



Plant Protection Act Section 7721

Fiscal Year 2023



National Clean Plant Network
Request for Proposals

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

Part 1. Award Information 3

Part 2. Funding Opportunity Description 4

 A. NCPN Background, Mission, Vision, and Purpose 4

 B. Alignment with NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives: 4

 C. Program Eligibility Criteria..... 6

 D. Program Priorities 6

 E. Program Activities for which Network Funding is Not Allowed..... 9

Part 3. Pre-Proposal Review Process 10

 A. Network Specialty Crop Governing Body Coordination Requirement 10

 B. Proof of Proposal Coordination..... 10

 C. Pre-Proposal Review and Prioritization – A Suggested Model 10

Part 4. Proposal Review Information..... 11

 A. Criteria 11

 B. Review and Recommendation Process 12

Part 5. Proposal and Submission Information..... 12

 A. Proposal Submission Formats 12

 B. Proposal Content and Submission..... 13

Appendix 1. Proposal Work Plan Template..... 14

Appendix 2. Criteria for new crops seeking entry into the USDA National Clean Plant Network 17

Part 1. Award Information

Category	Description
Funding Opportunity Title:	National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Program
Funding Opportunity Description:	<p>This program makes funding available for the National Clean Plant Network. The NCPN provides asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pathogens and pests to protect the environment and ensure the global competitiveness of U.S. specialty crop producers.</p> <p>Program priorities align with the goals specified in the NCPN Strategic Plan 2021-2025, and include: 1) Network operations by optimizing the production, maintenance, and distribution of clean plants, 2) Advancing special initiatives by optimizing the adaptation and implementation of novel technologies and new ideas while increasing the awareness of the importance, availability, and use of clean plants, and 3) Governance and networking by optimizing network resources.</p>
Total Available Funds	Funding for NCPN will be at least \$7.5 million.
Competitive Process	The NCPN Request for Proposals is a competitive process and the funding of any submitted proposals is at the discretion of USDA in consultation with the Network's Governing Board which forms its proposal review panel.
Posted Date	June 13, 2022
Closing Date	September 2, 2022
Anticipated Award Start Date	Between July-September, 2023
Performance Period	Funding is awarded for a single year with the option to extend longer as may be allowed by Federal regulations if USDA determines a request to be acceptable.
Type of Assistance Instrument	Cooperative Agreement; or an Interagency Agreement if the cooperator is another Federal agency.
USDA/APHIS Role	USDA/APHIS administers the Agreements on behalf of the Network's Federal Partners. Federal Partners include USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
Program Manager	Jennifer Nicholson National Clean Plant Network Coordinator USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Email: ncpn@usda.gov

Part 2. Funding Opportunity Description

A. NCPN Background, Mission, Vision, and Purpose

Background

The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) was established under The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) Title X, Sec 10202. Its purpose is to support a network of clean plant centers in the United States for specialty crops to provide reliable sources of propagative material that are free of propagative-borne pathogens. Network clean plant centers conduct diagnostic and pathogen elimination services and establish foundation blocks (nuclear stock) to provide pathogen-tested plant materials to nurseries, growers, and to state certification programs.

The Agriculture Act (commonly called the Farm Bill of 2014) H.R. 2642, specifically Title X, Section 10007 paragraph (e) renewed support of the NCPN as initially constituted under the Farm Bill 2008 and authorized funding in the amount of not less than \$5,000,000 annually provided through USDA for support of the activities of NCPN. This law also codified NCPN under the Plant Protection Act, in Section 7721.

NCPN Mission, Vision, and Purpose

Mission: Healthy Agriculture through Clean Plants

Vision: Safeguarding and supporting specialty crops by providing a sustainable source of clean plant material through innovation, collaboration, translational science and outreach.

Purpose: To establish a network of Clean Plant Centers for diagnostic and pathogen elimination services to produce clean propagative plant material and to maintain blocks of pathogen-tested plant material in sites located throughout the United States.

B. Alignment with NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Applicants should ensure and indicate how their intended project aligns with NCPN Strategic Plan goals and objectives, outlined here.

Goal 1 – Network Program Operations. Optimize the production, maintenance, and distribution of clean plants. (Source – [NCPN Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#))

- 1.1 Stakeholder Driven Clean Plant Centers: Develop a network of Centers that is focused on stakeholders and their needs for clean plant material.
- 1.2 Existing and New Centers: Optimize the number of NCPN Centers to ensure optimal and complete specialty crop coverage.
- 1.3 Protocols, Standards, Collaboration, and Coordination: Improve and coordinate cleanup activities and maintenance of clean plants.
- 1.4 Foundation Management: Assess, support, and manage a network of nationally-focused clean plant foundations and collections.

