



GUIDELINES FOR MULTISTATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Developed by the regional associations supporting agInnovation

Approved: September 26, 2000

Updated: October 16, 2006

Updated: October 15, 2026

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GUIDELINES FOR MULTISTATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE

These guidelines are intended to provide recommendations on the organization and operation of multistate research activities.

THE MISSION OF MULTISTATE RESEARCH

The mission of the multistate research program is to support collaborative research among the 1862 Land-grant University State Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES), 1890 Association of Research Directors (ARD), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Cooperative Extension Service (Extension) and other partners to address high-priority issues that are beyond the capacity of a single SAES. By leveraging expertise and resources across states and organizations, the program enables more efficient, comprehensive and impactful research and research outcomes.

[Click here to view the History of the Multistate Research Program](#)

ORGANIZATION OF THE MULTISTATE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The regional associations of SAES (located within 1862 Land-grant universities) and ARD (located within 1890 Land-grant universities) directors, known as [agInnovation](#), serve as coordinating entities for multistate research activities. The intent is to bring institutions and other external partners (industry, federal agencies, non-Land-grant institutions, international partners, etc.) together to foster collaboration and coordination, identify regional research challenges and opportunities that can be addressed through multistate efforts, and facilitate the shared use of resources and expertise. These 5 regional associations are comprised of SAES and ARD directors of the following states and territories:

1. **agInnovation North Central:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.
2. **agInnovation Northeast:** Connecticut (two stations), Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York (two stations), Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.
3. **agInnovation South:** Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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4. **agInnovation West:** Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, The Northern Mariana Islands, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
5. **The Association of 1890 Research Directors** represents: Alabama A&M University, Alcorn State University, Central State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Lincoln University, North Carolina A&T State University, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University, Southern University and A&M College, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University, and West Virginia State University.

To learn more about the regional associations, including their membership, strategic initiatives, multistate research activities, and administrative procedures, please visit the websites below. Region-specific guidance on implementing multistate research activities is available from regional association offices. It's recommended to contact each office directly for instructions and deadlines.

North Central (NC)	https://www.aginnovationnc.org/
Northeast (NE)	https://www.aginnovation-northeast.org/
South (S)	https://aginnovationsouth.org/
West (W)	https://aginnovationwest.org/
Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)	https://wwwcp.umes.edu/ard/

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NIFA

The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated responsibility for administering the multistate research program to NIFA. In addition to implementing regulations, providing program oversight, and funding, NIFA is also responsible for providing a NIFA representative for each multistate research project.

Regional Research Directors' Associations

Regional associations of SAES and ARD directors provide leadership for multistate research by establishing regional priorities, managing research portfolios, and building strategic partnerships. They ensure the quality and relevance of multistate research through peer review and are responsible for approving, overseeing, and managing regional research projects. Regional offices provide guidance throughout project development, implementation, and completion.

SAES and ARD Directors

SAES and ARD directors provide leadership for the multistate research program in their respective states and are responsible for determining the most effective use of federal and non-federal resources to advance multistate research priorities and activities. SAES and ARD directors also authorize their stations' representatives to multistate research activities and document associated expenditures through appropriate reporting mechanisms. The directors also submit research performance progress reports via the NIFA Reporting System (NRS) to NIFA's Planning, Accountability, Reporting, and Staff (PARS). These reports include project initiation, project financial reports, and annual and final progress reports to document their stations' participation in, and contributions to, multistate research projects and activities.

Administrative Advisors (AA)

AAs serve as liaisons among multistate research project members, the regional association, and NIFA. Appointment and qualification to serve is at the discretion of the regional associations for each multistate research project. AAs facilitate communication, provide prospective peer reviewer contacts, as appropriate, ensure compliance with national and regional policies, support effective governance, authorize annual and other meetings, monitor fulfillment of reporting requirements, conduct mid-term evaluations of project progress, and assist committees in carrying out their business effectively.

NIFA Representative

NIFA assigns a representative to each multistate research activity. These representatives provide a national perspective on the activity, offer guidance on federal priorities and funding opportunities, and serve as a key communication link between the project and NIFA.

Regional Multistate Research/Activities Committee (MRC/MAC)

Each regional association maintains a multistate research/activities committee (or subcommittee) responsible for identifying and approving regional priorities to be addressed through multistate research, reviewing and recommending proposed multistate research activities for approval, and evaluating their progress and effectiveness.

PROJECT MEMBERSHIP

Participating members of a Multistate Activity consist of, at a minimum, SAES and/or ARD scientists, with an AA and a NIFA representative as ex-officio members. Many projects also include Extension professionals, non-Land-grant professionals, public- and private-sector partners, and international collaborators. Members are selected based on the expertise needed to achieve the project's goals and objectives.

TYPES OF MULTISTATE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Any of the following activities may be appropriate for integration with Extension and/or Academic Programs. Extension and academic professionals may participate in these activities when

deemed appropriate by the institutional administrator responsible for multistate research, typically the College of Agriculture Dean, Agricultural Experiment Station or ARD Director, or designee. See the [multistate proposal template forms](#) for more details on expectations for each project type.

National Research Support Projects (NRSP)

This type of activity focuses on the development of enabling technologies, providing support (such as collecting, assembling, storing, and distributing materials, resources and information), or sharing facilities needed to address high-priority research needs. While these activities support and enhance research efforts, they are not primarily research projects themselves. NRSPs are eligible for national off-the-top funding of the Multistate Research Fund (MRF). Specific guidelines and instructions for NRSPs, adopted by SAES directors, are found at <https://escop.info/resources/>.

Multistate Research Projects (MRP)

This type of activity involves collaborative, jointly planned research that uses multistate and multidisciplinary approaches. It brings together SAES and/or ARD members, along with other partners such as the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), other colleges and universities, Extension professionals, and representatives from industry and other organizations to address research challenges that affect multiple states and often multiple regions. An MRP proposal must demonstrate the following:

1. Clearly defined, focused, and independent objectives that are not sequential in nature.
2. Direct participation by project members in accomplishing one or more of the stated objectives.
3. Involvement of multiple SAES and/or ARD affiliates and a multidisciplinary team of collaborators.
4. Responsiveness to stakeholder needs and input.
5. Successful review and recommendation through the regional peer-review process.
6. Alignment with NIFA, USDA, agInnovation, and/or regional research priorities and goals.
7. Approval by the appropriate regional association.

