CALL FOR PROPOSALS
Vermont Integrated Research and Extension Competitive Awards
(VIRECA)
GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUBMISSION

Spring 2004 Guidelines

University of Vermont Extension and Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station faculty are invited to apply for Vermont Integrated Research and Extension Competitive Awards (VIRECA) from UVM Extension and the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station. Each year, Federal funds in the form of Hatch Formula Funds, Regional Research Funds, and Smith-Lever Funds are appropriated to the State of Vermont, through the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station and UVM Extension to support research and extension activities. Effective October 1, 2004 a pool of Federal Hatch and Smith-Lever funds will be available on a competitive basis to collaborative teams of faculty having appointments in the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station or UVM Extension (see Eligibility). The funds have been targeted into priority areas which the Station and Extension expect to see jointly planned activities that clearly demonstrate the link between the research of and the extension of acquired knowledge. It is also expected that there will be measurable positive impact on stakeholders as a result of this joint activity. The overall goal of this call is to provide an opportunity for research and extension faculty in both organizations to collaborate on projects that would strive to both develop and extend new knowledge to improve the lives of Vermonters.

Financial requests should be limited to a maximum request of $17,500 per proposal per year for a maximum period of two years.

ELIGIBILITY:

Principal investigators with existing VIRECA grants are not eligible. VIRECA proposals are required to have a minimum of two co-principal investigators—one investigator with a minimum of a 20% appointment in the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station and one investigator with a minimum of a 25% UVM Extension appointment. (One single investigator will not satisfy this requirement.)

PRIORITY AREAS FOR FUNDING:

The following areas should be viewed as high priority VIRECA funding:

- Food Safety and Human Nutrition
- Food Security—increasing local consumption of Vermont grown foods
- Rural Communities—the Working Landscape and Workforce Development
- Water Quality—reducing non-point source pollution, alternative nutrient management and feeding management strategies.

In addition, those projects that connect campus-based research with regional-based extension educational activities are considered priorities for funding.
FORMAT:

VIRECA proposals should be prepared consistent with the format described in the document Essentials of a VIRECA Proposal (Attachment A). Failure to adhere to this format may jeopardize review of the proposal by the VIRECA Review Committee, and may result in return of the proposal to the submitting co-PIs without a review. Each proposal must be accompanied by a completed "Cover Sheet" (Attachment D) as a face page. Each submitting co-PI must obtain the signature(s) of the appropriate Departmental Chairperson(s) to ensure that the Chair(s) has carefully reviewed the budget and personnel information obtained within a proposal. Please note that the justification portion of the project is extremely important, and it is essential to describe the relevance of the proposed work to Vermont stakeholders and why it is important for the VT-AES and UVM Extension to perform such work.

Detailed budget information should be provided using the attached Budget Worksheet (Attachment B). A detailed Budget Narrative (Attachment C) should accompany the budget worksheet justifying the outlined project expenses. This narrative should consist of a page separate from the budget worksheet providing details regarding the use of funds for each line item of the budget. Allowable expenses include:

1. Personnel: Salaries and wages - Salaries of technical positions, research associates, graduate student fellowships, post-doctoral fellows, lab assistants, or program staff may be requested. It is very important that the roles and responsibilities of all project personnel be clearly defined. Since VIRECA funds are limited, the proposal must include a statement of justification detailing why the listed positions are essential to meeting the project needs. Do not include a request for P.I. salaries as these are already covered by VT-AES and UVM Extension funds.

Fringe benefits, where appropriate, should be requested for technical personnel and program staff using the following rates: FY05-39.5% and FY06 – 41.3%.

2. Operating: Operating funds may be requested to finance expenses such as materials and supplies; travel; publication costs/page charges; and computer/statistical costs. A category designated "other" has been included for additional miscellaneous expenses.

3. Equipment: This category relates to permanent equipment, which is defined as any item with a unit cost exceeding $500.

4. Total project cost: should be indicated and limited to a total of $17,500 per proposal per year.

CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT:

On a separate page, co-PIs should list all actively funded projects in which they are presently involved, including the title of the project, the supporting agency, the total dollar amount, the effective dates including expiration, and the percentage of time of all project personnel committed to a project.
PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS:

On a separate page, co-PIs should include an updated copy of their curriculum vita. Brief biosketches should be included for other key personnel. These should be attached to the end of the application. It is important that the roles and responsibilities of all project personnel are clearly defined and delineated.