- 1.5 Plant Availability: Develop and maintain up-to-date lists of available cultivars. Facilitate the distribution of clean products at Clean Plant Centers.
- 1.6 Permitting and Associated Regulatory Matters: Facilitate discussions with permitting, regulatory, and related program officials in support of Network activities.
- 1.7 International Clean Plant Program Connections: Support a Network of centers that are well connected internationally for material access and regulatory purposes.

Goal 2 - Advancing Special Initiatives. Optimize the adaptation and implementation of novel technologies and new ideas while increasing the awareness of the importance, availability, and use of clean plants.

- 2.1 Use Advanced Diagnostics: Use more accurate, sensitive, and comprehensive detection methods to accelerate the production of clean plants. Additionally, identify risk, including that of not adopting new technologies.
- 2.2 Foundation Protection: Use new technologies to safeguard and back up foundation material.
- 2.3 Natural Disaster Preparation: Secure clean material in case of natural disasters or disease outbreaks.
- 2.4 Clean Plant Material Demand: Determine industry needs for clean plant material.
- 2.5 Clean Plant Program Education & Outreach: Facilitate the adoption of plants coming from Clean Plant Centers by nurseries and growers through extension and outreach activities.
- 2.6 Economics: Assess the economic impact of the clean plant programs.
- 2.7 Quality Assurance and Quality Control: Establish formalized programs and processes for program quality coordination and management.
- 2.8 Scientific Information Development, Use, and Sharing: Develop agreement and establish procedures for internal and external data and information development and sharing.
- 2.9 Interface with Nursery Clean Plant Programs: Facilitate communication among regulators, research scientists, industry, and Centers to develop clean plant nursery programs to increase the use of clean plant material.

Goal 3 – Governance and Networking. Optimize Network resources.

- 3.1 Program Governance: Assess and ascertain NCPN governance and administration needs for fiscal year 2021-2025.
- 3.2 Governing Bodies: Accommodate governance for new crops, including funded members and non-funded members.
- 3.3 Program Scope: Revisit and re-circumscribe the scope and parameters of the Network with regular reviews and updates.
- 3.4 Clean Plant Specialty Crop Business Plans: NCPN specialty crop groups and Clean Plant Centers develop business plans to ensure for the long-term financial stability of specific crops and Centers within the Network
- 3.5 NCPN Planning Harmonization Strategy: In developing and implementing national, crop-specific, and center-oriented plans, as well as special topics initiatives, NCPN managers will strive to coordinate and harmonize all efforts. This will include the creation and coordination of technical proposals and other plans.
- 3.6 Funding Stability: Identify complementary sources of funding to support and/or enhance clean plant programs.

- 3.7 Succession Planning: Develop Succession plan resources to address people, plants, and infrastructure.
- 3.8 Program Networking: Governance bodies should meet regularly with stakeholders and networking groups for continuing collaboration and to engage in critical discussions around pertinent network/commodity topics.

C. Program Eligibility Criteria

In order to submit a proposal to the Network's Cooperative Agreements Program, an applicant must, at a minimum, meet the following criteria.

1. **Specialty Crops.** Any commodity proposed as a target for Network program funding must qualify as a 'specialty crop' as defined by the USDA (for the definition, see Section 3 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004; 7 U.S.C. 1621 note; Public Law 108-465)
2. **Strategic Plan Focus.** Proposals must clearly address at least one NCPN Strategic Plan goal.

NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 1: Program Operations - Network funding is targeted to programs that diagnose and eliminate vegetatively-propagated, graft-transmissible plant pathogens, and establish 'clean plant' foundation/nuclear plantings or related holdings.

NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 2: Special Initiatives – Activities might include clean plant initiatives including education/outreach, economic studies, the advancement of data and information management strategies, program quality management and clean plant network or center reviews, and strategic and business planning in support of the National Clean Plant Network. Activities could also include conducting clean plant laboratory and foundations methods development and engaging in the use of advanced technologies to assist in diagnostics and therapy.

NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 3: Program Governance and Networking - Activities may also include forming and managing clean plant governing bodies and administering and coordinating the Network and its activities at the specialty crop level, among crops, and nationally.

3. **Eligible Applicants.** Eligible applicants must be state government agencies, land grant universities, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, non-land grant colleges of agriculture, non-profit organizations, or Federal Government agencies.

D. Program Priorities

In addition to the Program Eligibility Criteria stated above, following are priorities that the Network will consider in reviewing proposals for funding and in implementing its Cooperative Agreements program.