Multistate Research Coordinating Committees (CC) and Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERA)

Both ERAs and CCs provide opportunities for scientists, specialists, and others to work cooperatively to solve problems that concern more than one state, share research data, and coordinate research and other types of activities. As integrated activities, the membership of an ERA must incorporate research, Extension, and/or teaching professionals. CCs do not have this requirement but are distinguished by their emphasis on coordination of activities and information exchange.

Rapid Response Research Activity (RRRA, formerly 500-series)

The purpose of an RRRA is to provide a mechanism for addressing urgent crises, emerging challenges, and other time-sensitive opportunities through the multistate research framework and MRF. Activities may range from formally organized research focused on specific objectives to more informal research coordination, collaboration, or information-sharing efforts, depending on the circumstances. To establish an RRRA, a minimum of two SAES, ARD, Extension, and/or Academic Programs directors must agree to sponsor the activity. A proposal consisting of, at a minimum, an issues and justification statement and project objectives must be submitted to the regional association office. Projects are reviewed and approved in accordance with regional policies and procedures. Rapid Response Research Activities are approved for a two-year period. If warranted, the activity may later be developed and submitted for approval as a multistate research project or another type of multistate research activity through standard review and approval procedures. These projects are designated in NIMSS under the 500-series for numbering purposes to distinguish them from other research activities.

Research Advisory Committees (AC)

An advisory committee is typically composed of university department heads/chairs, or other institutional leaders, along with an AA and, in some cases, a NIFA representative. ACs provide stakeholder perspectives, technical advice, and review multistate projects for their regional associations. Operating under the authority of the regional associations, ACs serve as regional subject matter experts and help ensure the quality, relevance, and impact of multistate research activities.

Development Committees (DC)

Development Committees are established for a period of up to two years and are charged with developing the justification and proposal outline for a new 5-year multistate research activity. At least one objective of the new committee must focus on preparing and submitting a proposal to establish either an MRP, CC, or ERA. Scientists from two or more states may initiate a proposal for a DC provided it is sponsored by at least two SAES, ARD, Extension, and/or Academic Programs directors within the region. Membership consists of a sponsoring director who serves as the lead AA and supports the committee through the development and submission of the proposed activity, along with members appointed by participating research, Extension, and Academic Program directors, as appropriate.

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Nomenclature of Multistate Projects and Activities

Description	Northeast Region (NE)	North Central Region (NC)	Southern Region (S)	Western Region (W)	Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD)
National Research Support Project (NRSP)	NRSP_xx	NRSP_xx	NRSP_xx	NRSP_xx	NRSP_xx
Multistate Research Project (MRP)	NE_xxxx	NC_xxxx	S_xxxx	W_xxxx	ARD_xxxx
Coordinating Committee (CC)	NECC_xxxx	NCCC_xxxx	SCC_xxxx	WCC_xxxx	ARDCC_xxxx
Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERA)	NEERA_xxxx	NCERA_xxxx	SERA_xxxx	WERA_xxxx	ARDERA_xxxx
Rapid Response Research Activity (RRRA; formerly 500-Series)	NE_5xx	NC_5xx	S_5xx	W_5xx	ARD_5xx
Advisory Committee (AC)	NEAC_xxxx	NCAC_xxxx	SAC_xxxx	WAC_xxxx	ARDAC_xxxx
Development Committee (DC)	NEDC_xxx	NCDC_xxx	SDC_xxx	WDC_xxx	ARDDC_xxx

*Designations of “OLD” in the project designation (e.g. NC_old229, NCERA_old101, etc.) refer to expiring or terminated projects/activities and “TEMP” refers to proposals in progress or under review (e.g. NE_temp2025, WCC_temp4125, etc.)

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

To facilitate the organization and operation of the national multistate research portfolio the directors of the regional associations have agreed to the following policies and procedures.

- The portfolio of multistate projects and activities should reflect the needs and priorities of the region's stakeholders while aligning with USDA priorities. Multistate activities are managed at the regional level and coordinated nationally to address shared priorities, leverage expertise, and minimize duplication of effort across projects.
- All funding is at the discretion of each participant's SAES/ARD office. Before proceeding, prospective participants should consult with their SAES/ARD director's office on these policies and funding availability.
- Participation is open to all individuals with relevant expertise and the ability to contribute to the activity, including representatives from Land-grant and non-Land-grant institutions, industry, federal agencies, and other stakeholder groups.

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- Requests to join a current multistate research activity must be approved by the administrator of the proposed member's institution; in the case of a SAES or ARD, that would be the director or their designee (for ARD, these are often the regional NIMSS system administrator for the project or the potential participant). Non-SAES or ARD participants should contact the project's regional NIMSS system administrator, indicating desire to join a multistate committee and submit the information required via the Participation Form (formerly Appendix E).
- It is the responsibility of each SAES and ARD Director to monitor their scientists' active engagement in multistate projects.
- Roles, responsibilities, and eligibility for serving as AAs are guided by a multistate activity's host regional association.
- Changes to current multistate activities must be approved by the host regional association. It is recommended that there be one standard type of governance for all multistate committees with the election of a chair, a chair-elect, and a secretary. While not required, it is recommended that officers are to be elected for a two-year term to provide continuity. Administrative guidance is provided by the assigned AA.
- All decisions should be made in an open and democratic process at the discretion of the multistate activity.
- Decisions on regional off-the-top funding to support multistate activities are determined by the sponsoring regional association of the activity.
- Records for multistate research activities are maintained through the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS), an electronic management system that houses project information, including proposals, goals, objectives, membership records, and annual reports. NIMSS can be accessed anytime at <https://www.nimss.org/>.
- All identifiers and titles of multistate activities are at the discretion of the hosting regional association.
- Requests for multistate research activity extensions beyond its approved term will not be considered. With exception of DCs, RRRs, and ACs, the maximum duration time allowed of a multistate activity is five years. The host regional association is ultimately responsible for monitoring the performance and outcomes of each multistate activity and may terminate an activity before the end of its approved term at its discretion.
- All multistate activities are required to meet annually (virtual or in person) via a fully authorized meeting in NIMSS and submit a corresponding annual report within 60 days after the meeting. Reporting should follow the [Annual Report Format](#) as closely as possible, although Advisory Committees may submit meeting minutes/notes in place of a full report. Reports must be created by multistate activity members who then upload the report to NIMSS and then submit for their Administrative Advisor's (AA) approval. Future meetings cannot be officially authorized in NIMSS until the previous annual report has been fully submitted and AA approved. Termination reports are no longer required.

