

**FY 2022 - Request for Proposals – NCPN**

<b>National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)</b>			
<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Cooperative Agreements Program		
<b>Funding Type:</b>	Cooperative Agreement or Interagency Agreement (for Federal Agencies)		
<b>Program Manager’s Contact Information:</b>	Erich Rudyj Coordinator – National Clean Plant Network USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Science and Technology The National Clean Plant Network 920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200, Raleigh, NC 27606 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:NCPN@usda.gov">NCPN@usda.gov</a>		
<b>Posted Date:</b>	June 7, 2021		
<b>Closing Date:</b>	<b>August 27, 2021</b>		
<b>Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:</b>	10.025, Plant and Animal Disease, Pest Control, and Animal Care		
<b>Eligible Applicants:</b>	Land-Grant Universities	Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture	Non-Profit Organizations
	State Agricultural Experiment Stations	State or Local Governments	Federal Agencies
<b>Cost Sharing:</b>	None. However, applicants are encouraged to indicate other funds available for program operations in addition to support requested from the Network.		
<b>Funding Opportunity Description:</b>	<p>This program makes funding available for the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN or ‘the Network’) for Fiscal Year 2022.</p> <p>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> <p>Funding will be provided to Land-Grant Universities, non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, non-profit organizations, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, State Governments, and Federal Agencies to support Network priorities noted above. Funding priority will be given to proposals that focus on specialty crops (for the definition, see 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) with clear work and financial plans that align with the NCPN Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and for developing and maintaining a comprehensive, cohesive and efficient network.</p>		
<b>Alignment of the Program:</b>	This program aligns with the activities conducted under the Plant Protection Act, Section 7721, Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program (PPDMDPP) and is part of the USDA Implementation Plan for that program.		

  
Full Announcement

<b>Request for Proposals (RFP) National Clean Plant Network</b>			
<b>United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ)</b>			
<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Cooperative Agreements Program		
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Initial Announcement		
<b>Key Dates:</b>	Proposals must be received by August 27, 2021 Cooperative Agreements are anticipated to begin about July 1, 2022		
<b>Funding Opportunity Description:</b>	<p>This program implements funding for Fiscal Year 2022 as provided under the Plant Protection Act, Section 7721, Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program (PPDMDPP) and is part of the USDA Implementation Plan for that program.</p> <p>The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) provides asexually propagated plant material free of targeted plant pathogens and pests to protect the environment and ensure the global competitiveness of US 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>		
<b>Total Amount to be Awarded:</b>	Anticipated at a base of not less than \$5,000,000 under the Plant Protection Act Section 7721.		
<b>Eligibility:</b>	Land-Grant Universities	Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture	Non-Profit organizations
	State Agricultural Experiment Stations	State or Local Governments	Federal Agencies
<b>Cost Sharing:</b>	None. However, applicants are encouraged to indicate other funds available for program operations in addition to support requested from the Network.		



**IMPORTANT: CHANGES FOR APPLICANTS IN FISCAL YEAR 2022**

**NCPN Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Focus and Alignment**

NCPN is operating under a renewed Strategic Plan. Under the Plan, NCPN has established 3 program goals; 1) Network Program Operations 2) Advancing Special Initiatives 3) Governance. These goals are further divided into 24 program objectives supported by 75 associated action items. Applicants for NCPN program support are asked to indicate specifically which program goals, objectives, and associated action items are being satisfied by their requests for support and specifically how their activities shall satisfy the cited objectives. (See the NCPN Strategic Plan reference and NCPN Goals/Objectives on pages 7-8 of this Request for Proposals.)

**Revised NCPN Work and Financial Plan Templates for use in Developing Proposals**

<b>Work Plan Template</b>	For FY 2022, the Work Plan format is updated; including program alignment with NCPN’s Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. Please read the instructions in Part V. below and complete the Work Plan in as succinct a manner as possible.
<b>Financial Plan Template</b>	A suggested Financial Plan template ‘spreadsheet’ is also provided for applicant use in addition to the budget template included in the Work Plan.

**Proposal Submission Formats**

NCPN Governing Bodies are encouraged to establish streamlined crop business plans that capture program and applicant harmonization for that crop. Applicants might then simply submit a streamlined, single entity work plan as provided in item #1 or #2 below:

<b>1. Single-Crop Proposal from a Single Entity</b>	For FY 2022, applicants applying for support under aegis of an NCPN Governing Body (Tier 2) streamlined, harmonized business plan are encouraged to do so under a simply work and financial plan as mentioned and provided for elsewhere in this RFP.
<b>2. Multi-Crop Proposals from a Single Entity:</b>	For FY 2022, applicants applying for support may still apply for support under harmonized proposals submitted by under aegis of various NCPN Crop Governing Bodies (Tier 2). If the crops in question are now covered by streamlined Governing Body (Tier 2) crop business plans, then the applicant is advised to request such support under a <u>single entity work plan</u> when submitted to NCPN. Please provide sufficient information on each individual crop. In situations where a single budget item covers more than one crop, please prorate the request across all covered crops as appropriate.
<b>3. Harmonized Proposals from a Single Crop Covering Multiply Entities:</b>	Historically, NCPN encouraged entities seeking support for a single, similar crop, submit their request for support under one, harmonized, consolidated proposal. This is still an acceptable means of both harmonizing proposals and seeking support under a single proposal for several entities together. Such proposals should be developed in a manner that the relationships among the applicants are clear in their program support for each other but that there is sufficient distinction such that each entities actions and budgetary needs are individually identifiable for ascription of responsibilities and funding purposes.

