

External Project Support – 30 points

Is it clear that the project is important to the impacted specialty crop industry? Does the proposal describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why (other than the applicant and organizations involved in this project)? Will industry stakeholders be actively involved? Are there at least two letters of support from industry (ex: Specialty crop producers/processors)?

20 - 30 Points	Applicant is appropriately responsive to the prompt. The information provided is comprehensive, utilizes examples, claims are supported, and makes sense. The answer is detailed and clearly stated. The answer gives the reviewer an in-depth understanding that the proposed project is important to the specialty crop industry. Two (or more) letters of support from the industry are provided.
10 - 19 Points	The information provided is general but makes sense. The applicant answers the prompt, but the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are resolved by information provided elsewhere in the application. Two (or more) letters of support from industry are provided.
1 – 9 Points	The information provided is hard to follow, no examples are provided, claims are not supported. Applicant mostly answers the prompt, but the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are not resolved by information provided elsewhere in the application. Two (or more) letters of support may or may not be provided.
0 Points	Prompt should have been answered and is not answered. No letters of support from industry provided.

Expected Measurable Outcomes (EMO) – 20 Points

Are the outcomes achievable? Is there an appropriate plan to measure achievement and share project results with industry? Are the outcomes appropriate for measuring the project's overall impact on the specialty crop industry?

18 – 20 Points	Outcome and Indicator selected. Information provided under Data Collection is comprehensive, utilizes examples, claims are supported, and makes sense. The answer is detailed and clearly stated. The answer gives the reviewer an in-depth understanding of what the applicant is proposing to do.
8 – 17 Points	Outcome and indicator are selected. Information provided under Data Collection is general but makes sense. The applicant answers the prompt, but the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are resolved by information provided elsewhere in the application.
1 – 7 Points	Outcome and indicator are selected, but not as USDA intended. (Example: Applicant chooses Outcome 3 but picks an Indicator from Outcome 5.) The information provided is hard to follow, no examples are provided, claims are not supported. The answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns.
0 Points	Prompt should have been answered and is not answered.

Budget – 25 Points

Is the amount of the grant request reasonable and appropriate? Does the budget narrative for each budget category adequately explain the costs and why they are necessary?

23 - 25 Points	Grant request amount is reasonable and appropriate. The budget narrative for each budget category is detailed and clearly stated. The answer gives the reviewer an in-depth understanding of why the costs is necessary for the successful completion of the project.
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16 - 22 Points	Grant request amount may or may not be reasonable and appropriate. The budget narrative for each budget category is general but makes sense.
11 - 15 Points	Grant request amount is not reasonable and appropriate. The budget narrative for each budget category leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns.
1 – 10 Points	Grant request amount may or may not be reasonable and appropriate. Dollar amounts are provided in all the budget tables. No budget narrative is provided.
0 Points	Prompt should have been answered and is not answered.

Project Purpose – 25 Points

Does the proposal clearly state the specific issue, problem, or need the project will address, as well as the relevance and importance to the specialty crop industry and the approach to addressing the issue? Are the objectives appropriate for the project?

20 - 25 Points	Applicant is appropriately responsive to the prompt. Information provided is comprehensive, utilizes examples, claims are supported, and makes sense. The answer is detailed and clearly stated. The answer gives the reviewer an in-depth understanding of what the applicant is proposing to do.
11 – 19 Points	Information provided is general but makes sense. Applicant answers the prompt but the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are resolved by information provided elsewhere in the application.
6 - 10 points	Information provided is hard to follow, no examples are provided, claims are not supported. Applicant mostly answers the prompt but the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are resolved by information provided elsewhere in the application.
1 – 5 points	Applicant provides an answer to the prompt but the information is not responsive to the question asked and the content of the answer leaves the reviewer with questions or concerns that are not resolved by information elsewhere in the application.
0 Points	Prompt should have been answered and is not answered.