Southern SARE Producer Grant
Award and Management Process:

A guide to managing your Producer Grant project

Congratulations on receiving a Southern SARE Producer Grant. The following document provides guidelines on the grant award and grant management processes to assist you as you conduct your SARE-funded sustainable agriculture project.

Table of Contents

Feel free to contact Candace Pollock-Moore at cpollock@uga.edu or call 770-412-4786 with any questions.

Grant Award Process

Once a Producer is Awarded a Producer Grant

The producer receives initial notification via email of his/her award, which includes reviewers' comments for reference. A follow-up official award letter is sent by snail mail outlining signing the grant subaward contract, submitting invoices for reimbursement and fulfilling reporting requirements.

Budget Reviews

After the producer is notified of his/her award, Southern SARE reviews the project budget. If revisions are required, the budget is sent back to the producer for correction. Southern SARE budget reviews can range anywhere from one (1) to three (3) weeks, or longer depending on the time it takes to correct a budget that needs revisions.

If no revisions are required or once revisions have been made, the budget is sent forward to the University of Georgia College of Agriculture Business Office for additional reviews. Any budget found with errors is sent back to Southern SARE for correction. Once corrections are made or if no errors are found, the budget is then sent to University of Georgia Sponsored Projects for approval.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Contract

The UGA Sponsored Projects review process goes through several levels. Once UGA Sponsored Projects reviews the proposal, the department sends an email to the producer with a copy of the MOU, an audit certification form, and the link to University of Georgia's vendor registration system (**http://suppliers.uga.edu**). **All correspondence between UGA Sponsored Projects and the producer is via email. UGA Sponsored Projects does not snail mail documents.**

The MOU is the producer's grant subaward contract. It describes the rights and responsibilities as a SARE Producer Grant recipient. The MOU must be signed and returned to UGA Sponsored Projects.

In addition, an audit certification form must be filled out and returned to UGA Sponsored Projects, and the producer must register in UGA's vendor registration system. The vendor registration is required in order to process invoices for reimbursement.

Once the MOU, audit certification and vendor registration are filled out and returned, and the producer is registered in the vendor registration system, there is one more final review before the MOU is signed by the Assistant Director of Sponsored Projects at UGA. The MOU won't be executed until it has been entered into the procurement (PO) system. A signed, fully executed copy of the MOU is then sent to the producer for record keeping.

It is at this time that the grant project is officially executed. From the time a project is awarded to the time it is executed can take anywhere from **two (2) to four (4) months**.

Grant Management Process

Southern SARE provides guidelines for managing the financial requirements of a Producer Grant.

The following are some common categories that producers may have to make changes to regarding their grant project.

Budget Revisions

Sometimes a budget revision is needed to move monies from one spending category to another. Southern SARE must approve any revisions to a budget.

To learn what is required to process a budget revision, see the guielines on the Southern SARE website at: https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/financial-requirements/

Once the request has been received and approved by the SSARE Director, an approval notification will be emailed to the producer.

It may take up to **8 weeks** for revisions in budget requests to be processed.

No-Cost Extensions

Weather events, changes to labor or personnel, illness, broken equipment, delays in data collection and analysis, and other circumstances can impact the completion of a grant project. If a producer still has funds available in the project account and needs more time to complete a project beyond the original end date, a no-cost extension can be requested. No-cost extensions are only given for project-related activities. Extensions cannot be requested for the purpose of using up remaining funds.

Southern SARE must approve any no-cost extension requests. To learn what is required to file a no-cost extension, see the guidelines on the Southern SARE website at: https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/financial-requirements/

No-cost extensions cannot be requested any sooner than 90 days from the end date of the project. No-cost extensions can be requested for a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 12 months beyond the original end date of the project. Southern SARE does not fulfill a no-cost extension for longer than 12 months.

If more time is needed after the 12-month period, an additional extension can be requested. USDA requires that projects be up-to-date on annual reports before approving additional no-cost extensions. Address the no-cost extension request to Candace Pollock-Moore at cpollock@uga.edu

Once the request has been received, it goes through several layers of approval within the SSARE office. The no-cost extension is then sent to the University of Georgia College of Agriculture Business Office for approval. Once approved, the no-cost extension request is then sent to University of Georgia Sponsored Projects for approval. UGA Sponsored Projects emails the agreement amendment to the producer for signature. The amendment document must be signed and returned before the no-cost extension is fully executed.