**Proposal Content**

Applicants are requested to use and follow the NCPN Work and financial plan templates as closely as possible. Unless an applicant is new to NCPN, existing cooperators are encouraged to provide limited information in the form of program introductions, backgrounds, resumes and publication lists; or even procedurally ‘how’ something will be done unless it’s important to the discussion. The project proposal should however focus on the following:

<i>What is being done?</i>	<i>Why it is important?</i>	<i>When it will occur?</i>
Anticipated ‘outputs’ and especially the predicted ‘outcomes’ as a result of those outputs	Making a clear connection between what is being requested in the proposal and linkages to the budget plan, and the impacts of the project on stakeholders	Indicate the timeframes when activities and associated outcomes will transpire

**Page Limitations**

**IMPORTANT:** For FY 2022, recommended guidelines for page limitations can be found in the table below. Addenda can be added and are not included in the suggested page limits.

<b>If your proposal is for:</b>	<b>The suggested page limit is:</b>
One crop	15 pages
Multiple crops	15 pages + 5 pages per each additional crop (ie., 2 crops = 20 pages)
Harmonized Proposal	Maximum 40 pages

<b>Pre-Proposal Review Process</b>	The 12-week RFP open period for FY 2022 funding is partly to allow for sufficient time for applicants to engage effectively with stakeholders as part of the Network suggested <u>pre-proposal review process</u> .
<b>Individual Applicant Entity Business Plans or comparable Annual Entity Reports</b>	Applicants seeking Network support that also have established entity business plans or issue annual entity reports for their operating units are <u>suggested to attach such documentation</u> to their proposals as an appendix. If such plans do not exist applicants are encouraged to develop them.
<b>New Crops Seeking NCPN Support for FY 2022</b>	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. Many of the major points regarding criteria for crop entry into the Network are also captured in various places in the main body of this Request for Proposals.

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## Part I. 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. Supported 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.

<i>The Network is currently comprised of seven crop taxa organized as follows:</i>	
<b>Fruit and Nut Trees</b>	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>
<b>Grapes</b>	All fruit and ornamentals in the genus <i>Vitis</i> , including the muscadine grapes.
<b>Hops</b>	<i>Humulus lupulus</i> and its associated varieties.
<b>Berries</b>	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).
<b>Citrus</b>	Including members of the genus <i>Citrus</i> and related genera in the Rutaceae as determined by the needs of industry.
<b>Sweet Potato</b>	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> , both edible and ornamental varieties.
<b>Roses</b>	All members of the genus <i>Rosa</i> as requested by industry.

#### NCPN Mission, Vision, and Purpose

<b>MISSION</b>	Healthy Agriculture through Clean Plants
<b>VISION</b>	Safeguarding and supporting specialty crops by providing a sustainable source of clean plant material through innovation, collaboration, translational science and outreach.
<b>PURPOSE</b>	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 that their intended project aligns with appropriate NCPN Strategic Plan goals and objectives and should further specify in their project proposal how they intend to meet those goals and objectives as further outlined in the NCPN Strategic Plan ‘Appendix’ that covers actions anticipated under goals and objectives.

**NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives**

**IMPORTANT:** *The FY 2022 NCPN Cooperative Agreements program will focus on applicants satisfying one or more of the programs Strategic Goals and Objectives as outlined below. (Source – NCPN Strategic Plan FY 2021-2025)*

<b><i>NCPN Goal 1 – Network Program Operations</i></b>	
<i>Optimize the production, maintenance, and distribution of clean plants.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	1.1 <u>Stakeholder Driven Clean Plant Centers:</u> Develop a network of Centers that is focused on stakeholders and their needs for clean plant material. 1.2 <u>Existing and New Centers:</u> Optimize the number of NCPN Centers to ensure optimal and complete specialty crop coverage. 1.3 <u>Protocols, Standards, Collaboration, and Coordination:</u> Improve and coordinate cleanup activities and maintenance of clean plants. 1.4 <u>Foundation Management:</u> Assess, support, and manage a network of nationally-focused clean plant foundations and collections. 1.5 <u>Plant Availability:</u> Develop and maintain up-to-date lists of available cultivars. Facilitate the distribution of clean products at Clean Plant Centers. 1.6 <u>Permitting and Associated Regulatory Matters:</u> Facilitate discussions with permitting, regulatory, and related program officials in support of Network activities. 1.7 <u>International Clean Plant Program Connections:</u> Support a Network of centers that are well connected internationally for material access and regulatory purposes.

<b><i>NCPN Goal 2 - Advancing Special Initiatives</i></b>	
<i>Optimize the adaptation and implementation of novel technologies and new ideas while increasing the awareness of the importance, availability, and use of clean plants.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	2.1 <u>Use Advance Diagnostics:</u> 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 <u>Foundation Protection:</u> Use new technologies to safeguard and back up foundation material. 2.3 <u>Natural Disaster Preparation:</u> Secure clean material in case of natural disasters or disease outbreaks. 2.4 <u>Clean Plant Material Demand:</u> Determine industry needs for clean plant material. 2.5 <u>Clean Plant Program Education &amp; Outreach:</u> Facilitate the adoption of plants coming from Clean Plant Centers by nurseries and growers through extension and outreach activities.
<b>Objectives</b>	2.6 <u>Economics:</u> Assess the economic impact of the clean plant programs.