1. **Established or Forming Clean Plant Network Specialty Crop Governing Bodies**
 - Applicant Proposal Support from Established Network Clean Plant Governing Bodies – Priority is given to proposals that are coordinated through Network sponsored, specialty crop-specific clean plant network governing bodies. This includes a process of having proposals pre-reviewed

by the appropriate governing body for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals covering the same Network specialty crop group.

- **Pre-Proposal Review Process** – Pre-proposals that are reviewed by designated governing body working groups that specifically target proposal harmonization and prioritization shall be given high priority. Such working groups are recommended to be at least 50% composed of affected industry stakeholders.
- **Evidence of Coordination** - Evidence of such coordination is required at least in the form of a letter of support from the appropriate Network Governing Body specific to the applicant’s specialty crop focus area. Such evidence should be submitted by an applicant for support as an addendum to a proposal.
- **Governing Bodies in Formation** - In cases where a specialty crop does not yet have a Network recognized governing body, but where one is being formed, evidence of Network formation activities may be submitted.

The Network currently includes seven crop groups organized as follows:

Crop Groups	Description
Fruit and Nut Trees	Stone and pome fruits in the genera <i>Malus</i> , <i>Prunus</i> , and <i>Pyrus</i> . This includes ornamentals as well as fruit bearing trees and nut trees in the genus <i>Prunus</i> . Olives (<i>Olea europaea</i>) are also included in this group.
Grapes	All fruit and ornamentals in the genus <i>Vitis</i> , including the muscadine grapes.
Hops	<i>Humulus lupulus</i> and its associated varieties.
Berries	Members in the genera <i>Fragaria</i> (strawberry), <i>Rubus</i> (raspberry, blackberry, and other bramble/cane fruit), <i>Vaccinium</i> (blueberry and cranberry), <i>Ribes</i> (currant and gooseberry), <i>Sambucus</i> (elderberry) and edible <i>Lonicera</i> (honeysuckle).
Citrus	Including members of the genus <i>Citrus</i> and related genera in the Rutaceae as determined by the needs of industry.
Sweet Potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> , both edible and ornamental varieties.
Roses	All members of the genus <i>Rosa</i> as requested by industry.

New Crops. Appendix 1 of this Request for Proposals provides in-depth information about the criteria that should be met to receive NCPN support for new crops seeking entry into the Network.

2. **Quarantine Crops.** Priority is given to proposals supporting work on specialty crops that would be restricted in importation unless initially processed through a clean plant center capable of handling potentially infected plant materials. This priority focus does not preclude similar plant material from being submitted from domestic sources.
3. **Specialty Crops in State Certification Programs.** Priority is given to the diagnostics and therapy for specialty crops where there is expressed interest from state governments to support state certification programs for nurseries or a reasonable possibility in the building of certification standards.
4. **Propagatively Transmitted Pathogens.** Network program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated; with a particular focus on plant viruses and related organisms.

5. **Existing Facilities.** When supporting a laboratory-based clean plant center, priority is given to existing governmental or university facilities experienced in appropriate facets of specialty crop pathogen clean plant activities with a demonstrated capacity to develop, manage, and distribute specialty crop clean plant material.
6. **Multiple Cooperators.** Priority is given to proposals that show clear program and funding coordination among two or more entities, networking, and involvement of other cooperators, including industry partners, universities, non-profit organizations, and governmental cooperators.
7. **Meeting Industry Goals.** – Priority is given to proposals that meet one or more industry group-established priorities, appropriate under the established purpose of NCPN, and covering clean plant programs as expressed by industry members participating in Network specialty crop governing bodies. Evidence of meeting industry goals can be shown by specialty crop governing bodies establishing and utilizing a pre-proposal review group that is driven by industry representation of about 50% membership.
8. **Program Support Diversification.** For long term sustainability, the Network encourages applicants to seek and secure diversified sources of program funding in addition to those funds requested from NCPN. Priority may be given to applicants that show evidence of this effort in their proposal.
9. **Benefits to Small Producers and Distributors.** Priority may be given to applicants that demonstrate how their proposal and associated products and deliverables make a positive impact on small to mid-sized, local agricultural industries and in support of underserved agricultural communities.
10. **Business Plans or Annual Entity Reports.** Applicants seeking Network support that also have established business plans, including multi-year program or strategic plans, or issue annual entity reports for their operating units are requested to attach such documentation to their proposals as an appendix. The Network hopes to use this information to better understand the operating environment of each entity seeking Network support.
11. **Programs Supporting NCPN Technologies Development and Special Initiatives**
 - High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) Technology and other new or advanced technologies - The validation of diagnostic technologies for testing plants intended as nuclear stock is allowed as a supported Network cost. This includes conducting methods development studies that compare the efficacy of HTS against other diagnostic technologies but only to the extent that such studies are conducted for known pathogens of concern to industry. Network resources may not be used to conduct basic research on novel or unknown pathogens.
 - Education Products, Materials, and Communications Processes – Proposals are welcomed to develop concepts and products for Network extension, education and outreach with stakeholders, especially nurseries and growers; and for the advancement of NCPN communications plans. Stakeholder education should focus on informing select stakeholders in the value of using clean plants and on orienting around Network program products and should show coordination of product or process with the Network’s Education/Outreach Working Group.
 - Economics Cost/Benefit Analyses and Other Related Work – Priority may be given to proposals requesting support to look at the economic impacts, costs, and benefits of developing and using

clean plant material, especially with regard to such impacts on industry. Such work should be coordinated with the NCPN Economics Working Group.