PROPOSAL REVIEW:

Proposals submitted for funding consideration to the VIRECA program will be subjected to two types of review: a technical review and a peer review. Since VIRECA Committee members who will review the merits of your proposal are not necessarily experts in your field, proposals must be written clearly enough to enable non-experts in your field to be able to judge the merits of the proposed work. The Principal Investigators must obtain technical reviews.

Technical Review: It will be the responsibility of each co-PI submitting a VIRECA proposal to obtain technical reviews from at least two qualified individuals with a minimum of one review addressing research components and one review addressing proposed extension (outreach) activities. The PIs should state the names of the reviewers and a brief description of the reviewers' qualifications. It is strongly recommended that reviews be conducted by qualified personnel external to the UVM campus. It will be the responsibility of the submitting PIs to arrange for the reviews. The purpose of the reviews is to enable an evaluation of the scientific, technical and educational feasibility, as well as merit, of the proposal. Reviewers are expected to provide detailed comments about the proposal, including its merits and weaknesses. Reviews that lack detailed comments will be considered incomplete and will jeopardize favorable review of a proposal.

The "VIRECA Proposal Review Form" should be mailed to the technical reviewers, and reviews should be sent directly to one of the co-PIs in a sealed envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL". Envelopes should be submitted as part of the proposal application. Alternatively, the technical reviewers may send their reviews by email directly to Dr. Paul Kindstedt, Competitive Hatch Program Coordinator, at paul.kindstedt@uvm.edu. Reviews sent by email must be received by April 26, 2004.

VIRECA Committee Review: A panel of Experiment Station and Extension faculty, as well VT-AES and UVM Extension stakeholders, will provide a critical review of projects in order to ensure that the most appropriate projects are receiving VIRECA support. The VIRECA Committee Review will assist the Experiment Station Director and the Director of UVM Extension with assurance that priorities and activities have the support of well qualified and highly respected peers. (Committee members who are submitting proposals for review are deemed to have a conflict of interest, and will therefore not be permitted to participate in the review of their own proposal).

N.B. The right is reserved to not fund any and all proposals if the pool of applications does not yield proposals that adequately address the proposal review criteria.
The VIRECA Review Committee will be appointed to conduct the review of VIRECA proposals. Two outcomes of the review will emerge:

1. Projects will be approved and funded, either partially or for the full dollar amount requested.

2. Projects will not be approved.

The attached VIRECA Committee Review sheet will guide the evaluations of the VIRECA Committee. Evaluations will be based upon the VIRECA Committee Members' assessment of: the level of research/extension integration that would result; the importance of the problem to the stated priorities; the scientific and technical feasibility of the proposed research; quality and appropriateness of outreach activities; the project’s potential to yield measurable social, economic and/or environmental impacts; adequacy of resources and professional training/experience of investigators to achieve objectives; budget justification; and potential for timely application or transfer of results.

**DURATION OF FUNDING:**

Funding of VIRECA proposals will be limited to a two-year term. Proposals may be funded for a minimum of one year; however, proposals of all durations must be able to demonstrate the potential to yield measurable economic, social and/or environmental impacts as well as the successes of the research/extension integration. For projects granted multiple year funding, each year of funding will be awarded contingent upon the successful completion of project objectives for the stated year and upon timely compliance with VT-AES and UVM Extension reporting requirements.

**TIMETABLE SUMMARY:**

**March 2004 – Call for Proposals**

April 26, 2004 - Full proposals (original and seven copies) and reviews are due to Paul Kindstedt, Competitive Hatch Program Coordinator, 212 Carrigan Hall, UVM Campus. Electronic copies of the proposal will not be accepted. Principal Investigators are to obtain technical evaluations from at least two qualified reviewers, with reviews submitted as part of the application, or sent directly by the reviewer to Paul Kindstedt by email.

**May 2004 – VIRECA Review panel will meet and recommend projects for approval and funding.**

**June 2004 – AES Dean and EXT Director will finalize and approve funding decisions; final decisions will be mailed to faculty. Proposals will be sent to CSREES in Washington, D.C. for approval.**

**October 1, 2004 - Projects start, pending CSREES approval.**