PROJECT APPROVAL

Upon approval of a multistate research project by the sponsoring regional association, the regional office records the approval in NIMSS. This action automatically notifies NIFA and

requests the assignment of one or more NIFA representatives to the project. For all multistate activities except NRSPs, approval by the sponsoring regional association constitutes the final required approval.

REPORTING

All multistate activities are required to meet annually (virtual or in person) via a fully authorized meeting in NIMSS and then submit a corresponding annual report within 60 days after the meeting. Reporting should follow the [Annual Report Format](#) as closely as possible, although Advisory Committees may submit meeting minutes/notes in place of a full report. The report should provide a synthesis of the committee's collaborative activities and achievements during the reporting period; it should not serve as a compilation of individual member, state, or station reports. Annual meeting minutes should also be included and clearly outline the activity's leadership succession and any formal decisions made. Reports must be created by multistate activity members who then upload the report to NIMSS and then submit for their AA's approval. Future meetings cannot be officially authorized in NIMSS until the previous annual report has been fully submitted and AA approved. Termination reports are no longer required.

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE

Chair: The chair of the committee is responsible for organizing the meeting agenda, conducting the meeting, and assuring that task assignments are completed. It is encouraged that the chair be elected for at least a two-year term to provide continuity. Chairs are eligible for reelection.

Chair-elect: The chair-elect normally succeeds the chair and is expected to support the chair by carrying out duties assigned by the chair. The chair-elect serves as the chair in the absence of the elected chair. Normally the chair-elect is elected for at least two years and succeeds to the position of chair. The chair-elect is eligible for reelection.

Secretary: The secretary is responsible for the distribution of meeting materials and maintaining records of key discussions, decisions and actions taken (meeting minutes). Working with the chair, the secretary prepares the NIMSS annual report. The Secretary succeeds to the position of chair-elect and is eligible for reelection.

Members: In addition to carrying out the agreed-upon research, collaboration, coordination, information exchange, or advisory activities, members are responsible for contributing to the achievement of the project's shared objectives. This includes reporting progress, collaborating with other project members, actively participating in committee meetings, and communicating project accomplishments and impacts to both the committee and their respective institutions.

HISTORY OF MULTISTATE RESEARCH

The Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) amended the Hatch Act of 1887, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, and sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1979 (NARETPA). The amendments require USDA-approved Plans of Work from each of the eligible SAES, prior to the distribution of the capacity funding provided under these authorities.

The AREERA also amended the Hatch Act to identify the Multistate Research Fund (MRF) (previously named the Regional Research Fund). The amendment specifies that:

Not less than 25 percent shall be allotted to the States for cooperative research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a State agricultural experiment station, working with another State agricultural experiment station, the Agricultural Research Service, or a college or university, cooperates to solve problems that concern more than one state. The funds available under this paragraph, together with the funds available under subsection (b) for a similar purpose, shall be designated as the 'Multistate Research Fund, State Agricultural Experiment Stations'.

Both the Hatch Act and the Smith-Lever Act were amended to require integrated research and Extension activities. The amount to be expended was set at not less than 25 percent, or twice the states' FY1997 expenditures for integrated activities. The Smith-Lever Act was also amended to require that each institution receiving funds under Sections 3(b) of that Act expend a portion of those funds for a multistate program, beginning in FY2000.

The AREERA also requires that all capacity-funded research (including multistate research) undergo scientific peer review. The multistate research peer review requirement is delegated to the regional associations from which a multistate activity originates.

The 1890 and 1994 Land-grant universities are not required in the AREERA to have any multistate research or any integrated research and extension activities. Also, the 1862 Land-grant universities of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are exempted from the integrated research and extension activity requirements. However, any of these institutions may voluntarily participate in these types of activities. The Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD), representing 1890 Land-grant universities, has volunteered to be included as one of the regions participating in the multistate program.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Administrative Advisor
AC	Advisory Committee
ARD	Association of 1890 Agricultural Research Directors
AREERA	Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act of 1998
ARS	Agricultural Research Service, USDA
CC	Coordinating Committee
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
DC	Development Committee
ED	Executive Director
ERA	Education/Extension and Research Activity
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
FOS	Field of Study, from the USDA NIFA Manual of Classification codes
FTE	Full-time equivalent effort of a participant devoted to a project during one year. Represented as a decimal or a %. All FTE fields in NIMSS, SY, PY, and TY, are optional.
FY	Fiscal Year
KA	Knowledge Area, from the USDA NIFA Manual of Classification codes
MAC	Multistate Activities/Advisory Committee
MRA	Multistate Research Activity
MRC	Multistate Review Committee
MRF	Multistate Research Fund
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA
NIMSS	National Information Management and Support System
NRS	NIFA Reporting System
NRSP	National Research Support Project
NRSP RC	NRSP Review Committee

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PY	Professional Year (represents the full-time equivalent (FTE) effort of a non-scientist professional staff member devoted to a project during one year)
SAES	State Agricultural Experiment Station(s)
SOI	Subject of Investigation, from the USDA NIFA Manual of Classification codes
SY	Scientist Year (represents the full-time equivalent (FTE) effort of a doctoral-level scientist (Ph.D. or equivalent) devoted to a project during one year)
TY	Technical Year (represents the full-time equivalent (FTE) effort of a technical support staff member devoted to a project during one year)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

GLOSSARY

Activity - A generic term to indicate a research project or extension program.

Administrative Advisor - An administrator that has been delegated the responsibility by his or her regional association to provide guidance and oversight, on behalf of the regional association, to a multistate research project, coordinating committee, education/Extension and Research Activity, or advisory committee. The administrative advisor is typically a current director of an SAES or ARD institution, or, as allowed by individual regional associations, may be an Academic Programs or Extension director, a department head/chair/director, or other organizational senior leader.

agInnovation – The national organization representing agricultural research administrators from 1862 and 1890 Land-grant Universities. Its membership consists of research leaders from each of the affiliated regional associations of agricultural experiment station and ARD directors, who work collaboratively to advance the national agricultural research enterprise.

