

FAQs for the Gulf of Mexico Program Farmer to Farmer Cooperative Agreements 2018 RFP
(EPA-GM-2018-FARMER)

Question: Do the funds only apply to existing farmer led programs or are they available to assist in developing one as long as all the other requirements are met?

Answer: The application will be ranked based on the entity's history of working with farmers and farmer led organizations as indicated in the ranking sheet. The RFP emphasizes the importance of applicants already having experience working with farmers.

Question: Does the proposal have to be submitted by a farmer's association to the EPA?

Answer: A proposal may be submitted by any eligible entity as identified in Section III. The proposal will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A. which includes "the extent to which the proposal ... demonstrates a successful history of working with farmers to implement demonstration projects with results."

Question: The RFP indicates a preference of innovative, unproven, etc. concepts to improving water quality, but also is results oriented requiring at least a 5% impact on various metrics. My question relates to what would be a better approach to submitting an application:

1. Focus on a proven technology (would know estimated impact on water), but is not implemented at larger scales yet due to newness/unproven methods of delivery?
2. Or Focus on an unproven concept/technology that currently lacks the understanding of its impact on certain WQ parameters?

Answer: Unfortunately, we cannot specifically recommend an approach while the RFP is active. That being said, innovative approaches can include both the options listed. This is because each landowner can have novel situations on their farm/ranch related to things like land use, crop rotations, management planning and other creative management techniques. Using Farmer-to farmer demonstration of that technology/practices can take innovative approaches in communication/demonstration. The project does have to meet a required measure such as a 5% improvement in water quality. The proposals only need some type of innovative/novel component in its delivery.

Question: It states in the RFA that the project must "demonstrate a minimum 5% improvement in at least one water quality parameter in a water body and/or segment by the end of the project period as compared to initial baseline". Does this need to be a measured improvement or can the improvement estimate be modeled based on application of beneficial practices in the chosen geography?

Answer: The 5% improvement does need to be a measured improvement in at least one of the areas where the project is taking place.

Question: Given the funding in the RFA, do you have a sense as to whether or not an applicant should prioritize the 5% reduction over the education an outreach or is there any guidance on this for effort and budgetary management?

Answer: While we cannot specifically recommend an approach while the RFP is active, both the 5% measured improvement (the environmental measure of success) as well as farmer-to-farmer led outreach (outreach measure of success) are required. The proposal needs to address both of these

requirements. There are many approaches that can be proposed and the applicant has to consider the best approaches for their farmer partners.

Question: Are plant nursery operators considered as farmers by EPA? What is the EPA definition of farmland? Does it include 100% forested?

Answer: For this funding opportunity, farmland is land used in the production of food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, and/or other agricultural land uses. Farms that have a USDA Farm number or would be eligible to receive a farm number from the USDA Farm Service Agency are considered farms for this funding opportunity.

Question: Related to the demonstration of a 5% reduction in one water quality parameter, can that be demonstrated by a reduced load/concentration from an edge-of-field location to a water body/segment, or does the improvement need to be measured in the water body/segment?

Answer: The 5% improvement does need to be a measured improvement in the water body/segment.

Question: Are mini-grants (small competitive subcontracts) considered allowable expenses of a proposal under this RFP? Are there certain language/guidelines that should be followed related to proposing mini-grants to farmer-led organizations to conduct project relevant work?

Answer: EPA refers to these as subawards and yet they are allowable expenses. Below is language to help understand the subaward process.

§ 200.92 Subaward.

Subaward means an award provided by a [pass-through entity](#) to a [subrecipient](#) for the [subrecipient](#) to carry out part of a Federal award received by the [pass-through entity](#). It does not include payments to a [contractor](#) or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a [Federal program](#). A [subaward](#) may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the [pass-through entity](#) considers a [contract](#).