<b><i>NCPN Goal 2 - Advancing Special Initiatives</i></b>	
<i>Optimize the adaptation and implementation of novel technologies and new ideas while increasing the awareness of the importance, availability, and use of clean plants.</i>	
<b>(cont.)</b>	<p>2.7 <u>Quality Assurance and Quality Control</u>: Establish formalized programs and processes for program quality coordination and management.</p> <p>2.8 <u>Scientific Information Development, Use, and Sharing</u>: Develop agreement and establish procedures for internal and external data and information development and sharing.</p> <p>2.9 <u>Interface with Nursery Clean Plant Programs</u>: Facilitate communication among regulators, research scientists, industry, and Centers to develop clean plant nursery programs to increase the use of clean plant material.</p>

<b><i>NCPN Goal 3 – Governance and Networking</i></b>	
<i>Optimize Network resources.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>3.1 <u>Program Governance</u>: Assess and ascertain NCPN governance and administration needs for fiscal year 2021-2025.</p> <p>3.2 <u>Governing Bodies</u>: Accommodate governance for new crops, including funded members and non-funded members.</p> <p>3.3 <u>Program Scope</u>: Revisit and re-circumscribe the scope and parameters of the Network with regular reviews and updates.</p> <p>3.4 <u>Clean Plant Specialty Crop Business Plans</u>: 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</p> <p>3.5 <u>NCPN Planning Harmonization Strategy</u>: 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.</p> <p>3.6 <u>Funding Stability</u>: Identify complementary sources of funding to support and/or enhance clean plant programs.</p> <p>3.7 <u>Succession Planning</u>: Develop Succession plan resources to address people, plants, and infrastructure.</p> <p>3.8 <u>Program Networking</u>: Governance bodies should meet regularly with stakeholders and networking groups for continuing collaboration and to engage in critical discussions around pertinent network/commodity topics.</p>

**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.

<b>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b>	
<b>Specialty Crops</b>	<u>Program Focus</u> – 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)
<b>Strategic Plan Focus</b>	<p><u>NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 1: Program Operations</u> - Network funding is targeted to programs that diagnose and treat against vegetatively-propagated, graft-transmissible plant pathogens, and establish ‘clean plant’ foundation/nuclear plantings or related holdings, including those maintained by governments, land grant universities, or non-land-grant colleges of agriculture.</p> <p><u>NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 2: Special Initiatives</u> – Activities might include clean plant education/outreach initiatives including 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. 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.</p> <p><u>NCPN Strategic Plan Goal 3: Program Governance and Networking</u> - 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.</p>
<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	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.
<b>Meeting Program Goals</b>	<u>NCPN Goals</u> – Proposals must clearly meet the stipulated USDA and APHIS/PPQ strategic goals <b><i>and at least one NCPN program Strategic Plan goal as defined in this Request for Proposals.</i></b> Work plans and associated budget plans must specifically show how an NCPN Strategic Plan goal and objective are: 1) being met, 2) planned outputs, and 3) anticipated outcomes because of those outputs.

**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.

<b>PRIORITIES</b>	
<b>Quarantine Crops</b>	<u>Prohibited Articles</u> – 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 such as germplasm or other collections, or domestically sourced material in the hands of nurseries, growers, and others seeking NCPN supported clean plant center assistance.
<b>Specialty Crops in State Certification Programs</b>	<u>Nursery Clean Plant Support</u> – 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.
<b>Propagatively Transmitted Pathogens</b>	<u>Vegetative Propagation</u> - Network program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated; <u>with a particular focus on plant viruses and related organisms.</u>
<b>Existing Facilities</b>	<u>Governmental and University</u> – 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.
<b>Business Plans or Annual Entity Reports</b>	<u>Applicant Plans and Entity Reports</u> - Applicants seeking Network support that also have established business plans, including multi-year program 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. High consideration is given to such attachments.
<b>Established or Forming Clean Plant Network Specialty Crop Governing Bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Applicant Proposal Support from Established Network Clean Plant Governing Bodies</u> – 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 submitted covering the same Network specialty crop grouping or even among the various specialty crops supported by the Network.</li> <li>▪ <u>Pre-Proposal Review Process</u> – Pre-proposals that are reviewed by designated governing body working groups that specifically target proposal harmonization and prioritization shall be given high priority.</li> </ul>

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<b>PRIORITIES</b>	
<b>Established or Forming Clean Plant Network Specialty Crop Governing Bodies (cont.)</b>	<p>Such working groups are recommended be at least 50% composed of affected industry stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Evidence of Coordination</u> - 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.</li> <li>▪ <u>Governing Bodies in Formation</u> - 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Multiple Cooperators</b>	<u>Cooperator Networking</u> – 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.
<b>Meeting Industry Goals</b>	<u>Clean Plant Industry Goals</u> – 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. Details are available by contacting the leadership of respective specialty crop governing bodies. Evidence of meeting industry goals is suggested in the form of specialty crop governing bodies establishing and utilizing a pre-proposal review group that is driven by industry representation of about 50% membership whenever possible.
<b>Programs Supporting NCPN Technologies Development and Special Initiatives, such as Education/Outreach, Economics, Quality Management or Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) Technology and other new or advanced technologies</u> - The use and development for greater relevance of established HTS technologies for diagnostics for the purpose of therapeutics or to determine the pathogen status of 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 <i>but only to the extent that such studies are conducted for known pathogens of concern to industry. Network resources may not be used for comparison studies intending to pursue or otherwise conduct basic research on novel or unknown pathogens.</i></li> <li>▪ <u>Education Products, Materials, and Communications Processes</u> – 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.</li> <li>▪ <u>Economics Cost/Benefit Analyses and Other Related Work</u> – Priority may be given to proposals requesting support to look at the economic</li> </ul>

