Summary of the Review of Individual Research Area Pre-Proposals - 3-step process

OVERVIEW OF STEPS:

Step 1: Review of Individual Research Area Pre-Proposals by the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) for conformance to instructions provided in the FY14 Request for Pre-Proposals.
Step 2: Review of Individual Research Area Pre-Proposals by Review Panels (RP).
Step 3: Review of Individual Research Area Pre-proposals by the Executive Committee (EC).

SUMMARY OF EACH STEP IN REVIEW PROCESS:

Step 1: Review of Pre-Proposal by the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) for conformance to instructions provided in the FY14 Request for Pre-Proposals.

All components of the pre-proposal are carefully reviewed by the NFO for conformance to the RFP guidelines. The NFO may return, without review, any pre-proposal that is not consistent with the instructions detailed in the RFP. All accepted individual RA pre-proposals are assigned to one or more review panels based on the focus of the proposed research.

Step 2: Review of Pre-Proposals by Review Panels.

The review panels comprise research area committee members and if warranted, external reviewers (i.e. scientists not funded through the USWBSI) whose interest and expertise is related to the research area. Each pre-proposal assigned to a review panel is first reviewed individually by each RP member addressing the following by assigning a numerical score of 1-5 (5=best):

i) Do the stated objectives of this pre-proposal address the current scientific needs of this research area within the overall goals of the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative?
ii) Are the proposed objectives and methods appropriate?
iii) Likelihood of success within the funding period.
iv) Investigator's qualifications.
v) Progress made within previous funding cycles.
vi) Reasonableness of the budget.

Each Research Area is assigned a funding working cap set by the Steering Committee. Following the completion of review by individual panel members, each review panel then convenes to reach a consensus and classifies each pre-proposal into one of the following funding categories:

1. **Recommended for Funding Group I (i.e. Category I-within Working Cap):**
   This category is for pre-proposals recommended for funding. The combined budgets of all pre-proposals in this category shall not exceed the working cap for the research area. Note that the Review Panel chairs will be provided spreadsheets and instructions for their use in facilitating the submission of the committee's recommendation.

2. **Recommended for Funding Group II (i.e. Category II-outside Working Cap):**
   This category is for any remaining pre-proposals recommended for funding but not within the 'working cap'. The overall review summaries for this subset should be assigned a **priority rank** from 1 to n*, with no duplication of rank. Those 'Overall Consensus

* 'n' = the number of Category II pre-proposals.

Summary' forms should also include the recommended funding level (i.e. amount) for each project.

3. **Not recommended for Funding (i.e. Category III).**

<u>Step 3</u>: Review of Individual Research Area Pre-proposals by the Executive Committee (EC).

The EC is responsible for reviewing all individual pre-proposals following the same guidelines as individual review panel members:

i) Do the stated objectives of this pre-proposal address the current scientific needs of this research area within the overall goals of the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative?
ii) Are the proposed objectives and methods appropriate?
iii) Likelihood of success within the funding period.
iv) Investigator's qualifications.
v) Progress made within previous funding cycles.
vi) Reasonableness of the budget.

The EC will regard the recommendations of the review panels as advisory and retains the ability to:

- Increase or decrease the actual amounts recommended for individual pre-proposal; and
- Change the Review Panel's recommended funding category for any given individual pre-proposal.

The small percentage that is held back from the 'working caps' will be allocated by the EC in a manner aimed at achieving overall balance in the final plan. Any changes made to the CPC's funding recommendation will be based on the EC's own reading of the individual pre-proposals, the advice from the Review Panels, and any other factors which influence the soundness of the final comprehensive research plan submitted for recommendation to USDA-ARS.