It typically takes **six (6) to eight (8) weeks** for a no-cost extension to be executed from submission to approval.

Changing the Project Scope or Objectives

Modifying budgets or filing for no-cost extensions can sometimes alter the scope or objectives of a project. Other instances during the life of a grant project can also occur that may cause a need to change the scope or objectives of a project from its originally intended purpose.

Southern SARE must approve any requests to change the scope or objectives of a project. To learn what is required to file a request to change the project scope or objectives, see the guidelines on the Southern SARE website at:
https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/financial-requirements/

Once the request has been received, approval processing begins at the SSARE office and then forwarded to the UGA Sponsored Projects for approval. A formal modification to the award is sent to the producer to be signed and returned to UGA for finalization.

It may take up to **8 weeks** for the process, from request to approval to final modification of the award, to be completed.

Submitting Invoices for Reimbursement

Southern SARE grant awards operate as reimbursement. That is, the producer conducts the work, then submits invoices to Southern SARE to be reimbursed for project expenses.

Once awards are fully executed, SSARE Associate Accountant Jami Sealey, will email the producer a template to use for submitting invoices. The producer can also use his/her own invoice form.

Learn more about the details of what is required for reimbursement on Southern SARE's website at:
https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/financial-requirements/

Some things to keep in mind:

- The official start date of Producer Grant projects is April 1 of any given year. No invoices can be submitted for work done prior to April 1.

- Even though the project start date is April 1, no reimbursements can occur until the project MOU is fully executed.

- Producers cannot invoice for expenses that have not yet occurred. Producers must pay for expenses, then submit invoices for reimbursement. Producers cannot invoice for payment of quotes for items yet to be purchased.
- Only one invoice may be submitted per expenditure period. For example, if three (3) expenses occurred during the month of July, one invoice is submitted outlining each expense. The invoice period must be for the entire month. SSARE cannot accept more than one invoice for a given period of time. For example, if a producer sends an invoice for July 1-15, a second one cannot be sent

for July 16-31.

- Receipts are required for each expense per expenditure period.

- Expenditure dates must be consecutive. For example, you cannot submit expenditures for July, then submit expenditures the following month for May.

- A cumulative total is required on expenses from one expenditure date to the next on invoices.

- SSARE holds 25 percent of the final expenses until the final report is submitted and approved.

Provided there are no revisions needed on submitted invoices, it normally takes **four (4) weeks** to process reimbursements.

Reimbursements can be in the form of checks or ACH. Contact Denise Quick at denise.quick@uga.edu for more information.

Closing Out Your Grant

Before your grant project can be closed out, the following items must be received within 45 days of the project end date:

- Final report – The final report is prepared by the project investigator and submitted in the SARE Grant Management System.

- Final invoice – The final invoice documents the remaining expenses of your SARE-funded project. The period covered by the invoice must not go past the end date of your project. If there are no final expenses to invoice, a statement of final cumulative totals is required. The final invoice will be held without payment until the final report is submitted and approved.

All required closeout documentation must be received within 45 days of the subaward ending date to be compliant with the terms and conditions of the MOU subaward agreement. **Subawards with non-compliance status are subject to closure and forfeiture of any remaining funds.**

Grant Project Reporting Requirements

SARE Grant Management System

Once you are awarded a Southern SARE Producer Grant, your grant project is managed in the SARE Grant Management System (**http://projects.sare.org**) including your annual report, final report, and any project products. The SARE Grant Management System is a progressive style of reporting, which means you can log into your project at any point during the duration of your grant to update project information.

Annual Report

An annual report summarizes the progress of your SARE Producer Grant project.

An annual report is required each year a grant project is active, except for the final year. SSARE requests that annual reports be submitted by **April 1** each year. Late annual reports will result in sub-award invoices being held for payment until the delinquent report is received and approved.

Final Report

The final report, a culmination of the results of your SSARE Producer Grant project, is due **45 days** after the project end date, if you are not filing a no-cost extension. If you are filing a no-cost extension and it is approved, the submission of an annual report on the progress of your grant project for that given year is required.

Processing of your final invoice and paperwork associated with closing out your grant cannot be processed until your final report is submitted to the SARE Grant Management System and approved. Failure to submit your final report within the required timeline can result in the termination of your grant project and the forfeiture of any unpaid invoices.