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<b>PRIORITIES</b>	
	<p>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 Education/Outreach Working Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Program Quality Management, Quality Control, Training, and Program Reviews</u> – Proposals are welcome in support of the planning and implementation of NCPN quality management initiatives; including the development of standards for use 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 Management Working Group.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Support Diversification</b>	<u>Resource Independence</u> – Priority may be given to applicants that indicate or otherwise show that, over time, they are working towards becoming increasingly self-sufficient and being able to operate their clean plant program with decreasing, or minimal, or only periodic continued Federal financial support.
<b>Benefits to Small Producers and Distributors</b>	<u>Small to Mid-Sized, Local Agricultural Industries</u> – Priority may be given to applicants that demonstrate how their proposal and associated products and deliverable make a positive impact on small to mid-sized, local agricultural industries and in support of underserved agricultural communities.

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

<b>NON-FUNDED ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Basic Research</b>	Though funding may be used for methods development when the outcome impacts immediate delivery of clean plants to users.
<b>High Throughput Sequencing (HTS) Studies</b>	<b>If ‘for the express pursuit of unknown or novel pathogens for purposes of academic study’.</b> 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 more aligns with basic research.
<b>DNA Fingerprinting</b>	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 RFP.
<b>Diagnostics when not directly connected with the mission of NCPN</b>	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.
<b>G-2 Foundation support</b>	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.
<b>Surveys</b>	Network resources may not be used for pathogen surveys in plant

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<b>NON-FUNDED ACTIVITIES</b>	
	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 to help ensure for knowledge on the foundations pathogen status.
<b>State Nursery Certification Programs.</b>	The Development and Support of State Nursery Certification Programs. Such support is available through other parts of the Plant Protection Act, Section 7721.
<b>Construction</b>	though the Network will consider appropriate retrofitting of existing facilities to meet quarantine compliance or otherwise support of the program mission.
<b>Replace existing Center or program funding with public funds</b>	Funding requests that are intended to <b><u>replace existing Center or program funding with public funds</u></b> thus resulting in the redirection of those already existing funds from the applicant that might have been used for the furtherance of activities supporting diagnostics, therapeutics, or the establishment of foundation plantings.

**Part II. Award Information**

<b>AWARD INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Total Available Funds</b>	Anticipated at a base of not less than \$5,000,000. The actual amount to be made available is dependent on the actual amount of funding made available through USDA for the purposes of the Network, including its Cooperative Agreements program.
<b>Funding Uncertainties</b>	NCPN's Cooperative Agreement program funding under this Request for Proposals is only available in FY 2022. If during FY 2022 it is determined that the Network's funding is not available for obligation by USDA for the fiscal year (FY), USDA is under no obligation to fund any proposals submitted under this Request for Proposals.
<b>Competitive Process</b>	The Network's Cooperative Agreement Program conducted under this 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.
<b>Anticipated Award Funding Amounts</b>	Approximately \$10,000 - \$1,250,000
<b>Anticipated Award Start Date</b>	July 1, 2022
<b>Performance Period</b>	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.
<b>Type of Assistance Instrument</b>	Cooperative Agreement; or an Interagency Agreement if the cooperator is another Federal agency.
<b>USDA/APHIS Role</b>	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). They provide advice to the NCPN Governing Board and project coordinators, track funding, receive and review progress reports, offer comments and suggestions, track project performance, and meet with cooperators as often as necessary to ensure progress in accomplishing the goals of the project, identifying obstacles, and resolving concerns.
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### **Part III. Eligibility Information**

#### **Eligible Applicants**

Land Grant Universities, Non Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, Non-Profit Organizations, State Governments and Federal Government Agencies with preference given to institutions or agencies with existing and established facilities and capability to conduct plant pathogen molecular diagnostics, apply therapies, and establish and maintain foundation/nuclear blocks of clean plant material.

Priority shall be given to applicants that work through established Network governing bodies to prioritize components of their proposals and harmonize their proposals with others in their respective networks. Proposals must be submitted by authorized representatives of the institution or agency applying for assistance and the proposals must be in the format described in Part V.B.

Authorized representatives from institutions or agencies whose projects are considered for funding will be required to complete or adjust the application for Federal Assistance, including all associated forms required by USDA, and, if funded, sign a Cooperative Agreement or other appropriate instrument.

### **Part IV. Proposal and Work Plan Submission Process**

#### **A. Network Specialty Crop Governing Body Coordination Requirement**

All applicants for funding under the Network’s Cooperative Agreements program should show evidence that their proposals have been submitted to an appropriate Network governing body for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination with other proposals submitted covering the same crop. 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. 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. Electronic Proposal Submissions**

All applicants must individually submit their respective work plans and associated budget plans directly to the National Clean Plant (NCPN) network at [ncpn@usda.gov](mailto:ncpn@usda.gov). An exception is where one or more institutions choose to apply for consideration as a sub-grantee to a principal applicant. In such a case however, work plans and budget submissions traceable down to individual sub-grantee institutions are encouraged.