Capacity Funds - Annual federal appropriations distributed to states through formula-based programs authorized by legislation such as the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Evans-Allen Act of 1978. These funds provide the foundational infrastructure, scientific expertise, facilities, and partnerships necessary to sustain long-term research capacity and address both immediate and emerging agricultural challenges at local, regional and national levels.

Capacity funds serve as a catalyst for additional investment by leveraging substantial support from state appropriations, federal competitive grant programs, industry partnerships, and other public and private funding sources. By providing stable and predictable support, they enable

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institutions to maintain critical research programs, respond rapidly to emerging issues, train the next generation of scientists, and generate innovations that benefit agriculture, communities, and society.

Coordinating Committee - An authorized group of research scientists and/or extension professionals working on a topic area of shared interests, with coordinated activities and the exchange of outputs.

Development Committee – An authorized group of scientists charged to evaluate the benefit of a new project idea and, if appropriate, develop a project/activity within the scope of the multistate research fund.

Education/Extension and Research Activity - An authorized group of scientists, Extension professionals, and/or teaching faculty working collectively (multifunctional) on a topic of shared interest and regional need, with coordinated activities and exchange of information, resources, and outputs.

Evans-Allen Funds - Payments to 1890 Agricultural Research Units authorized by the Evans-Allen Act of 1978 to provide support for carrying out the purposes of the federal-state partnership in agricultural research. Evans-Allen funding requires an equal state match.

Full-Time Equivalent - A management term used to express time commitment or appointment of people. For example, 0.5 FTE is a one-half-time (50%) appointment.

Function - Teaching, research, and Extension are the three functions of a land-grant university. In some uses teaching and extension are referred to as education. Extension and continuing education are often referred to as outreach.

Hatch Funds - Payments to State Agricultural Experiment Stations authorized by the Hatch Act of 1887 to provide support for carrying out the purposes of the federal-state partnership in agricultural research. Hatch funding requires an equal state match.

Impact - The economic, social, health, or environmental consequences derived as benefits for the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. An example of an impact would be improved human nutrition for a stated number of individuals through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.

Interdisciplinary Research – Integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge. Interdisciplinarity analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole.

Matching Funds - The Hatch Act of 1887 and Evans-Allen Act of 1978 (as amended) require that the capacity funds be matched one-to-one with non-federal funds.

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Milestone - A timeline-linked accomplishment that needs to be completed before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed. As an example, to genetically engineer a crop by 2025 a transformation method needs to be reduced to practice by 2022 (a milestone).

Multidisciplinary Research - More than one scientific discipline represented in a project, program or activity. Multidisciplinarity draws on knowledge from different disciplines but stays within their boundaries.

Multistate Research Fund (MRF) - Formerly called the Regional Research Fund, this was renamed as the Multistate Research Fund in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998. The AREERA requires that not less than 25% of all Hatch allocations must be used for multistate research activities and must be matched by non-federal funds.

National Research Support Project - Activities that support research needs, but are not research per se, are authorized as NRSPs. Examples include genomic sequencing, germplasm collections, and research management databases such as the Current Research Information System. NRSPs are governed by the [“Guidelines for NRSPs.”](#)

National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS) – An electronic database of all multistate research projects and activities that serves as the official repository for all projects. The NIMSS system is administered by the regional association staff. Hosting and technical support for NIMSS is provided by Clemson University Learning Institute. NIMSS is owned by agInnovation and is not a federal database.

Off-the-Top (OTT) Funding - Money set aside for approved activities prior to any distribution to the SAES. Agreement to take funding "off-the-top" requires the approval of the SAES directors, which is communicated to NIFA by the regional offices. Some regions refer to these as “regional trusts.”

Outcome - Outcomes describe changes in awareness, behavior, and condition experienced by the end user resulting from a project or activity. For example, the outcome from release of a new cultivar would be publication to create awareness, then adoption might be increased production or greater profitability.

Output - Outputs are the results of research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials and observations. For example, the output from a plant-breeding program might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed survey results.

Peer Review - Evaluation of a proposed set of research activities for scientific quality, relevance (i.e., scientific advancement and stakeholder needs), and technical feasibility by scientists fully knowledgeable and capable of conducting the research themselves.

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Professional Year - This is the portion of time (as a percentage) for people who hold positions in professional categories and who are assigned to research activities of the project. Such professionals usually hold a bachelor's and/or master's degree(s). Graduate students, by virtue of their degree and acceptance in graduate school, may be categorized as "professionals."

Program - A well-defined set of projects or activities that share a common theme or purpose. Degrees of coordination for a program's activities range from very informal to highly structured.

Project - A well-defined set of research activities. Multistate Research Projects differ from typical Hatch Projects in that there are multiple participants at two or more institutions in a Multistate Research Project.

Project Proposal - A project or program document that sets out (usually for five years) the objectives of a project, the shared responsibilities for the planned activities, and the expected outputs, among other items. The approved project proposal serves as the contractual agreement among participating institutions.

Scientist Year - This is the portion of time (as a percentage) for scientists (Assistant Professor, Assistant Scientist, and above) who are responsible for creative scientific study, thought, originality, judgments, and accomplishments directly assignable to the activity reported.

Stakeholder - Individuals, or groups of individuals, or organizations/institutions with a direct interest in the outcome of public investments in agricultural research and education. This could be producers of agricultural products, consumers of agricultural products, agricultural industry, or sponsors of research activities from federal and state governments.

Technical Year - This is the portion of time (as a percentage) for technicians, aids, and laboratory assistants assigned in support of a project or an activity.

MULTISTATE PROJECT FORMS

NEW/RENEWAL PROPOSAL TEMPLATES

[Format for Multistate Research Proposals](#)

[Format for ERA/CC Proposals](#)

REVIEW TEMPLATES

[MRP Proposal Review](#)

[ERA/CC Proposal Review](#)

[Midterm Review](#)

ANNUAL REPORTING

[Annual Report Form](#)

For any additional information not covered in these Guidelines, please contact your regional office.

Format for Multistate Research Project (MRP) Proposals

(formerly Appendix A)

Project Number: To be assigned by the sponsoring regional association.

Project Title: A brief, clear, specific statement of the subject of the research. Do not use terms such as "Research on", or "Studies of", or "Investigation of," etc.)

