

NAPDC Convening Awards - Request for Proposals

Overview

The National Agricultural Producer Data Cooperative (NAPDC) brings together diverse stakeholders to develop a national data framework enabling agricultural producers to maximize their profitability and sustainability through the use of data-driven decisions. The NAPDC Convening Awards opportunity is intended to enable **regional and/or domain specific** stakeholder groups to participate in developing such a framework. Successful applicants will be expected to work closely with peers from across the country, building a network of future colleagues and collaborators.

We invite proposals that contribute to the development of the NAPDC by addressing one or more of the priority areas listed below (see Program Scope). These areas were informed by discussions held at the NAPDC Conference in May 2023. We especially encourage projects that broaden interactions and seek to find synergies across communities (e.g., producers, researchers, and service providers) and organizational types (e.g., academics, government, and the private sector) either nationally or regionally.

- **Anticipated number of awards:** 3-5
- **Amount of funding available:** \$300k
- **Application Deadline:** January 8, 2024
- **Anticipated Project Start date:** February 1, 2024
- **Length of award:** up to 18 months
- **TOTAL budget per award (direct and indirect):** not to exceed \$100,000

We encourage applications by principal investigator teams with the willingness and capability to engage framework stakeholders and participate in coordinated NAPDC peer-reviewed publications, white papers, webinars, and other events.

Program Scope

The NAPDC Convening Award program aims to develop contributions to a national agricultural producer data framework. Proposals must represent at least one region and at least one strategic framework component (see below). The *regional* aspect of this program refers to groups of states that share agricultural production systems while the *framework component* aspect of this program refers to key aspects of a national data cyber-ecosystem. Regions and framework components can be found in Figure 1.

For the purposes of this opportunity, proposals that address one or more of the **strategic topics** listed below will be given priority, although proposals that focus on any framework component(s) are welcome. A competitive proposal will be designed, developed, and executed with substantive producer involvement. We also encourage proposals from regions and topics underrepresented by ongoing convening awards; for a list of current awards see <https://www.agdatacoop.org/convening-awards>

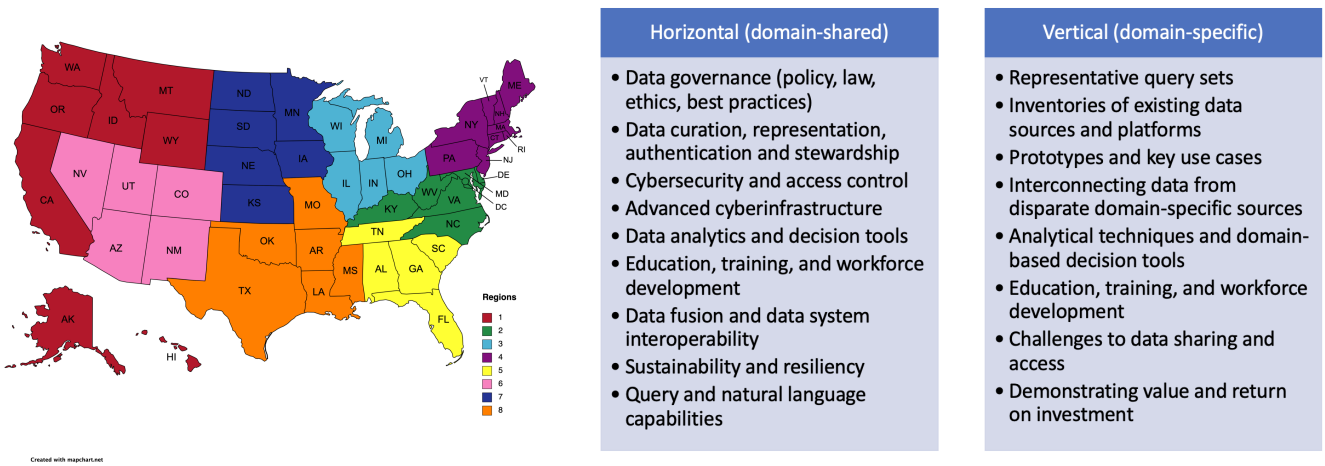


Figure 1. Regional agroecosystems (left) and framework components (right)

Strategic Topics

1. Tools for analytical model deployment tailored to address critical agricultural producer challenges. Such tools must be modular and incorporate appropriate privacy and security safeguards.
2. Data capture, stewardship, and/or integration tools that are applicable across different agroecosystems, e.g., specialty crops, row crops, and livestock, that follow existing standards and guidelines, e.g., ISO and ASABE.
3. Educational resources for the agricultural community around data collection, management, and the use of cyberinfrastructure. These resources must emphasize best practices (e.g., metadata, FAIR and CARE).
4. Intuitive and dynamic user interfaces for accessing, summarizing, and sharing on-farm data that are open source.
5. Proof of concept projects that enable precision on-farm management through data capture, collection and/or analysis.
6. Methods that provide cybersecurity and access control for data and/or models, and are accessible to agricultural producers.

Please refer to the NAPDC white paper ([LINK](#)) for examples of agricultural use cases that have been identified by the community as contexts in which strategic topics could be pursued.

All awardees must commit to share project information through the NAPDC website, acknowledge USDA support in project deliverables and communications, contribute to the NAPDC webinar series, and participate in quarterly PI team meetings.