Applicants also have the option of sending paper renditions of the work plans and financial plans to NCPN at the address in Part VIII ‘Agency Contacts’ of this Request for Proposals. Paper submissions of material, however, are no longer recommended.

### **C. Proof of Proposal Coordination**

Network governing bodies may choose to submit all cooperator proposals under their review as a single package to the Agency Contacts listed below. The specialty crop governing bodies may also request that individual applicants directly submit their proposals electronically at [ncpn@usda.gov](mailto:ncpn@usda.gov) or to the Agency Contacts so listed (Part VIII).

In situations where the Network governing body chooses to forward all proposals submitted to it for networking, prioritization, harmonization, and coordination, 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. In situations where 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 affecting proposals where more than one Network Governing Body is relevant to a proposal, evidence of coordination and support by all relevant specialty crop clean plant networks must be submitted with the proposal. Such proposals may be coordinated and submitted to the Network by any relevant specialty crop clean plant network with necessary evidence of coordination and support by other such relevant bodies or as otherwise provided for in this Request for Proposals.

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.

### **D. Pre-Proposal Review and Prioritization – A Suggested Model**

Based on the experiences of the Network’s prior Cooperative Agreements process, the Network’s Governing Board makes the following recommendation for continuance of an improved proposal review process in this FY 2022 NCPN Cooperative Agreements program. 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 have involvement 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, regarding their thoughts, 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 also be engaged in a process of “prioritization.” 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. If NCPN funding is insufficient, this process of prioritization will provide the Network’s Governing Board with crucial information “across all proposals” as to what the priority ‘components’ were for each of them. The Network’s Governing Board sees this as a truly ‘harmonizing’ process, honoring the submissions of each potential applicant and suggesting which components of each proposal are key consideration priorities.

For proposals including support for Advanced or New Technologies, Education/Outreach, Economics, Quality Management, and other 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 to applicants by relevant NCPN Governing Bodies for submission by applicants to NCPN as an appendix to their application for support.

## **Part V. Proposal and Submission Information**

### **A. E-Mail Proposals**

Applicants should submit their proposals and any other associated documents to NCPN directly at [NCPN@usda.gov](mailto:NCPN@usda.gov). Specifically, for this initial application stage, applications should contain:

1. Work Plan
2. Financial Plan
3. Evidence of compliance with the Pre-Proposal Review Process
4. Optional Appendix – Individual entity business plan
5. Optional Appendix – Harmonized crop business plan (if applicable)
6. Any other Appendices as may be appropriate at the discretion of the applicant

### **B. Paper Proposals**

No longer recommended. But if for some reason an applicant is required or compelled to do so, a paper application may be submitted to the address indicated under Part VII, Agency Contact, Raleigh, NC office.

C. Content and Form of Proposal Submission – Proposals / Work Plans

**National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)  
Cooperative Agreement Program**

<b>WORK PLAN FORMAT</b>	
<b>Cover Page</b>	<p>Name of Project:                      One or Two Sentence Project Description:                      Principal Investigator:                      Name of Entity:                      Address:                      City, State, Zip:                      Office Phone:                      Cell Phone:                      Fax:                      E-mail Address (Principal Investigator):</p> <p><b>Name, Title, and Signature of the Official Authorized by the Institution/Agency to Apply for Federal Financial Assistance:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p>
<p><i>Please complete each section explained on the following pages and maintain the numbering format on your proposal.</i></p>	
<b>Content</b>	<p><i>Work Plans (Proposals) should be brief, focused, and specific to the needs of the applicant as transposed against the mission of the National Clean Plant Network. After a brief explanation of applicant purpose, mission, and methods if applicable, the focus of the work plan should be on clarity surrounding the details and specifics of the particular requests of NCPN <u>including</u> clarity on anticipated ‘deliverables resulting from NCPN support.</i></p>
<b>Work Plan Length</b>	<p><i>Excluding the cover page, applicants <u>shall not exceed 15 pages (font 11, single spaced)</u> in Work Plan length <u>for proposals covering a single crop</u>. For <u>each additional crop the Work Plan may be increased by 5 pages up to a maximum not to exceed 40 pages for 4 covered crops or more</u>. This limitation does not include any Federal application forms or proposal cover letters or appendices.</i></p>
<b>Appendices</b>	<p><i>Applicants may submit documents as Appendices in support of their Work Plan in addition to the Work Plan page limitation. However, any submitted Appendices over 20 pages total may be assessed at the discretion of NCPN. This limitation does not include any letters and support information regarding process compliance or any submitted program or unit Business Plans, or Annual Entity Reports.</i></p>

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<b>Format</b>	<i>It is very important that applicants keep to the suggested format for visual consistency in proposals; with any non-format data such as spreadsheets, charts, or graphs being submitted as Appendices.</i>
<b>Work Plan Table of Contents</b>	<i>Applicants may also include a Work Plan “Table of Contents” (also excluded from the page maximum count for Work Plan length).</i>
<b>Financial Spreadsheet Template</b>	<p><b><u>Applicants are highly encouraged</u></b> to also submit their budget requests both in written form as part of the requested work plan and as an electronic Financial Plan spreadsheet. A spreadsheet template is available to applicants as a service to help formulate budget needs efficiently and to further help inform and facilitate the NCPN Governing Boards work in assessing the content of proposals.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Work plan and financial plan spreadsheet templates are available at the NCPN Federal website mentioned here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/ppa-ppdmdpp/sa_ncpn">https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/ppa-ppdmdpp/sa_ncpn</a></p>