Requested Project Duration: From October 1, ____ to September 30, ____ (usually five years). Appendix A/Research-type multistate projects normally start on October 1, the first day of the federal fiscal year (FFY) and terminate on September 30, the end of the FFY.

Non-Technical Summary: In lay terms, briefly describe the following: (1) the issue and why it is important, (2) your goal and objectives, (3) the target audiences and how they will benefit, and (4) how your activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives. Additionally, we strongly recommend including a brief statement on how this work aligns with USDA priorities.

Statement of the Issue(s) and Justification: This section should explain why the work needs to be done, and should include statements on the following points:

- The need as indicated by stakeholders. (That is, explain how the proposed research addresses national and/or regional priorities developed following stakeholder input.)
- The importance of the work, and what the consequences are if it is not done.
- The technical feasibility of the research.
- The advantages of doing the work as a multistate effort.
- Clearly describe how the proposed activity addresses and aligns with national (see agInnovation Science Roadmap Grand Challenges <https://escop.info/roadmaptext/>), USDA, and/or regional priorities.
- Identify the sets of stakeholders, customers, and/or consumers for whom the activity is intended.
- List of expected participants to help support this as a multistate activity.

Related, Current, and Previous Work: Conduct a brief review, using information from NIFA's current research search tools, NIMSS, and other relevant sources, of related research on the problem. Describe how the proposed work will build upon and advance existing research. Specifically identify related multistate research projects or other multistate activities. If there is any apparent duplication, clearly justify the need for the proposed work. If the proposal is for a replacement project, the accomplishments achieved under the previous project should be reviewed and those areas requiring further investigation identified. List essential, cited references. It is not expected that the proposal will include a comprehensive literature review.

Objectives: Clear, concise, one-sentence statements for each researchable objective. Include only objectives on which significant progress can be made during the life of the project with the resources committed. Do not specify the exchange of information, the coordination of research, the development of standardized techniques, or joint publication as objectives, as these are to be

organized under other types of activities. Each participant must indicate in their Participation Form (formerly Appendix E) those objectives in which he/she will participate.

Methods: Briefly summarize the research methods that will be used to accomplish each objective. Provide sufficient detail for reviewers to evaluate the extent of joint planning, collaboration, and coordination among project participants, including coordinated research activities, shared resources or equipment, data sharing and analysis, and the synthesis of findings across participating institutions. Clearly demonstrate that the proposed activity is a collaborative, multistate effort.

Measurement of Progress and Results: This section has three purposes. It is intended to show what the products of the research will be, how these products will affect the stakeholder or end user, and what critical points of achievement are needed for progress toward meeting objectives. To do this you should address the following items:

- **Outputs:** The results of collaborative research activities, such as data, information, biological or physical materials and observations. For example, the output from a plant-breeding program might be a named variety. The output from a survey might be the analyzed results.
- **Outcomes or Projected Impacts:** Outcomes describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit. For example, an outcome from the adoption of a new cultivar might be increased regional production or greater profitability. Impacts are the broader economic, environmental, health or societal benefits realized by producers, communities, consumers, and other end users because of the outcomes. These are usually measured using quantitative indicators that directly or indirectly demonstrate the benefits of the research. An example of an impact would be measurable improvements to human nutrition through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.
- **Milestones:** Time-bound accomplishments that must be achieved before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed. For example, if the goal is to genetically engineer a crop by 2032, successfully establishing the transformation method by 2030 would represent a key milestone.

Outreach Plan: Briefly describe how results of the project will be accessible to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, non-refereed but peer reviewed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.). If applicable, include descriptions concerning equality of service, ease of access to services/information, and any focus on broad access that may benefit from this proposed activity and what the plans are for disseminating information. Identify opportunities for the project/activity to interact with and/or deliver value to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities.

Organization and Governance: Provide a brief description of the technical committee's organizational structure, highlighting any unique governance features, such as an executive committee and its responsibilities, planned subcommittees, or designated program coordinators/managers and their roles. If the committee will use the standard form of governance

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structure, please select the auto-fill function. Otherwise, describe the processes for selecting leadership, making decisions, and governing the committee.

Literature Cited: List all references cited within the proposal.

Attachments: Uploading attachments to the proposal such as charts, tables, and other materials to better clarify the information within the proposal is allowed.

Projected Participation: This section is generated automatically as participants join via NIMSS Participation Form (formerly Appendix E) submission. Any non-SAES participants should contact the project's regional NIMSS system administrator.

Authorization: Final submission and approval through NIMSS by the supporting regional association office serves as signature authorization for this information.

Format for Coordinating Committees (CCs) and Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERAs) Proposals

(formerly Appendix B)

Note to Reviewers: Coordinating Committees (CCs) and Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERAs) are designed mainly for networking and information sharing between researchers, Extension professionals, and/or teaching faculty/instructors. Their accomplishments may not be as rigorous as research projects, so please keep this in mind when conducting your review.

Project Number: To be assigned by the sponsoring regional association.

Project Title: A brief, clear, specific statement of the subject of the research. Do not use terms such as "Research on", or "Studies of", or "Investigation of," etc.)

Requested Project Duration: From October 1, ____ to September 30, ____ (usually five years). Appendix B (CCs and ERAs) multistate projects normally start on October 1, the first day of the federal fiscal year (FFY) and terminate on September 30, the end of the FFY.

Non-Technical Summary: In lay terms, briefly describe the following: (1) the issue and why it is important, (2) your goal and objectives, (3) the target audiences and how they will benefit, and (4) how your activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives. Additionally, we strongly recommend including a brief statement on how this work aligns with USDA priorities.

Statement of Issue and Justification (Limit this section to approximately one page): This section should explain why the work needs to be done, and should include statements on the following points:

- The nature and significance of the issue(s) for which multistate coordination is proposed.
- The advantages of doing the work as a multistate effort.
- Whether a NIMSS search was conducted to ensure this activity is not duplicative of an existing project. If there is overlap, clearly state how this project is different and/or will complement other efforts.
- Clearly describe how the proposed activity addresses and aligns with national (see agInnovation Science Roadmap Grand Challenges <https://escop.info/roadmaptext/>), USDA, and/or regional priorities.
- Identify the sets of stakeholders, customers, and/or consumers for whom the activity is intended.
- Provide a list of expected participants to help support this as a multistate activity.