- Program Quality Management, Quality Control, Training, and Program Reviews – Proposals are welcome in support of the planning and implementation of NCPN quality management initiatives; including the development of standards for use in laboratories, foundations, and otherwise; training in the implementation of quality principles, support of quality managers at select NCPN funded locations, and program reviews to improve products and processes. Such work should be coordinated with the NCPN Quality Working Group.

E. Program Activities for which Network Funding is Not Allowed

1. **Basic Research;** though funding may be used for methods development when the outcome impacts immediate delivery of clean plants to users.
2. **High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) Studies for the express pursuit of unknown or novel pathogens for purposes of academic study.** Network resources may not be used for studies on novel or unknown pathogens, or for diagnostics to search for ‘unknowns’ as an academic pursuit. Such use of HTS is outside of the scope of this program and aligns with basic research.
3. **DNA Fingerprinting.** The Network recognizes the importance of maintaining and verifying clonal plant identity, including trueness to type; however, DNA fingerprinting and trueness to type work may not be supported through this funding.
4. **Diagnostics when not directly connected with the mission of NCPN.** Network resources may not be used for diagnostics if the primary purpose is only to satisfy a non-NCPN supported activity such as Federal or State importation or exportation regulatory requirements; in essence programs considered reasonably distant to the primary programmatic mission of NCPN.
5. **G-2 Foundation support.** The Network may, however, consider supporting foundations where plant material is cleaned at one location, but material is maintained locally elsewhere in G-1 ‘like’ conditions for specialized service to local industry. This exception does not include blocks intended for general increase.
6. **Surveys.** Network resources may not be used for pathogen surveys in plant collections, nurseries, or other holdings, except in support of diagnostics conducted on plant material intended for submission to the Network for potential therapeutics and in clean plant foundations or collections accepted as foundations.
7. **State Nursery Certification Programs.** The development and support of state nursery certification programs is not funded through NCPN. Such support is available through other parts of the Plant Protection Act, Section 7721.
8. **Construction.** NCPN does not provide funding for construction. However, the Network will consider appropriate retrofitting of existing facilities to meet quarantine compliance or otherwise support of the program mission.

9. **Replace existing Center or program funding with public funds.** Funding requests that are intended to replace existing Center or program funding with public funds thus resulting in the redirection of those already existing funds from the applicant.

Part 3. Pre-Proposal Review Process

A. Network Specialty Crop Governing Body Coordination Requirement

Applicants for funding under the Network’s Cooperative Agreements program should show evidence that their proposals have been submitted to an appropriate Network crop governing body for prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals covering the same crop. Evidence of such coordination is required, at least in the form of a letter of support from the appropriate Network crop governing body. In cases where an applicant is requesting Network support for work on specialty crops covered by more than one Network governing body, evidence of coordination and support from all relevant specialty crop clean plant networks must be provided with the proposal.

B. Proof of Proposal Coordination

Network governing bodies may choose to submit all cooperator proposals under their review as a single package. The specialty crop governing bodies may also request that individual applicants directly submit their proposals electronically at ncpn@usda.gov.

In situations where the Network governing body chooses to forward all proposals submitted to it, the governing body may provide a single letter documenting the consultative process with all included proposals.

In situations where the Network specialty crop governing body suggests that individual applicants submit their proposals directly to USDA/APHIS, the Network Governing Body must provide the applicant with a letter documenting the consultative process. If an NCPN Governing Body has also established a streamlined, harmonized crop business plan, a copy of this should be provided to all covered applicants for their use in submitting it as an appendix to their application for NCPN support. Applicants submitting their proposals directly to USDA/APHIS should include a copy of any information provided to them from specialty crop Governing Bodies capturing the consultative process that was followed.

In cases where a specialty crop does not yet have an NCPN recognized governing body, but where one is being formed, evidence of network formation activities may be submitted by the applicants for NCPN Governing Board consideration (See Appendix 2).

