

University of Maryland, 2113 Animal Science Building

College Park, Maryland 20742-2317

Telephone: 301-405-6085, FAX: 301-314-9412

e-mail: ssadams@umd.edu

**NRAC FULL PROPOSAL REVIEW FORM**

Project Code/Title: 23-12/ Quantification and Communication of Ecosystem Services of Low Trophic Level Farms

Date Due:

 Please provide the information requested below. Length and detail of responses may vary according to the nature of the proposal. We value your honest appraisal and the format allows you to be as expansive as you deem necessary (feel free to use a separate sheet if necessary). Your comments and scoring will be shared with the principal investigator but with complete anonymity.

1. **Science, Technology, and/or Extension Program Design (technical merit of all aspects of the project, 30%):** Does this proposal use top quality science and/or technology, or demonstrate extension scholarship? Is (are) the PI(s) familiar with relevant previous and contemporary investigations? Are the objectives and hypotheses explicit and clear? Is the experimental plan clear and the statistical design appropriate? Is the methodology described in the plan appropriate to meet the objectives for a research or extension project? Will this work advance understanding of the science and the contemporary problems that the industry faces? If this is an Extension-demonstration or education project do the PI(s) provide an adequate plan to evaluate the success of the effort? Are the proper metrics provided? Can the PI(s) properly assess the short-term, medium-term, long-term outcomes projected?

*Comments:*

The project proposes to address the social acceptance of low trophic level farms by educating the public on ecosystem services provided by the facilities. The scientific attributes of the project are not well established in the proposal. The only citation they provide to justify the approach is a work in review that is not attainable. Merely citing this future publication without providing any substance for it did not allow for adequate evaluation of the methodology. The premise that educating consumers on the value of these systems as providing quantifiable ecosystem services is not well explained. A plan to evaluate the success of the of the effort was not identified in the proposal. No metrics for evaluation were provided. The proposal does not provide any evidence that includes involving consumers as a part of the development of the story map. If the ultimate target of the tool is consumers, how can they be absent from providing input? Note, if consumers are referred to as “stakeholders” in the proposal, use of such a broad term to define consumers lacks specificity. The proposal was not written with clarity and could have been proofread prior to submission.

*Rating: Maximum score = 30*

 Excellent (numerical value = 30) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Very Good (numerical value = 27) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Good (numerical value = 24) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Fair (numerical value = 21) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Poor (numerical value = 18) \_\_\_18\_\_\_\_

1. **Industry Relevance and Probability of Success (30%):** Are the benefits and potential impacts related to industry utility such as increased farm-gate value or grower profitability? Will the project likely provide usable results that can be adopted by the industry in a timely manner? Alternatively, if it is a development effort toward a new technology, will this project’s results increase the team’s capacity to compete for external funds to support the next iteration of research and outreach needed to take the results to application? Will this project create an opportunity for information to be turned over to the industry for refinement and adoption that will eventually become self-sustaining?

*Comments:*

Benefits to industry was not well described in the proposal. The results appear to be available to industry in a timely manner, but not sure how they will be used effectively. Using the story map is described in the proposal as a passive means to engage consumers about the value of ecosystem services.

*Rating: Maximum score = 30*

 Excellent (numerical value = 30) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Very Good (numerical value = 27) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Good (numerical value = 24) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Fair (numerical value = 21) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Poor (numerical value = 18) \_\_\_18\_\_\_\_

1. **Integration with Extension (20%):** Does this work identify the key stakeholders? Stakeholders include those individuals (industries and agencies) not directly involved in the project. Is the extension plan appropriately designed to reach the targeted stakeholders? How will the results of this work address the needs of key stakeholders? Will this project extend our knowledge to all stakeholders? Are the expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts clearly described? Is the budget appropriate for effective integration?

*Comments:*

The work identifies key stakeholders that includes farmers and consumers. The extension plan was not clearly written and difficult to follow.

*Rating: Maximum score = 20*

 Excellent (numerical value = 20) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Very Good (numerical value = 18) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Good (numerical value = 16) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Fair (numerical value = 14) \_\_\_\_14\_\_\_

Poor (numerical value = 12) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Capacity (10%):** Is (are) the principal investigator(s) and specified members of the research (extension) team qualified to conduct the research (program)? Is there industry representation as part of the team? Have the investigators clearly articulated they have adequate facilities and equipment to complete the project. Is the overall budget appropriate given the scope of the project? Is there a reasonable chance the project will be completed on-time?

*Comments:*

The team appears to be qualified to do the research. Industry representation is not present on the team. The proposal appears to show that the team intends to seek review input from industry. The team has access to appropriate facilities and equipment. There is questionable use of $13k ($100/hr) for a data analyst, where the tasks include identifying existing data sources and providing analysis (not well defined). This is a bit expensive for identifying data.

*Rating: Maximum score = 10*

 Excellent (numerical value = 10) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Very Good (numerical value = 9) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Good (numerical value = 8) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Fair (numerical value = 7) \_\_\_7\_\_\_\_

Poor (numerical value = 6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Accountability (10%):** Does the investigator and her/his team have a successful track record of previous NRAC funding being adopted by the industry? Have they leveraged NRAC funding for additional resources to solve bigger problems that can be funded by NRAC alone? Is there evidence that the investigator(s) has (have) an established record indicating a high probability of success on the proposed work? Does the PI(s) have an established record of completing projects on-time meeting the objectives laid out in previous projects? Can this project integrate or be leveraged with funding from other work of the investigator(s)? Does the investigator(s) have a track record that suggests this project will be a good investment for NRAC resources?

*Comments:*

The PI does not have a record of previous funding, 2 members of the team do have previous successful funding and adoption of project results. The team has a good track record of previous research. Not clear if this project can integrate information from other work of the investigators. Do not think this is a good investment as written.

*Rating: Maximum score = 10*

 Excellent (numerical value = 10) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Very Good (numerical value = 9) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Good (numerical value = 8) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Fair (numerical value = 7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Poor (numerical value = 6) \_\_\_\_6\_\_\_

Non-Applicable – First Time Applicant \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**6*.* Total score: \_\_\_63\_\_\_\_**

 **Rating Excellent \_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Very Good \_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Good \_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Fair \_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Poor \_\_X\_\_\_\_**

**Final Recommendation: Must fund \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Fund if resources are available \_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Encourage Resubmission next year \_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_**

 **Do Not Fund \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**7. Strengths:** What are the major strengths of this proposal? If you provided a rating of excellent for any of the categories above but did not comment, would you please share why you rated a particular category as “excellent”?

**8. Weaknesses:** Identify the weaknesses of this proposal. Are there any flaws (design, methodological, etc.) that might seriously compromise the scientific integrity, value and/or validity of the work? If you rated an evaluation area as fair or poor, how might that area of the proposal be improved?

Note:

The overall premise of the project, valuing ecosystem services, is timely and much needed. Reworking the proposal so that it is clearly written and follows a logical progression would help much in presenting the information. It would be helpful to discuss the value and use of the photo data and include information on the confidence of using this data. Also recommend that more information on the value of using a story map to educate consumers in this type of application would help provide a basis for the products. The budgeted amount for a data analyst was not well established in the proposal. Having someone find existing data to use in the story map is not a $100/hr job. Also there is not a good description of the analyses that this position would do.