Objectives: Clear, concise, one-sentence statements for each researchable objective. Include only objectives on which significant progress can be made during the life of the project with the resources committed. Objectives for these types of activities need to emphasize coordination of activities and the exchange of information. They must not be generalized objectives, but rather they should be very specific. They may not necessarily be traditional research objectives. An

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objective that would be “to prepare a multistate research project outline” is inappropriate, although research projects may evolve from a coordinating activity. If the objective of the activity is to write a multistate research project outline, a request should be made to the sponsoring regional association to create a development committee (DC) for that specific purpose. Each participant must indicate in their Participation Form (formerly Appendix E) those objectives in which he/she will participate.

Procedures and Activities: Describe the procedures and activities that will contribute to achieving each of the objectives.

Expected Activities: Briefly discuss the expected activities of the proposed project. Examples of possible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination of specific research and extension programs.
- Exchange of ideas and/or information/data.
- Generate interest in a specific research and extension area (e.g., a symposium or workshop).
- Publication of joint research articles and/or review articles on a common issue.
- Evaluation and standardization of methods or techniques leading to the development of a common protocol.
- Identification of critical/key research and education issues.

Measurement of Progress and Results: This section has three purposes. It is intended to show what the products of the research will be, how these products will affect the stakeholder or end user, and what critical points of achievement are needed for progress toward meeting objectives. To do this you should address the following items:

- **Outputs:** The results of coordinated activities, such as compilation of data sets, information exchange, shared biological or physical materials and observations. For example, creation and distribution of a committee publication or hosting a symposium/webinar/workshop.
- **Outcomes or Projected Impacts:** Outcomes describe the significance of the outputs, showing in what ways the end user will benefit. For example, an outcome from the adoption of the recommendations resulting from a publication, symposium, webinar, and/or workshop. Impacts are the economic, social, health, or environmental benefits derived by the intended users. These are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits. An example of an impact would be measurable improvements to human nutrition through genetically engineering rice to contain the precursors to vitamin A.
- **Milestones:** Timeline-linked accomplishments that need to be completed before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed. As an example, to genetically engineer a crop by 2032 a transformation method needs to be reduced to practice by 2030 (a milestone).

Educational Plan: If applicable, include descriptions concerning equality of service, ease of access to services/information, and any focus on broad access that may benefit from this proposed activity and what the plans are for disseminating information to these and other groups.

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Identify opportunities for the project/activity to interact with and/or deliver value to peer groups, stakeholders, clientele, and other multistate activities.

Organization and Governance: Provide a very brief description of the organization of the Project Leadership/Editors with emphasis on unique items such as the formation of an executive committee and its functions, any subcommittees that are planned for specific functions, any anticipated program coordinators/managers and their responsibilities, etc. If you are using the standard form of governance, please select that for autofill. Otherwise, describe the processes that will be used for selecting leadership and for decision making.

Literature Cited: List of all references cited within the proposal.

Attachments: Supporting attachments such as charts, tables, and other materials to better clarify the information within the proposal are allowed.

Projected Participation: This section is generated automatically as participants join via NIMSS Participation Form (formerly Appendix E) submission. Any non-SAES participants should contact the project's regional NIMSS system administrator.

Authorization: Final submission and approval through NIMSS by the supporting regional association office constitutes signature authority for this information.

New/Renewal Multistate Research Project (MRP) Proposal Review Form

(formerly Appendix H)

Each Regional Multistate Research/Activities Committee (MRC/MAC) member will receive this evaluation form via NIMSS or as an e-mail attachment (or via other electronic means) with the project proposal and comments from the peer reviewers or Advisory Committee members, as available.

Non-Technical Summary

1. In lay terms:
 - a. Does this proposal describe the issue and why it is important?
 - b. Does the proposal outline the goals and objectives?
 - c. Does the proposal describe target audiences and how they will benefit?
 - d. Does the proposal explain how activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives?

(Comment boxes in NIMSS after each section; yes or no options only for questions below)

Statement of Issue(s) and Justification

1. Does the proposal convincingly address the extent of the problem and the importance to agriculture, rural life, consumers and science?
2. Does the proposal explain what the consequences are if the research is not done?
3. Does the proposal adequately explain why this research should be conducted by multiple institutions and other entities (e.g., ARS/USDA) through a regional collaborative effort?
4. Does the proposal indicate how the proposed research addresses national (agInnovation Science Roadmap Grand Challenges, <https://escop.info/roadmaptext/>), USDA, and/or regional priorities?
5. Does the proposal describe the probable impacts from successfully completing the work?
6. Is there a list of expected participants included?

Related Current and Previous Work

1. Does the proposal adequately explain how this research relates to previous work in this area and how the proposed work will supplement and extend knowledge in this area? Was a search conducted using current NIFA search tools? Although a comprehensive literature review is not required, does the proposal cite appropriate literature?
2. If the proposal is for a replacement project, are the accomplishments achieved under the previous project adequately reviewed with identification of those areas needing further investigation?
3. Does this proposal duplicate research being conducted through other multistate projects? Did the proposal specifically address potential duplication and, if potential duplication exists, did the committee specifically address how duplication will be avoided?

Objectives

1. Are the research objectives clear and appropriate for the desired outcomes?
2. Can significant progress be made towards these objectives during the lifetime of the project?

Methods

1. Is a procedure or approach outlined for each objective stated in the proposal?
2. Is collaboration and/or interdependence such as the use of common protocols, central data collection or analysis, sharing of equipment, common use of research samples or data, or other evidence of direct collaboration described in the proposal?
3. Are research responsibilities of the expected participants clearly stated?
4. Is there a plan for how the research findings will be tied together in a collaborative manner on a regional basis?

Measurement of Progress and Results

1. **Outputs:** Does the proposal describe expected outputs from the research?
2. **Outcomes and Impacts:** Does the proposal describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways end users and others will benefit? Does the proposal adequately explain the potential benefits and impact of the proposed research?
3. **Milestones:** Does the proposal include clearly defined milestones- that is, time-bound accomplishments that must be achieved before subsequent activities can proceed?

Outreach Plan

1. Does the proposal describe how results of the project will be made available in an accessible manner to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.)?