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**APHIS Agreement No:** *(To be Completed by USDA for Successful Applicants)*  
**Other Identifying Numbers:** *(Any Applicant Desired Program Identification Numbers)*

<b>FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022 WORK PLAN</b>			
<i>Name and Location of the Party Applying for Support</i>			
<b>Name of Project Being Supported</b>	<i>Provide a brief one or two sentence description of the proposed project for which funding is being sought.</i>		
<b>Performance Period:</b>	<i>Suggested time from the beginning to the end of the agreement. The timeframe should not exceed 1 year.</i>		
<b>Introduction and Background – Focusing of a Relevant Problem or Need Only:</b>	<p><i>Briefly indicate what relevant need or problem within the applicant’s mission area requires a solution in carrying out a public purpose of support or stimulation.</i></p> <p><i>Important Change: Unless an applicant is new and unknown to NCPN, basic applicant background, program history, project orientation, and extensive scientific or administrative methodologies are no longer required or requested. In this section and in the portions of the work plan below, keep proposals focused on:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) what are you doing,</i></li> <li><i>2) why is it important for the NCPN program to provide support,</i></li> <li><i>3) how are you <u>generally</u> going to go about your task (keep this portion brief)</i></li> <li><i>4) what are your anticipated ‘outcomes’, and</i></li> <li><i>5) what is the impact on industry or your other stakeholders.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Program introductions, backgrounds, general applicant information, resumes, and reading lists are discouraged.</i></p>		
<b>Alignment with the USDA and NCPN Strategic Goals and Objectives:</b>	<b>USDA Goal 2, Objective 3:</b> <i>Protect agricultural health by preventing and mitigating the spread of agricultural pests and diseases.</i>	YES	NO
	<b>APHIS/PPQ Goal 1, Objective 1.1:</b> <i>Strengthen PPQ’s pest exclusion system; by creating a more integrated and effective pest exclusion system.</i>	YES	NO
	<b>NCPN Goals and Objectives:</b> <i>Please refer to Part 1, Section C of this request for Proposals and indicate the NCPN Goals and Objectives being addressed under the submitted work plan for NCPN support. List the NCPN Goal and NCPN Objective (Repeat as often as appropriate)</i>		
<b>Stakeholder Participation and Industry Focus</b>	<p><b>A. Stakeholder Participation:</b> <i>Provide a very brief indication of the organizations collaboratively involved with the applicant in activities carried out through this proposal and explain their involvement.</i></p>		

<b>FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022 WORK PLAN</b>	
<i>Name and Location of the Party Applying for Support</i>	
<b>Stakeholder Participation and Industry Focus (cont)</b>	<p><b>B. Industry Focus:</b></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
<b>Project Goals and Objectives</b>	<p><i>Information here should be hinged to the applicant listed NCPN Goals and Objectives being addressed under the work plan. List or explain what results or benefits will be derived from this effort. Note that these outcomes will be the major building blocks upon which the milestones in the next section are based.</i></p>
<b>Project Milestones</b>	<p><u><i>Milestones, Time Tables and Performance Measures:</i></u> <i>Applicants must establish and present milestones (key activities) with target dates for accomplishing each. The milestones must correlate to the project’s objectives and desired results. The proposal must provide specific measurable objectives in the proposal, including initial implementation goals. This information will be a priority in the evaluation of the proposal. The specific performance measures will be used to evaluate the success of the project. Include how each element will be measured. It is critical for the proposal to have well defined performance measures.</i></p>
<b>Plan of Action</b>	<p><i>Provide a brief but comprehensive description of the program proposed for funding. <u>Specific methodologies are no longer requested;</u> just a brief description of: 1) what is being done, 2) why it’s being done, 3) basically how it’s being done, 4) the anticipated ‘outcomes’ and impacts on industry and stakeholders, and 5) link the budget request specifically to ‘what is being done’.</i></p> <p><b><i>Important:</i></b> <i>Information on specific methodologies are encouraged <u>only</u> to the extent that they are necessary to clarify ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘how’ ‘outcomes, and ‘linkage to budgets’ or to better justify the request for resources. Any such submitted information <u>must</u> be kept brief and to the point.</i></p>
<b>Anticipated Accomplishments – IMPORTANT</b>	<p><i>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. The anticipated accomplishments or ascribed performance measures <u>should include ‘outcome’ based information</u> and, if applicable, indicate the quantity and type of deliverables anticipated <u>as an ‘outcome-based’ deliverable to industry</u> under this project as well as the impact of producing and providing those deliverables.</i></p> <p><u><i>Important Change:</i></u> <i>In seeking past work plans, NCPN requested information on ‘Quantifiable Deliverables’ that were ‘output’ based instead of ‘outcome’ oriented. This included information such as number of plant introductions processed, the number and types of tests conducted, or the number of accessions or plants subjected to therapy.</i></p>