C. Pre-Proposal Review and Prioritization – A Suggested Model

The Network’s Governing Board indicates that pre-proposal review, harmonization, and prioritization by an existing Network specialty crop governing body, especially a specifically designated, industry-centered working group, would receive a high priority for funding consideration. Such a group designated to review pre-proposals should be composed of at least 50% industry with other affected stakeholders; or some other industry-driven process designed to accomplish the same purpose. This serves to ensure that industry stakeholders are involved in the pre-proposal development process and

serves to provide the Network's Governing Board with a high degree of confidence in the specialty crop governing body pre-proposal decision-making process, including proposal harmonization to help foster an efficient network system.

Additionally, the Network's Governing Board, at its discretion, may seek further counsel from other members of the Network, or more broadly, as part of a proposal review process, on the content or merits of any proposal submitted for funding consideration.

The specialty crop pre-proposal working group should evaluate proposals through a prioritization process. This process should not prioritize individual proposals against each other, but rather look at specific aspects of individual pre-proposal content and highlight the important parts of each proposal before the working group, ranking components relative to importance and need for the whole of the specialty crop being considered. A ranking of 'high', 'medium', 'low' or 'do not fund' is suggested. This process of prioritization will provide the Network's Governing Board with crucial information across all proposals on crop priorities.

For proposals including support for special initiatives, the Network's Governing Board sees merit in coordinating this component of the proposal through the Network's working groups established for each of these special initiatives to ensure that the request aligns with the direction of the Network collectively as manifested through the actions of the working group.

Evidence of compliance with this pre-proposal review process should be provided by relevant NCPN governing bodies to applicants for submission as an appendix to their application for support.

Part 4. Proposal Review Information

A. Criteria

In reviewing submitted proposals for NCPN funding consideration, The NCPN Governing Board, which reviews proposals and makes funding recommendations, considers the following items as part of their review process:

- **Goal Alignment.** Proposals are assessed on how closely they align with the stated mission and goals of NCPN. Applicants are requested to clearly state how their requests align with the NCPN Strategic Plan FY 2021-2025.
- **Stakeholder Participation and Focus.** Broad stakeholder participation in projects is encouraged and evidence of this should be captured in a proposal. Realistically projected information on program deliverables, specifically outcomes impacting nurseries, growers, and other users of clean plant material is encouraged.
- **Governing Bodies and Harmonization.** Networking is one of the hallmarks of NCPN, through NCPN-focused specialty crop governing bodies and their activities to coordinate proposals within their respective crop groups for Network consideration. Proposals that are discussed and harmonized among clean plant centers working on the same crop groups are encouraged and given priority funding consideration.
- **Overall Merits of Projects.** The merit and value of projects as they relate to the implementation of Network operations and initiatives is among the most important of sections when evaluated for consideration. Applicants should carefully consider what is asked of them in the suggested

work plan template and provide the requested information concisely, but with sufficient detail to convey the impacts of the proposed work.

B. Review and Recommendation Process

USDA/APHIS, USDA/ARS, and USDA/NIFA as represented by the members of NCPN's Governing Board Core Working Group are responsible for making recommendations of projects for funding through cooperative agreements. They are assisted in their task by the members of NCPN's Governing Board that form the panel to participate in the evaluation and recommendation process of proposals. The panel composed of Federal and State employees makes the primary recommendation of projects for funding and submits their recommendations to USDA for final ratification. They may seek counsel from subject-matter experts as appropriate. Individuals on the panel will have no association with any proposal that is being reviewed. In the event of a real or perceived conflict of interest, a panel member shall recuse themselves as appropriate. USDA/APHIS/PPQ has final funding obligating authority in determining which projects are funded for this program.

Proposal funding will be announced in the APHIS Plant Protection Act 7721 Spending Plan. Funded applicants will be contacted with instructions to complete the award process through the USDA ezFedGrants system.

Part 5. Proposal and Submission Information

A. Proposal Submission Formats

NCPN applicants can submit either individual entity proposals or a harmonized crop proposal that includes multiple entities.

- 1. Single entity proposals.** Applicants from a single institution may apply for NCPN support for one or more crops. If multiple crops are covered in the proposal, provide sufficient detail to distinctly describe the work plan activities for each crop, and provide a separate budget for each crop. In situations where a single budget item covers more than one crop, prorate the request across all covered crops as appropriate. Documentation of the network specialty crop governing body pre-proposal review should be included for each crop covered in the proposal.
- 2. Harmonized crop proposals covering multiple entities.** Historically, NCPN encouraged entities seeking support for a single crop group to submit their request for support under one, harmonized, consolidated proposal. Consolidated crop proposals should clearly show how individual programs work together to support cross-network needs for the crop. These proposals should also clearly detail the individual contribution and activities for each institution.