Organization

1. Does the proposal include an adequate description of the planned organizational structure of the technical committee?

Scientific Quality

1. Does the proposal demonstrate scientific excellence?
2. If other reviews are available to the project Technical Committee, have they adequately addressed the concerns and comments? (This criterion only applies if regions expect projects to be revised prior to MRC/MAC review. Please check with your regional association before responding to this question.)

Comments:

Please indicate the primary revisions that should be made before final approval by the Regional Multistate Research/Activities Committee (MRC/MAC).

Recommendation:

_____ Approve
_____ Defer pending revision (Comments required above)
_____ Reject

Evaluation Form for New Coordinating Committees (CC) and Education/Extension and Research Activities (ERA)

(formerly Appendix J)

Regional offices will assign each of their Regional Multistate Research/Activities Committee (MRC/MAC) members this evaluation form via NIMSS or other electronic means as is appropriate for that regional office. All proposals, peer reviews and responses to peer reviews will be made available to review members.

Non-Technical Summary

1. In lay terms:
 - a. Does this proposal describe the issue and why it is important?
 - b. Does the proposal outline the goals and objectives?
 - c. Does the proposal describe target audiences and how they will benefit?
 - d. Does the proposal explain how activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives?

(Comment boxes in NIMSS after each section; yes or no options only)

Statement of Issue(s) and Justification

1. Does the proposal convincingly address the extent of the problem and the importance to agriculture, rural life, consumers and science?
2. Does the proposal explain what the consequences are if the research is not done?
3. Does the proposal adequately explain why this research should be conducted by multiple institutions and other entities (e.g., ARS/USDA) through a regional collaborative effort?
4. Does the proposal indicate how the proposed research addresses national (agInnovation Science Roadmap Grand Challenges, <https://escop.info/roadmaptext/>), USDA, and/or regional priorities?
5. Does the proposal describe the probable impacts from successfully completing the work?
6. Is there a list of expected participants included?

Objectives

1. Are the objectives clear and appropriate for the desired outcomes?
2. Can significant progress be made towards these objectives during the lifetime of the project?

Procedures and Activities:

1. Is a procedure or approach outlined for each objective stated in the proposal?
2. Does the proposal site milestones?
3. Does the proposal show the opportunity for joint planning and coordination by participants?
4. Are there concrete examples of how this project will coordinate activities?

Expected Activities

1. Does the proposal list expected activities?
2. Are the expected activities clear and appropriate for the desired outcomes?

Measurement of Progress and Results:

1. **Outputs:** Does the proposal describe expected outputs from the research?

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2. **Outcomes and Impacts:** Does the proposal describe the significance of the results, showing in what ways the end user will benefit? Does the proposal adequately explain the potential benefits and impact of the proposed research?
3. **Milestones:** Does the proposal include statements related to milestones; that is, time-linked accomplishments that must be completed before subsequent activities can begin or can be completed?

Educational Plan

1. Does the proposal describe how results of the project are to be made available in an accessible manner to the intended users of the information (e.g., refereed publications, workshops, producer field days, etc.)?
2. If the proposed project is to become an integrated (multifunctional) activity involving participants from Cooperative Extension, is the nature of their involvement adequately described?

Organization and Governance:

1. If the organization of the technical committee is to be different from the recommended Standard Governance for Multistate Research Activities, does the proposal include an adequate description of the planned organizational structure of the technical committee?

Literature Cited:

1. Although a comprehensive literature review is not required, does the proposal cite appropriate literature?

Comments:

Please indicate the primary changes you believe should be made before final approval by the Regional Multistate Research/Activities Committee (MRC/MAC).

Recommendation:

- ☐ Approve
☐ Defer pending revision (Comments required above)
☐ Reject

Midterm Review of Multistate Activities (To Be Completed During the Third Year of Project)

Note to Reviewers: Coordinating Committees (CCs) and Education/Extension and Research Activity (ERAs) are designed mainly for networking and information sharing between researchers, Extension professionals, and/or teaching faculty/instructors. Their accomplishments may not be as rigorous as research projects, so please keep this in mind when conducting your review.

- 1. Meetings, Attendance, and Minutes:** All multistate projects are required to meet annually (once per federal fiscal year, 10/1 to 9/30) and submit an annual report within 60 days of each meeting.
 - Are annual meetings held as required (virtually or in-person) and generally well attended? (Y/N)
 - Do the meeting minutes/notes provide a good sense of the activities and decisions made during the annual meeting? (Y/N)
 - Are leadership transitions clearly stated and the current chair listed? (Y/N)
 - Does project leadership match what is listed on the project homepage (review names under Editors/Technical Leadership on the project's homepage)? (Y/N)
 - Please provide in the comments box below additional comments and suggestions for improvement for future meetings, attendance, and meeting minutes, as needed.

(Insert open comment text box here in NIMSS)

- 2. Accomplishments Toward Project Objectives:** Evaluate the project's progress (activities, milestones, outputs, and outcomes) since it was last approved (current 5-year iteration).
 - Are the presented activities, milestones, outputs, and outcomes clearly related to the original objectives from the outline since the project was last approved? (Y/N)
 - Are accomplishments presented in a multistate, collaborative fashion, showcasing interdependence and collaboration among project participants and not as lists of individual station reports? (Y/N)
 - Do members appear to be working together, cooperating, and/or collaborating towards the current project's objectives? (Y/N)
 - Do the presented activities, milestones, outputs, and outcomes clearly state which project members were involved? (Y/N)
 - Based on the presented activities, milestones, outputs, and outcomes, is the group making sufficient progress towards originally stated objectives? (Y/N)
 - If they are not making sufficient progress towards objectives, have they provided clear and acceptable reasons for not doing so? (Y/N)
 - Do the reported accomplishments demonstrate relevance to issues of importance to stakeholders and the broader public? (Y/N)
 - Please provide in the comments box below additional comments and suggestions for improvement of the project's work towards stated objectives and/or improvements to this section for future reports.

(Insert open comment text box here in NIMSS)

3. **Impacts:** (Remember: Impacts describe the difference the project has made regarding social, economic, and/or environmental condition as experienced by the project's intended stakeholders and/or the broader public. Impacts are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits and should be distinct from Outcomes and Outputs.)
- Are the stated "Impacts" actually impacts, as defined above? (Y/N)
 - Are these impacts built around the objectives in the project outline? (Y/N)
 - Has the committee described well the long-term benefits of the project? (Y/N)
 - Please provide in the comments box below additional comments and suggestions for improvement of projects **Impacts** and/or this Impacts section in future reports, as needed.