Eligibility

- Lead proposer(s) (Principal Investigator(s)) must be primarily affiliated with an institution or organization that is eligible for a USDA award. We will be following the eligibility requirements listed in the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative- Foundational and Applied Science Program RFA ([see Part III, A](#)).
- Lead PIs are limited to one proposal per funding cycle.
- It is recommended that applicants check with their sponsored project offices before submitting their applications, particularly with respect to their budget proposals.

Awards

Awards will be made in the form of subcontracts for allowable project expenses, where allowable is determined by USDA guidelines. Please check with your office of sponsored projects to help determine what is an eligible expense. Indirect costs **are allowed** so please ensure your budget meets USDA indirect cost requirements. An indirect cost is the percentage of the award paid directly to the institution for administrative and other overhead costs. Each proposal **MUST** include in the budget support for at least one PI to attend an in-person national convening event to be held at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Deliverables

Proposals should describe how the results of the proposed activity are anticipated to further the aims of NAPDC and how these outcomes will be shared with the NAPDC grantees and communities. Examples may include: concept papers, best practices documents, data resources, analytical tools and methods, and cyberinfrastructure

- A final written report of the project activities and outcomes must be submitted to the NAPDC within 90 days of the completion of the project. The scope of the report includes answers to the posed questions (see above). NAPDC is required to report data about the number and characteristics of participants in engagement activities, and information about outcomes and impacts. Successful applicants will be asked to provide this data on completion of the proposed activity.
- Awardees are required to agree to USDA guidelines for data management plans and make content, data, resources, tools, etc. that are collected and/or developed using NAPDC support available to the broader stakeholder community using standard USDA practices, open source, FAIR, or other models. Awardees should familiarize themselves with the USDA guidelines for data management plans (<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/data-management-plan-nifa-funded-research-projects>). A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) can be made available as deemed necessary.
- Awardees are expected to work with the NAPDC team to make project activities and outcomes visible through the NAPDC communication channels, as well as via webinars and events.

- In all presentations, papers, posters, and other public communications (including social media posts), awardees must acknowledge support from the NAPDC and the United States Department of Agriculture under USDA award number 2021-77039-35992.

How to Apply

Please submit your proposal - following the requirements below - as a single PDF attachment via smartsheet:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/63e08348949c4b82b4a1407ca8248c8e>

Submission Guidelines

Project Period:

The estimated project period for awards will be up to 18 months with anticipated project dates of 2/1/2024 - 8/30/2025.

Required Proposal Documents:

- Project description (no more than five pages) including
 - Objectives/aims with preliminary results and plans for achieving each objective/aim (up to 2.5 pages)
 - Describe how the project will further the aims of the NAPDC (up to 0.5 pages)
 - Describe how the project will meaningfully involve the agricultural producer community (up to 0.5 pages)
 - Expected outcomes and deliverables (up to 0.5 pages)
 - Qualifications of project team (up to 0.5 pages)
 - Proposal timeline (up to 0.5 pages)
- Bibliography and References Cited
- Data management plan specifying how the project will meet the requirements described in the NAPDC Data Management Plan
- Budget and budget justification (please follow USDA guidelines for allowable expenses). The budget justification detail should follow the same order as the budget.
- USDA Conflict of Interest (COI) information for each senior/key person. This will assist with avoiding COI during the review process.
- Letters of collaboration for consultants or collaborators who have agreed to render services. The letter should clearly state:
 - The full name of the collaborator and his/her institution.
 - A description of the collaborator's expected role in the research.
 - A brief statement which describes the experience and expertise of a collaborator in his/her field.
 - A statement acknowledging that facilities and equipment are available to the collaborator.
 - Acknowledgement of any prior or on-going collaboration with any members of the scientific team on the plan.
- AOR Signed Letter of Support

- Copy of Institution's Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

This must be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the Smartsheet application. **Please use at least 11 pt font (e.g., 12pt, Times New Roman) and margin settings of 1", all sides.**

Indirect Cost Guidelines:

Indirect costs are not to exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA). Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

1. the sum of an institution's negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA

The maximum allowable indirect cost rate under the award, including the indirect costs charged by the subawardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates.

Unallowable Costs:

The following is a list of selected items of costs which are usually unallowable. This list is not all inclusive. For more information on whether costs are allowable, please refer to 2 CFR 200.420-475 General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, in the Uniform Guidance:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200/subpart-e>.

- Alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment costs
- Promotional give away items such as tote bags, coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc.
- Incentives such as gift certificates, cash, etc. given to entice participation in meetings, surveys, and other events.
- Rent for grantee owned facilities
- Award ceremonies
- Receptions
- Application writing costs
- Meals –Meals are allowable when they are part of the cost of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information (in such instances the cost of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences are also allowable). On the other hand, business meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to breakfast, lunch, or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost.

Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category. They are considered to be per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established travel policies subject to statutory limitations.

Review Criteria and Process

NAPDC Convening Award funds are administered by the NAPDC Executive Board with input from NAPDC community members. The community members who are requested to provide proposal reviews represent the diversity of NAPDC constituents and demonstrate independence of judgment and expertise in the area(s) of review assigned to them. Some NAPDC Executive Board members are included in the review process to fill knowledge gaps, to replace a community member who is unable to complete their reviews, or to otherwise facilitate the review process. The review processes abide by the USDA Conflict of Interest Policy to ensure that no one included or affiliated with a proposal is involved in its review.

NAPDC supports and encourages diversity in all members, volunteers and audiences, including full participation in programs, policy formulation, and decision-making. The proposal review process will make every effort to engage a diverse range of voices in reviewing applications as well as in awarding grants.

Contact Information

For questions about this opportunity please email agdatacoop@unl.edu