UPDATED FOR FY 2023: When preparing a harmonized crop proposal, the work plan should contain consolidated sections for Background, Alignment with NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives, and Stakeholder Participation and Industry Focus. Each individual applicant should have a distinct, continuous section in the proposal to describe their entity's Goals and Objectives, Milestones, Methods, and Deliverables. The Budget Spreadsheet should contain a separate worksheet for each entity.

B. Proposal Content and Submission

Submission Instructions

Applicants should submit their proposal package to NCPN directly at ncpn@usda.gov. The deadline for submission is 11:59 pm (U.S. Hawaiian Time Zone) of the closing date of the announcement. The completed package should include these sections:

1. Proposal Work Plan with Budget Spreadsheet. (See Appendix 1)
2. Documentation of Pre-Proposal Review Process. Applicants should provide documentation of proposal review and coordination with the appropriate NCPN specialty crop governing body. This process is not required for proposals focused on cross-network special initiatives, but these proposals should be coordinated with the appropriate working group.
3. Optional Appendix: Business Plans or Annual Reports. Applicants seeking Network support that also have established entity business or strategic plans or issue annual entity reports for their operating units may include these as an appendix.

Content Guidance

Proposals should be brief, focused, and specific to the needs of the applicant as relevant to the mission of the National Clean Plant Network. Unless an applicant is new and unknown to NCPN, extensive program history or detailed scientific or administrative methodologies are no longer required or requested. General applicant information, resumes, and reading lists are discouraged.

Keep proposals focused on:

- 1) what you are doing,
- 2) why is it important for the NCPN program to provide support,
- 3) how you are generally going to accomplish this work,
- 4) your anticipated outcomes and deliverables, and
- 5) the impact on industry or your other stakeholders.

Page Limitations

Proposal work plans should not exceed 15 pages (11 point font, single spaced) for proposals covering a single crop or special initiative. For proposals with multiple crops or multiple entities, the work plan may be increased up to 5 pages for each additional crop or entity, up to a maximum of 40 pages. This limitation does not include any proposal cover pages, budget, or appendices. Review of material beyond these page limitations is at the discretion of the reviewers.

Appendix 1. Proposal Work Plan Template

FY 2023 National Clean Plant Network Proposal

Name of Project

Brief Project Description: *Provide a brief one or two sentence description of the proposed project.*

Principal Investigator

Name of Institution

Address

Phone

E-mail

1. Background

This section explains the purpose of the project and must cover the following elements.

Reason for project – Identify the need or problem and how Federal investment in the project will help to address the problem. The agreement should be supporting solutions for a public purpose.

Overview of the project activities – Briefly describe the project and activities that will be performed.

Deliverables and expected outcomes – Briefly describe the deliverables of this agreement to stakeholders.

Impact on industry or other stakeholders- Identify stakeholders who will benefit from this work and the impact of the project deliverables for them.

2. Alignment with NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives

Briefly list and relate the relevant NCPN Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives being addressed under the submitted work plan.

3. Stakeholder Participation and Industry Focus

A. Stakeholder Participation:

Provide an indication of the organizations collaboratively involved with the applicant in activities carried out through this proposal and explain their involvement.

B. Industry Focus:

Indicate the industry or industries being served because of the products generated through this project. As applicable, also indicate the deliverables intended for use either by nurseries or growers and the

anticipated timeframe for producing and delivering, or otherwise making available, the agreed upon materials and products.

4. Goals and Objectives

Provide Goals and Objectives that outline what you plan to accomplish through this project. Goals are a broad statement of the overall outcomes the project intends to accomplish. Under each goal, provide specific Objectives that concisely and clearly state the planned actions in 1-2 sentences. Any narrative explaining how to accomplish the objective should be included under the methods section.

5. Milestones

For each objective, provide a list of milestones (keys steps or activities) that are planned to achieve the objective and reach the goal. For each milestone, include a timeline for completion, and expected performance measures. A table format such as the example below may be used.

Objective 1

Milestone	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Performance Measure
1.1 Key activity		X	X		Performance metric or deliverable

6. Methods

Provide a clear description of the approach that you plan to follow to achieve the project objectives, including relevant program operations. You must provide sufficient detail to clearly communicate how you plan to conduct your project. This information is critical in justifying the Budget requested for this project.

7. Deliverables

Clearly state what is intended to be delivered to stakeholders at the end of this agreement. List or indicate the specific intended accomplishments or performance measures that will be used to evaluate the success of the project and how each element will be measured. If applicable, indicate the quantity and type of deliverables anticipated under this project. Deliverables may include tangible products (such as clean plant units distributed) or less tangible outcomes (such as improvements or advances in network activities).