<b>FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022 WORK PLAN</b>	
<i>Name and Location of the Party Applying for Support</i>	
<b>Anticipated Accomplishments – IMPORTANT (cont.)</b>	<p><i>Though important, NCPN is now moving forward and towards understanding the ‘outcome’ associated with such actions. As such, <u>all stated NCPN project deliverable should do one or both of the following only:</u></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Indicate both which one(s) and how specific ‘Outcomes’, ‘Action Items’ or ‘Timelines’ specified in the NCPN Strategic Plan FY 2021-2025 ‘Appendix’ are being satisfied.</i></li> <li><i>2. Indicate a quantifiable ‘industry focused outcome’ to actions undertaken <u>and</u> its associated impact on stakeholders. Examples might include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>○ Number of New Releases (accessions) provided to Industry or other users</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>▪ Impacts on industry or stakeholders</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><i>○ Amount of Material Planted or Maintained in Foundations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>▪ Impacts on industry or stakeholders</i></li> </ul> </li> <li><i>○ Number and Types of Clean Plant Units Distributed</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>▪ Impacts on industry or stakeholders</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<b>Budget Plan</b>	
<i>Provide budget details that reflect the anticipated expenditures for the project presented (or that will be presented) on Standard Form 424A and expand on the details either in the form of a descriptive budget narrative or as suggested below or in the form of an electronic spreadsheet as suggested elsewhere in this ‘Request for Proposals’:</i>	
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<p><b><i>Salaries and Fringe Benefits</i></b>  <i>(Applicants <u>must</u> specify type of personnel and number of positions and salary and number of hours devoted to NCPN. If more than one crop is being serviced, either specifically indicated or pro-rate the costs among the crop categories.)</i></p>	\$
<p><b><i>Equipment</i></b>  <i>(Specify the type, number, and cost of each piece of equipment requested. If more than one crop is being serviced, specify or pro-rate the costs among the crop categories.)</i></p>	\$
<p><b><i>Supplies</i></b>  <i>Indicate, in general terms only, the kinds of supplies for which support is being sought. If more than one crop is being serviced, specify or pro-rate the costs among the crop categories.</i></p>	\$

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<b>Budget Plan</b>	
<b>Travel</b> <i>(Specifically indicate if travel is associated with servicing the diagnostics, therapeutics, and foundational needs of the project.)</i>	\$
<b>Travel</b> <i>(Indicate separately if travel support is being sought directly to attend NCPN Governing Body meetings; specifying the crop being serviced.)</i>	\$
<b>Travel</b> <i>(Indicate separately if travel support is being sought to service any NCPN Special Initiative; specifying (if known) the events for which support is being sought.)</i>	\$
<b>Printing/Publications</b>	\$
<b>Contracts and Other Services</b>	\$
<b>Other Costs (must be specified)</b>	\$
<b>TOTAL OF DIRECT COSTS</b>	\$
<b>Indirect Costs</b> <i>See additional information on indirect costs below</i>	\$
<b>TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST</b>	\$
<b>*Cooperator’s Share as Manifest in Matching Funds</b>	\$

### Budget

Budgets must include only those costs that are allocable and allowable per relevant OMB guidance available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants\\_circulars.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_circulars.html)  
Budgets must be complete, with sufficient details, and clear enough 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.

### Matching Funds

*\*Indicate any cost-sharing, matching contributions, or an enumeration of other funds available for program operations in addition to NCPN requested support here in budget fashion similar to cost categories above.*

### Indirect Costs – 15% limitation

*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.***

**NOTE:** *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).*

<b>Principal Investigator and Other Contact Information (Including APHIS/PPQ)</b>	
<b>Institution Name:</b>	
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	<i>Provide the name and all contact information for the primary cooperator contact person(s).</i>
<b>Grants and Agreements Contact:</b>	<i>Provide the name and all contact information for the cooperator agreements/grants/budget contact person(s) needed to facilitate the agreement through the cooperator’s process.</i>
<b>Other Persons Crucial to this Program:</b>	<i>Provide the name and all contact information for other persons crucial to this program needed to facilitate the agreement through the cooperator’s process.</i>
<b>USDA, APHIS, PPQ – Program Contacts:</b>	
<p><u>The NCPN ‘Raleigh, NC’ Office:</u>                      Erich Rudyj, Coordinator                      USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Science and Technology, National Clean Plant Network                      920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200                      Raleigh, NC 27606                      Phone: (919) 855-7447                      E-Mail : <a href="mailto:ncpn@usda.gov">ncpn@usda.gov</a></p>	<p><u>The NCPN ‘Riverdale, MD’ Office :</u>                      Ms. Tammy Kolt, Administrative Support                      USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Science and Technology,                      National Clean Plant Network                      4700 River Road – Unit 152, Riverdale, MD                      20737                      Phone: (301) 851-2160                      E-Mail: <a href="mailto:ncpn@usda.gov">ncpn@usda.gov</a></p>

**D. Application Forms – Subsequent ezFedGrants Process**

The initial application to NCPN for funding recommendations, with a deadline to NCPN as indicated in Part V Section D below must include a work plan, a financial plan as indicated in this Request for Proposals as well as any appropriate support documentation such as information issued under authority of an NCPN Specialty Crop Governing Body indicating participation in the recommended pre-proposal review process.

Applicants subsequently recommended by the NCPN Governing Board, as further captured in a USDA APHIS Plant Protection Act Spending Plan for NCPN for FY 2022, for further consideration will then be sent a link to the ezFedGrants website to conclude the process.