(Insert open comment text box here in NIMSS)

4. **Information and Technology Transfer:** Information and technology transfer and plans or accomplishments for delivering the results to users including other researchers, Extension, Industry, Producers, students, or other stakeholders are required for every project supported by Multistate Research Funds.
- Has this project sufficiently delivered information to stakeholders? (Y/N)
 - Are the Publications listed from only the current project iteration? (Y/N)
 - Are the Publications listed in annual reports directly related to project objectives? (Y/N)
 - In the comments section below, please describe any concerns, potential improvements, and compliments to share with the project members regarding Information and Technology transfer.

(Insert open comment text box here in NIMSS)

5. **Grants, Contracts & Other Resources Obtained:**
- Have outside funds been obtained from other federal and state agencies or the private sector to support project activities? If members worked collaboratively on a grant submission but it was not funded, it may be included, as well. (Y/N)
 - In the comments box below, describe the effectiveness of this project on leveraging outside funding to help address project objectives. Include any suggestions for improvement or additional funding sources possible available to the investigators.

(Insert open comment text box here in NIMSS)

Project Performance:

_____ Continue - Meets Expectations

_____ Continue - Needs Improvement (Reviewer: Be sure to describe these improvements clearly above)

_____ Terminate at end of current federal fiscal year

Annual Report Format for Multistate Research Activity

(formerly Appendix D/SAES-422)

Important Notes on Annual Reports:

Annual reports should document the committee's collective progress toward achieving the project's objectives and should not simply be a compilation of individual station reports.

An annual report is required for each year of the activity and must be submitted within 60 calendar days following the annual meeting.

Committee members prepare and submit the report electronically through NIMSS, after which it is reviewed and approved by the Administrative Advisor. Once approved, annual reports for the Multistate Research Fund (MRF) projects are publicly made available in NIMSS for USDA-NIFA, stakeholders, and other audiences. These reports communicate the accomplishments and impacts of the multistate research program and showcase the value of agInnovation's multistate research enterprise program.

Annual Report Sections:

Period Covered (duration since last report):

Date of This Report:

Participants: Provide a list of those who attended each meeting, and their employing institution. As an alternative, provide an attachment containing this information. If available, add the address for the group list serve.

Meeting Minutes: Reports should include meeting minutes/notes that provide a good sense of the activities and decisions made during the annual meeting, as well as clearly outline any changes to project leadership (Chair, Incoming Chair, etc.). Provide these updates to the project's administrative advisor or regional system administrator so they can update the technical leadership/editor list on the project's NIMSS homepage.

Collaborative Accomplishments Toward Project Objectives (two or more states/institutions): This section focuses on achieved and/or ongoing/in-progress activities, milestones, outputs, and short-term outcomes. Committees should organize accomplishment information around the project's objectives, as identified in the original proposal.

Annual reports should demonstrate the committee's collaborative progress toward achieving the project's objectives and should not simply be a compilation of individual station reports.

The report should communicate accomplishments in a manner that is meaningful to stakeholders and other external audiences. Clearly identify the participating institutions and key contributors involved in the work and emphasize the collaborative nature of the activity. Describe significant partnerships and linkages within the committee, as well as collaborations with external stakeholders, peer organizations, clientele, and other multistate activities.

Activities: Organized and specific functions or duties carried out by individuals or teams using scientific methods to reveal new knowledge and develop new understanding.

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Milestones: Measurable, time-bound accomplishments that mark critical progress toward achieving a project's objectives and outputs. Milestones represent key intermediate targets that must be completed before subsequent activities can proceed and are useful for planning, tracking, and managing complex projects. For example, a milestone for a biotechnology project might be "Develop and validate a genetic transformation protocol by December 2026."

Outputs: Defined products (tangible or intangible) that are delivered by a research project. Examples of outputs are reports, data, information, observations, publications, and patents.

Short-term and Medium-term Outcomes: Quantitative, measurable benefits of the research outputs as experienced by those who receive them. Examples of short-term outcomes include gains in knowledge and awareness whereas medium-term outcomes would include such things as the adoption of a technology, the creation of jobs, reduced cost to the consumer, less pesticide exposure to farmers, or access to more nutritious food.

Impacts: This section focuses on long-term outcomes and benefits. Committees should build information around the activity's objectives as identified in the original proposal.

Impacts describe the difference the project has made (changes in knowledge; attitude; behavior; social, economic, and/or environmental condition) as experienced by the project's intended stakeholders (*See example 1 below*) and/or the broader public (*See example 2 below*). Impacts are usually quantitatively measured either directly or indirectly as indicators of benefits.

If the impact is the result of work by certain participating institutions/individuals, please indicate which participating institutions/individuals were involved in the work (*See suggested format options in examples below. Example 1 shows a full committee collaboration, while 2 and 3 illustrate collaborations between two or more stations*).

Example 1: All project participants collaborated to develop and release [a new pesticide product] that makes it easier and more affordable for soybean growers to effectively manage [pests]. In 2026, farmers using this pesticide increased yields by % while spending \$ less per acre on pest management.

Example 2: Project participants at the University of Arkansas and Louisiana State University genetically engineered rice to contain the precursors to Vitamin A. Consumption of this rice is expected to improve human nutrition.

Example 3: Genetically engineered rice that contains the precursors to Vitamin A has been released to consumers and could improve human nutrition. *Louisiana State University, University of Arkansas*

Information and Technology Transfer: Describe information and technology transfer and plans or accomplishments for delivering the results to users including other researchers, Extension, Industry, Producers, students, or other stakeholders. What is the project's benefit to broader society? This section should be brief and concise, no more than one or two short paragraphs.

Grants, Contracts & Other Resources Obtained: List any grants, contracts, and/or other resources obtained by one or more project members ***because of the project's activities***. Include the recipients, funding source, amount awarded and term if applicable. If the group worked collaboratively on a grant submission but it was not funded, you may include that here as well.

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Publications: List the publications for the **current project year (since last annual report)** only (with the authors, title, journal series, etc.) that are related directly to the project objectives.