8. Budget

Complete the Budget Spreadsheet Template available on the [APHIS NCPN website](#). Copy the budget tables into your proposal workplan and also provide the spreadsheet as a separate file. Budgets must contain sufficient narrative details to allow the proposal reviewer to understand what is being requested, to be able to comprehend its purpose and why it is being requested, at what magnitude or quantity. If the budget includes more than one crop or institution, create a separate worksheet for each crop and institution. Budget costs specifically related to crop governing body administration or outreach initiatives should also be detailed on a separate sheet. Total project costs should be shown in a summary table on the first sheet.

Other Sources of Support

Provide a description indicating other sources of funding support for program operations such as institutional support, commodity support, user fees, or other sources.

Instructions on Calculation of Indirect Costs – 15% limitation

The Plant Protection Act restricts indirect costs charged against a cooperative agreement under Section 7721 (including NCPN) to the lesser of 15% of the Total Federal Funds provided under the cooperative agreement or the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement applicable to the recipient as established by law. This amount may also be calculated as approximately 17.647% of Total Direct Costs or Total Modified Direct Costs, whichever is applicable.

To claim indirect costs, a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement should be in place and a copy provided to APHIS at the time of award. If an applicant does not have a current negotiated rate (including a provisional rate), the applicant may charge a de minimis rate of 10%. (Please see 2 CFR 200, Part 414, paragraph (f) for details and exceptions).

Appendix 2. Criteria for new crops seeking entry into the USDA National Clean Plant Network

Purpose

This Appendix provides criteria for the entry of new crop groups into the Network. Individuals who would like to propose the entry of an additional crop group should draft a crop entry recommendation, citing specific criteria below that apply, and then forward that proposal to NCPN Management Team at: ncpn@usda.gov. Please note that you will also have to complete a full proposal with work plan and detailed budget during the Request for Proposals (RFP) period.

Background

The Network currently includes seven crop groups organized as follows:

Crop Groups	Description
Fruit and Nut Trees	Stone and pome fruits in the genera <i>Malus</i> , <i>Prunus</i> , and <i>Pyrus</i> . This includes ornamentals as well as fruit bearing trees and nut trees in the genus <i>Prunus</i> . Olives (<i>Olea europaea</i>) are also included in this group.
Grapes	All fruit and ornamentals in the genus <i>Vitis</i> , including the muscadine grapes.
Hops	<i>Humulus lupulus</i> and its associated varieties.
Berries	Members in the genera <i>Fragaria</i> (strawberry), <i>Rubus</i> (raspberry, blackberry, and other bramble/cane fruit), <i>Vaccinium</i> (blueberry and cranberry), <i>Ribes</i> (currant and gooseberry), <i>Sambucus</i> (elderberry) and edible <i>Lonicera</i> (honeysuckle).
Citrus	Including members of the genus <i>Citrus</i> and related genera in the Rutaceae as determined by the needs of industry.
Sweet Potato	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> , both edible and ornamental varieties.
Roses	All members of the genus <i>Rosa</i> as requested by industry.

New Crops

Individuals in the existing seven NCPN crops actively worked to form and launch the clean plant program during 2005-2008. From this perspective, these crops were selected based on the input from their respective industry, university, and state cooperators. These taxa are economically important and are known to have high-consequence, propagation-transmissible pathogen threats. Since the Network's inception, Network managers have occasionally received inquiries, seeking information about the criteria under which other crops may seek entry into NCPN.

Criteria for New Crop Entry into the Network

Network participants and managers have operated under stated or assumed criteria under which crops and associated clean plant facilities can seek entry and support. When drafting a recommendation for new crop entry into the Network, individuals should confirm and explain how the target crop meets the following entry criteria.

Specialty Crop Requirement

- Supported crops must be defined as a specialty crop under Section 101 of the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note), amended under Section 10010 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79.
- Please see [What is a Specialty Crop?](#) for more information.

Prohibited Crops

- Priority for NCPN entry and support is given to specialty crops that would be restricted in importation unless initially processed through a clean plant center capable of handling potentially infected plant materials. This priority focus does not preclude similar plant varieties from being submitted from domestic sources such as germplasm or other collections.

Applicant Entity Eligibility

- Financial support from the Network is limited to the following entities that serve as clean plant centers or program cooperators:
 - Land-Grant Universities and Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture
 - State Agricultural Experiment Stations and State or Local Governments
 - Non-Profit Organizations
 - Federal Agencies

Industry Focus

- Priority is given to specialty crops and associated clean plant centers that become part of the Network and conduct diagnostics and therapy on select specialty crops as requested by industry. Additionally, support is provided for the establishment and maintenance of this material in G-1 foundation/nuclear/mother-blocks.

