Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Pre-Proposal Preparation and Submission, Award Notification 8/3/06

(FAQ also addresses common mistakes made during both the preparation and submission of pre-proposals)

A

Award Notifications

When will I know the funding outcome of my submitted pre-proposal(s)?

Award Notifications are normally distributed in January. Notifications are sent directly to the Principal Investigator (PI). The notification will include the USWBSI's funding recommendation for all pre-proposals submitted by the PI.

C

Common mistakes made during preparation and submission of pre-proposals.

Budget Page – Intent to attend Forum not indicated (Travel section (F) of Budget Page).

PI must indicate his/her intention to attend the USWBSI's forum to be held during the Award Year by checking either 'Yes' or 'No' in Section F.

Budget Page – Indirect Cost Rate (IDC) rate not entered into Section J.

PI must enter IDC rate in designated area in Section J.

Cover Page – IDC rate not included in Box 9.

PI must include IDC rate next to the 'Requested Amount' in Box 9.

Cover Page – no designation, or multiple designations, of Research Area(s) (Box 16).

PI must designate one research area for which the submitted pre-proposals best fits. If proposed project falls under the new Integrated/Interdisciplinary Research (IIR), the PI should mark the IIR selection with an 'X', and then list in designated area the related research areas using their acronyms.

Cover Page – all currently funded USWBSI projects not listed in Box 13.

PI should list all currently (FY06) funded USWBSI research projects regardless of their relationship to the submitted pre-proposal.

Collaborative Arrangements - letters of intent missing from pre-proposals

If the proposed work involves collaborative arrangements, letters of intent from collaborators must be included with the submitted pre-proposals. The letter of intent must include specific details describing the services the collaborator will provide.

Multiple copies of pre-proposal not sent with pre-proposal when it contains colored graphics (images, charts, etc.)

Submitted pre-proposals are reproduced only in black/white for the review process. If the PI wishes the reviewers see his/her pre-proposal with colored graphics, multiple copies must be submitted; one signed original plus 15 copies. Copies should not be stapled.

Project Description – text exceeds page limit (5 pages), and/or entire Project Description (text and tables/graphics) exceeds 10 pages.

The page limit for the Project Description is 10 pages total (up to five pages for text plus additional pages for graphics i.e. tables, images, graphs). When graphics or tables are inserted throughout the text rather than at the end of the Project Description, PIs sometimes exceed the text limitation (five full pages). The total amount of text in the Project Description can be less than five pages, but it can not total more than five pages (even if graphics are included throughout text). The Project Description includes the following sections: Title, Introduction, Rationale and Significance, Research Methods and Materials (includes expected results).

Signatures missing on Cover Page and/or Budget Page

Pre-proposals sometimes get submitted without all required signatures. Principal Investigators must sign both the cover page and the budget page. Co-Investigators must sign the cover page (faxed copies are acceptable). If proposing institution requires pre-proposals be approved by an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) (i.e. grant office or office of sponsored programs, etc.), the AOR is required to sign the budget page.

Vita and Publication List - exceeds maximum page limit per scientist

A limit of four-pages is allowed for both (i.e. combined) the Vita and Publication List of each individual listed in Section 10 on the Cover Page.

Confidentiality

How is my submitted pre-proposal handled so that confidentiality is maintained?

Pre-proposals submitted to the USWSBSI are treated as confidential documents. Pre-proposals are only viewed by the administrative staff of the Networking & Facilitation (responsible party for processing, and facilitating the review of pre-proposals), and Reviewers (USWBSI Executive Committee (EC) and responsible Research Area Committee (RAC)). The Reviewers are instructed prior to their review that the content of all pre-proposals are confidential and thus should be handled accordingly. The NFO securely stores original pre-proposals for at least two years.

Current and Pending Support

Who should submit a Current and Pending Support Page?

A separate Current and Pending Support page should be included in the submitted pre-proposal for each individual listed on the ‘Cover Page’ under Box 10 (i.e. PI and all Co-PIs).

What is the difference between the two columns with subheadings "Total $ amount" and "PI Allocation.”

Grant awards may be divided among Investigators (PI and CO-PI), whereby the Total amount of the award may be different then the amount allocated each investigator (including PI). These columns should be used to indicate this type of scenario.

D

Deviation Authorization

What is the process for requesting authorization of a deviation from the FY07 RFP Pre-proposal preparation instructions?

The NFO must authorize any deviations from FY07 RFP instructions in advance of pre-proposal submission. Deviations may be authorized by receiving written approval from the NFO Director (dvs@uky.edu) or Manager (scabusa@scabusa.org). Requests for deviation of guidelines should be submitted in writing via e-mail to either the Director or the Manager of the NFO (e-mail address' above) prior to submission of the pre-proposal.

Duration of Proposed Work

Can the duration of the proposed work be multi-year?

Awards are given on a one-year basis. Therefore pre-proposals should only include goals (i.e. objectives) which can be accomplished within the award period (one-year).

E

Electronic Format Submission

Can I submit my pre-proposal in electronic format?

With the exception of PIs submitting pre-proposals to the CBCC research area (participating in a beta test of a new on-line submission process), pre-proposals must be submitted in paper format with original signatures.

I

Indirect Costs Rate

What is the Indirect Cost Rate (IDC) for pre-proposals submitted to the USWBSI?

USDA-ARS is the agency which funds the USWBSI recommended research projects. Although USDA-ARS does not set a limit on the amount of indirect costs that can be allowed, the USWBSI (responsible for the review of pre-proposals) encourages institutions to set a rate limit of 5%. Many institutions (i.e. grants office or office of sponsored programs) have complied with the recommended amount. It is recommended that PIs consult their institution's granting office before submitting pre-proposal(s).

P

Pre-Proposal Sections

Cover Page – Do I need to complete all sections (i.e. boxes)?

Sections (i.e. boxes) 1 through 16 must be completed with the exception of Section 13. This section applies only to those PIs who received funding from the USWBSI in FY06. All individuals listed under Section 10 must sign the Cover Page.

'Summary of Progress for Ongoing Related Projects' - What information should be included in this section?

The 'Summary of Progress for Ongoing Related Projects' applies to progress the PI has made during the current year of funding (i.e. what has been accomplished since the FY06 funding was received). The FY05 Final Performance Reports cover the entire grant year for FY05 which ended in April (approx.). Note that this is a summary and is limited to one page. Detailed data should be included in the 'Introduction' and/or 'Research Methods'.

R

References to Project Description

What information should be included in the "References to Project Description" section of the proposal?

Reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal/book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the Website address also should be identified. PIs must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal.

While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only, and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the project description.

Returns

For what reasons does the USWBSI/NFO return a pre-proposal?

Pre-proposals may not be considered by USWBSI for the following reasons. The proposal:

1. does not meet USWBSI pre-proposal preparation requirements, such as page limitations, or formatting instructions as specified in the FY07 RFP Guidelines; or

2. does not meet an announced pre-proposal deadline date (and time, where specified).

T

Tuition Remission

Can tuition remission costs for graduate students be included in the proposed budget?

Tuition remission is **permitted** under USDA-ARS **extramural agreements** with any type of recipient organization (i.e. universities). Funding awarded to PIs (only those not affiliated with USDA-ARS) who submitted pre-proposals to the USWBSI comes in the form of Extramural Agreements. If tuition remission is budgeted as a direct cost, it should be included in the "Other Direct Costs" category of the Budget Page (Section H).