

Limited Submission Review Instructions & Scoring Matrix

USDA Equipment Grant Program (EGP)

Principal Investigator(s):

BACKGROUND & INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWERS

A “limited submission” refers to a grant program that places a limitation on the number of proposal applications a single eligible entity can submit each cycle. The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) has a process in place to allow for an internal competition among interested PIs to determine which application(s) will move forward. Once a limited submission opportunity is identified, an internal call for pre-proposals is sent out to potential PIs. Those interested in being considered for full submission are required to submit a pre-proposal (ranging from one to five pages, depending on the type of program and sponsor) by a specified date. If more applications are received than the institution is allowed to submit to the sponsor, the applications are moved forward to a peer review process in order to make final selection(s).

That peer review process is what you are taking part in now. While we do want you to be aware that **the proposals you review here are *not* finalized and will be expanded before they are submitted to the sponsor**, we ask that you be as critical in your review as you would be if these applications were moving forward to a sponsor now. We are **especially interested in your feedback on weaknesses of the applications and where improvements can be made** either before they move forward through submission to this program or others.

If you are reviewing more than one application for this same program, we ask that you use the applications as a reference for one another in your scoring, knowing that the pool will be ranked based on scores received to determine which move(s) forward to the sponsor.

A final reminder for foreign nationals before you proceed:

We want to ensure that you are eligible to receive compensation for this service. Visa type determines your eligibility for honoraria. Most common visa types eligible for honoraria: B-1, B-2, F-1 (with approval from current school/employer and additional documentation provided), J-2, WB-WT. Any visa holders not eligible for honoraria pay outside of their employing organization may NOT be eligible for payment from UTSA. Further guidance from UTSA on allowable reimbursements for most frequently used visas can be found here:

<https://international.utsa.edu/visas/guide-to-most-used-visas/index.html>. If you believe you may not be eligible for honoraria, please notify ORAU staff immediately.

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SCORING

Selection of applications to be submitted to the USDA Equipment Grant Program (EGP) will be based on a 5-point scoring scale for criteria given below.

No. of applications allowed per institution this cycle: **Three (3)**

Project Types: (1) Fundamental Research, (2) Applied Research

- Ratings should be given in whole numbers (not decimals).
- Reviewers should consider not only the relative number of strengths and weaknesses, but also the importance of these strengths and weaknesses to the criteria or to the overall impact when determining a score.
 - For example, a major strength may outweigh many minor and correctable weaknesses

Minor weakness: easily addressable weakness, does not substantially lessen impact

Moderate weakness: lessens impact

Major weakness: Severely limits impact

SCORING RUBRIC

Description
Poor – No evidence or information provided
Fair – Minimal evidence; limited potential; vague; weak concepts; limited likelihood of success; limited in innovative thinking; lacks sufficient information
Good – Some evidence; partially developed concepts; some potential for effectiveness and success; some inconsistencies; needs work; some innovation present; requires additional information/clarification
Very Good – Convincing concepts with enough examples of evidence to indicate a good chance for success; clear and complete; innovative
Excellent – Excellent concepts; exceptional evidence; well-thought out with an extremely high likelihood of success; exemplary; highly innovative

Borrowed from State of Ohio's Straight A Fund Application Scoring & Evaluation Process, Criteria & Rubrics.

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SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below based on the **Scoring Rubric** above, and give a separate score for each within the **Evaluation Scores** table below.

<p>1. Innovativeness and Effectiveness (40pts) Likelihood that the project will have an impact upon, and advance the quality of Research, Training, and Extension Activities by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include scientific merit, institutional long-range goals, alignment with USDA’s Goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the equipment need, innovation, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus.</p>
<p>Strengths: Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>2. Proposed Approach (20pts) Soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, and an abbreviated plan of operation, timeline, management plan, and expected products and results.</p>
<p>Strengths: Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (30pts) The institution's capability acquire, install, and operate the equipment and the degree to which the equipment will strengthen its research, research training, and/or extension capacity. This criterion also includes the degree to which the equipment will broaden the participation in agricultural science and engineering research by women, underrepresented minorities and the quality and extent of documented graduate and/or undergraduate students’ involvement and training in using the equipment.</p>
<p>Strengths: Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Click here to enter text.</p>
<p>4. Key Personnel (10pts)</p>

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Adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out experiments or activities using the equipment.
<p>Strengths: Click here to enter text.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Click here to enter text.</p>

EVALUATION SCORES

Criteria	Your Score
1. Innovativeness and Effectiveness	/40 pts
2. Proposed Approached	/20pts
3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building	/30pts
4. Key Personnel	/10pts
TOTAL	/100pts