Existing Facilities

- Preference is given to institutions or agencies with existing and established facilities associated with clean plant programs and the capability to conduct plant pathogen molecular and biological diagnostics, apply therapies, and to establish and maintain foundation/nuclear blocks of clean plant material.

Program Circumscription and Operations

- The purpose of NCPN is to support clean plant centers engaged in diagnostics with the intent of conducting therapeutics as necessary followed by the establishment of clean plant material in foundations for recurring distribution to the public or owners.
- Network funding is targeted to programs that diagnose and treat against vegetatively-propagated, graft-transmissible plant pathogens, and establish ‘clean plant’ foundation/nuclear plantings, including those maintained by governments, land grant universities, or non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.

New Crop Self-Advancement and Readiness

- New crops seeking NCPN support should have advanced sufficiently with basic research needed to develop diagnostic tools, therapeutic capabilities, and foundation concepts to readily capitalize on inclusion in NCPN and associated NCPN support to operationalize research already conducted. This would include at least a basic understanding of pathogen pressures on that crop and associated impacts, an understanding of needs, and a prioritization on how NCPN support

might best be used in addition to other sources of funding already available for the clean plant support of the specialty crop.

Program Governance and Administration

- Since the purpose of the program is to establish a ‘network’, representatives of all specialty crop groups seeking NCPN entry support must form, or be in the process of forming, an inclusive ‘Governing Body’ to administer activities covering clean plant needs for that crop.
- The forming Governing Body must have a Chair, Vice-Chair, and an Administrative Coordinator.
- Members of the Governing Body must operate under a self-administered Charter, and be composed of voting members representing science, education/extension, the regulatory community, and relevant industry. Such members must include, or at least reach out, to all known facilities engaged in the ‘clean-up’ of the crop in question with the intent of ascertaining the full scope of a network in support of clean plant activities associated with the specialty crop.
- These Governing Bodies meet regularly and help the Network establish priorities and harmonize proposals. These Governing Bodies also work with each other to understand and harmonize needs across the entire Network.
- As appropriate, the representatives of a new crop seeking NCPN entry and support can petition an existing Governing Body to expand its Charter to include the new entrant.

Program Clean Plant Center Inclusiveness

- The representatives of all crop groups seeking NCPN inclusion and support must include, or at least reach out, to all known domestic facilities engaged in the ‘clean-up’ of the crop in question.

Propagatively Borne Pathogens

- Network program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated.
- Network support is largely focused on mitigation of plant disease caused by viruses and related organisms; however, clean plant facilities in the Network are also authorized to work on other pathogens as necessary to ensure for the health of their foundation stocks.

Characterization of Pathogen Threat

- When proposing a new crop group, representatives should be able to characterize pest threats to existing plantings (within the same specialty crop, or across specialty crops for certain pests) from especially injurious or fast-moving pathogens that may be targeted by a clean plant program; as well as demonstrate that the pest threats are of a nature that exclusion/prevention/control through individual grower initiatives are not practical or possible.

Phytosanitary Trade Implications

- Network support is directed to specialty crops with significant phytosanitary trade implications (risks or benefits, import or export) that may be created or resolved through a coordinated clean plant network approach.

Characterization of Farm-Gate Value

- Individuals recommending a new specialty crop seeking NCPN entry and support should characterize the farm gate value of nursery stock produced annually for the specialty crop and whenever possible, the farm gate value of commodity itself (e.g., fruit) produced by the industry or its associated products.

National Clonal Germplasm Repositories

- Priority is given for specialty crops that are or could be associated with an existing USDA supported national Clonal Germplasm Repository which could serve to house such plants in the event that clean stock is no longer requested regularly from an NCPN supported foundation, yet it is advisable to retain them.

Nursery Certification Programs

- Priority is given to the diagnostics and therapy for specialty crops where there is expressed interest from state governments to support state certification or related programs for nurseries and growers.

NCPN Program Support

- NCPN funds should not be used to replace other sources of funding already ascribed to a program.
- NCPN support should be considered supplemental to other streams of funding already supporting a new specialty crop clean plant initiative.
- The Network encourages applicants for entry and funding to seek and secure program funding and income generating opportunities in addition to those funds requested from NCPN.
- Representatives for new specialty crops seeking NCPN support should characterize its plan for program support and sustainability, and the role that NCPN support plays in the plan.

Prohibition on the Use of NCPN Funds

NCPN funds may not be used to support certain activities, including:

- Routine diagnostics or other activities to support initiatives other than those that are core to the mission of the Network.
- Construction projects.
- Nursery certification programs.
- Basic research initiatives.
- General surveys for plant pathogens in nurseries, grower's fields, similar situations, or in the environment.
- Trueness-to-type plant evaluations.