**E. Submission Dates and Times, including Other Relevant Dates**

<b>RFP Open Period:</b>	The Program will accept proposals for <u>12 weeks</u> ; from June 7, 2021 and until August 27, 2021
<b>Deadline for Submission of Proposals:</b>	11:59 pm (U.S. Hawaiian Time Zone) August 27, 2021 for submission either to the NCPN email address at <a href="mailto:NCPN@usda.gov">NCPN@usda.gov</a> or by mail. If e-mailed, the package must be received by USDA/APHIS by the deadline. The e-mail address to use is: <a href="mailto:NCPN@usda.gov">NCPN@usda.gov</a> . If mailed with an appropriate carrier, the package must be postmarked by the deadline.
<b>Allocation of Funds:</b>	Unless otherwise indicated, funds will be allocated for a 12-month period beginning on the date indicated in the Notice of Award.

## Part VI. Proposal Review Information

### A. Criteria

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

<b>Goal Alignment</b>	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.
<b>Stakeholder Participation and Focus</b>	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.
<b>Governing Bodies and Harmonization</b>	Networking is one of the hallmarks of NCPN, in part manifest 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.
<b>Overall Merits of Projects</b>	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 briefly but thoughtfully and impactfully provide for the requested information.

### 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 as the panel to participate in the evaluation and recommendation process of proposals. The panel composed of Federal and State employees make the primary recommendation of projects for funding and submit 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 initiative.

## Part VII. Agency Contacts

<p><u>The NCPN ‘Raleigh, NC’ Office :</u>                  Erich S. Rudyj, Coordinator                  USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Science and Technology,                  National Clean Plant Network                  920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200                  Raleigh, NC 27606                  E-Mail : <a href="mailto:ncpn@usda.gov">ncpn@usda.gov</a></p>	<p><u>The NCPN ‘Riverdale, MD’ Office :</u>                  Ms. Tammy Kolt, Administrative Support                  USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Science and Technology,                  National Clean Plant Network                  4700 River Road – Unit 152                  Riverdale, MD 20737                  E-Mail : <a href="mailto:ncpn@usda.gov">ncpn@usda.gov</a></p>
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## Appendix 1

### A. Criteria for new crops seeking entry into the USDA National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)

#### 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](mailto: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

<i>The Network is currently comprised of seven crop taxa organized as follows:</i>	
<b>Fruit and Nut Trees</b>	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>
<b>Grapes</b>	All fruit and ornamentals in the genus <i>Vitis</i> , including the muscadine grapes.
<b>Hops</b>	<i>Humulus lupulus</i> and its associated varieties.
<b>Berries</b>	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).
<b>Citrus</b>	Including members of the genus <i>Citrus</i> and related genera in the Rutaceae as determined by the needs of industry.
<b>Sweet Potato</b>	<i>Ipomoea batatas</i> , both edible and ornamental varieties.
<b>Roses</b>	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.

**FY 2022 - Request for Proposals – NCPN**

<b>New Crop Entry Criteria:</b>	
<u><i>Specialty Crop Requirement:</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Please see <a href="https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop">https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop</a> for more information.</li> </ul>
<u><i>Prohibited Crops:</i></u>	<p>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.</p>
<u><i>Applicant Entity Eligibility:</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Financial support from the Network is limited to the following entities that serve as clean plant centers or program cooperators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Land-Grant Universities and Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture</li> <li>▪ State Agricultural Experiment Stations and State or Local Governments</li> <li>▪ Non-Profit Organizations</li> <li>▪ Federal Agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<u><i>Industry Focus:</i></u>	<p>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.</p>
<u><i>Existing Facilities:</i></u>	<p>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.</p>
<u><i>Program Circumscription and Operations:</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul>
<u><i>New Crop Self-Advancement and Readiness:</i></u>	<p>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.</p>

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<b>New Crop Entry Criteria:</b>	
<u>Program Governance and Administration:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ The forming Governing Body must have a Chair, Vice-Chair, and an Administrative Coordinator.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ 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 as appropriate.</li> </ul>
<u>Program Clean Plant Center Inclusiveness:</u>	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.
<u>Propagatively Borne Pathogens:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Network program funding primarily targets propagatively-transmitted plant pathogens (graft-transmissible plant pathogens) found in specialty crops that are vegetatively propagated.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul>
<u>Characterization of Pathogen Threat:</u>	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.
<u>Phytosanitary Trade Implications:</u>	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.
<u>Characterization of Farm-Gate Value:</u>	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

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	products.
<u><i>National Clonal Germplasm Repositories:</i></u>	Priority is given for those 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.
<u><i>Nursery Certification Programs:</i></u>	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.
<u><i>NCPN Program Support:</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCPN funds should not be used to replace other sources of funding already ascribed to a program.</li> <li>○ NCPN support should be considered supplemental to other streams of funding already supporting a new specialty crop clean plant initiative.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> </ul>
<u><i>Prohibition on the Use of NCPN Funds:</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NCPN funds may not be used to support certain activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Routine diagnostics or other activities to support initiatives other than those that are core to the mission of the Network.</li> <li>▪ Construction projects.</li> <li>▪ Nursery certification programs.</li> <li>▪ Basic research initiatives.</li> <li>▪ General surveys for plant pathogens in nurseries, grower’s fields, similar situations, or in the environment.</li> <li>▪ Trueness-to-type plant evaluations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

