2022 Regenerative Agriculture Request for Proposals

The Illinois Regenerative Agriculture Initiative (IRAI) is announcing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support research and demonstration projects involving both University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and community partners.

Purpose

The purpose of this funding is to 1) increase *capacity* in regenerative agriculture research, extension, and training at UIUC and 2) develop active *relationships* between academic and stakeholder communities that enable actionable research and enhance adoption of regenerative agriculture practices in the Midwest U.S. To facilitate IRAI goals, we request that applicants clearly define what regenerative agriculture *metrics* they will assess and expect to affect with their proposed work.

Funding Availability and Timeline

Awards of up to $50,000 will be made for 12-24 month projects beginning September 1, 2022. Funding will be awarded to UIUC and non-UIUC entities as appropriate for project activities (see Budget). Priority will be given to proposals that articulate how these relatively small awards will be used to leverage and advance externally funded activities that happen(ed) outside of the award period.

Eligible Applicants

Applicant teams **must** include at least one UIUC faculty or staff member **and** at least one member from a stakeholder group. Stakeholder groups are considered broadly and include not only farmers and agribusiness, but also organizations like schools, hospitals, banks, and faith or citizen groups. Given the short duration of project funding, we anticipate that successful applicant teams may already have a working history, and the funded project will be a discrete part of an overarching plan or body of work. It is appropriate to propose projects that bring UIUC researchers into ongoing stakeholder-led efforts and vice versa.

Support

A Zoom meeting from 3-4:30 pm (central time) on **May 5, 2022,** will facilitate connections between researchers and stakeholders. Register at https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkfuqsrT8vE9aNkO71jCrlOksv86YICi2K. Questions can be sent to Emily Heaton (heaton6@illinois.edu) and Anya Knecht (knecht2@illinois.edu) **with "IRAI RFP" in the subject line**. Please check go.illinois.edu/irai for updates to this RFP.

Content and Form of Application

The proposal should be submitted as a **pdf file** composed of the following:
- **Cover page** with project title, coinvestigator information (names, affiliations and emails), and 150-word summary.
- **Narrative** of maximum 3 single-spaced pages (minimum 11 pt. font; 1-inch margins) not including references. Figures and tables are encouraged. The narrative should describe
  - the overarching goal or problem the team seeks to address;
  - the specific aspect of that goal or problem addressed in this proposal;
  - regenerative agriculture metrics to be assessed (e.g. acres planted, product produced, people reached, people trained, etc.);
  - the potential impact of the proposed work;
  - the approach;
  - and a timeline of activities and deliverables.
- **Team description** of up to 2 pages should be used to highlight the team members' expertise and how the project will be managed to advance IRAI goals of capacity and relationship building between researchers and stakeholders. Who will lead which aspects of the work? Who bears responsibility for which deliverables?
- **2-page resume or curriculum vitae** of proposing team members. Include most relevant education, appointments, activities, funding, publications, and outreach.
- **Budget** should be included using the budget template provided: https://sustainability.illinois.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/IRAI_simple-budget-template.xls. Fringe benefits do not need to be separated from salary for the proposal. No overhead or indirect funds are allowed. Budget disbursement details will be negotiated following selection to ensure UIUC and stakeholders receive funds in a way that best facilitates the project.

Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due by 5 p.m. Central time on **Thursday June 30, 2022.** Submit applications through this two-step process:

1) Email a **compiled pdf** of all proposal sections to **Anya Knecht (knecht2@illinois.edu)** with "IRAI Proposal Submission" in the subject line**;**
2) Complete a google form indicating that you have emailed your submission. The link to this form is below and will be on IRAI website https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf00FbKVKtevhMCvUXMfrPZfiuZ1-ABTH5RXDoNIdi9Z_f2jg/viewform. Completing this form will provide confirmation that your proposal was submitted and serve as a back-up in case of email delays/issues.

Evaluation Criteria

- Quality and innovativeness of the proposed work
- Clear articulation of how the proposed work will advance IRAI goals (see Purpose)
- Clear articulation of regenerative agriculture metrics quantified (e.g., acres planted, product produced, people reached, people trained, etc.)
- Suitability of the team to tackle the problem at hand

- Probable impact the proposed work would have on the problem at hand
- Probable longevity of the team beyond the IRAI funding period
- Likelihood to increase regenerative agriculture awareness within and beyond the agricultural community

Reporting obligations

Funded teams will be expected to:

- Meet 30 minutes each month with IRAI leadership for an update on progress, challenges, and spending
- Contribute to at least one IRAI outreach media (e.g., blogs, podcasts, interviews, factsheets) product per year
- Report progress on metrics and milestones at the IRAI annual conference.