Project Products

An outreach plan is required of Producer Grant projects to document how project results are shared with other producers and ag professionals in the sustainable ag community. Outreach activities can include workshops, publications, trainings, field demonstrations, videos, fact sheets, podcasts, webinars or other activities.

Any project products that are developed as a result of your Producer Grant should be uploaded to the SARE Grant Management System. This enables audiences to access useful tools and resources for their own sustainable agriculture interests.

Annual reports, final reports and project products are available for public search via the SARE Projects Database at: https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/

SARE Grant Management System

Grant applicants submit their annual and final reports of their grant project in the SARE Grant Management System (**http://projects.sare.org**) The SARE Grant Management System is a progressive style of reporting, which means you can log into your project at any point during the duration of your grant to update project information.

The SARE Grant Management System is divided into the following sections:

Project Information
> Abstract
> Project objectives

Cooperators

Research
> Materials and methods
> Number of farmers who participated in the research
> Results and discussion

Educational and Outreach Activities
Activities
>> Consultations
>> Curricula, factsheets, or educational tools
>> Journal articles
>> On-farm demonstrations
>> Online trainings
>> Published press articles, newsletters
>> Tours
>> Webinars, talks, presentations
>> Workshop/field days
>> Other educational activities

Participants
>> Number of farmers/ranchers who participated in education and outreach activities
>> Number of ag professionals who participated in educational activities

Education and Outreach Description

Learning Outcomes

Project Outcomes
> Number of farmers/ranchers who changed or adopted a practice
> Number of grants received that built upon the project
> Number of new working collaborations
> Description of project outcomes
> Recommendations

Participants

Submitting Your Reports

To begin updating your project report, log into the system using your username and password.

Logging in will take you the "Projects Home" page. To access your project, click on the project number of your approved grant project located under "Project Coordinator Links" **(To view or edit a Project, click on the project number)**. Producer Grant project numbers begin with "FS" followed by the year in which the grant was awarded. The series of numbers following the hyphen correspond to the number of Producer Grants awarded by SSARE. For example, FS19-313 is a Producer Grant awarded in 2019 and is the 313th Producer Grant funded.

Clicking on your project number to access your funded project will take you to the "Project Overview" page. Click on the **"Working Version"** link to access the various categories in your report to update your project, either as an annual report or as a final report.

If you have project products to add to your report, click on **"Add a product"** to submit your project product. This can include videos, publications, Power Point presentations or other outreach products.

Project Information

The Project Information section is divided into two parts:

Abstract: The abstract summarizes what your project is about and the project results.

Project objectives: The objectives of your project outline what you plan to study/measure as outlined in your proposal.

Click the **"Edit"** button next to the Project Information text to edit the sections.

Update each section by filling in the text box with the appropriate information. You may add photos, documents, graphs, and figures by clicking on the **"Add Media"** button above the text box. You can paste tables into the text box area. Once completed, save your changes by clicking on the **"Update Report"** button at the bottom of the page.

Cooperators

Cooperators play a significant role in helping farmers conduct project research and educational activities. Cooperators can be other farmers/ranchers, academic researchers, Cooperative Extension specialists, government agency personnel such as with NRCS, or non-profit organizations.

When adding cooperators, be sure to fill out sections designed with a **"red asterisk".** The red asterisk denotes require information. **A report cannot be successfully submitted without satisfying required fields.**

Research

The Research section allows farmers to provide a detailed description of the project design, research methods and materials, data analysis and all research findings.

The section is broken down into:

Materials and methods: This section describes the process involved in conducting the project and the logic behind the choices made. Materials include the items used to set up trials and conduct the research project. Methods discuss the research approaches that were taken to answer the objectives put forth in the research project.

Number of farmers who participated in the research: This section asks the farmer to list the number of farmers who participated in the research.

Results and discussion: This section allows farmers to discuss the results of their research project, how the methods were measured and whether their objectives were met.

Remember to utilize the **"Add Media"** button to upload photos, graphs, figures and documents. You may also hyperlink text with urls by using the **"paperclip"** icon in the toolbar.

Educational and Outreach Activities

Producer Grants require educational and outreach activities so farmers can share the results of their project with other members of their community.

Producers enter or update the total numbers of different types of educational resources created and the total numbers of different types of activities conducted by the project team.

Educational and outreach activities can include: consultations, curricula, factsheets, journal articles, on-farm demonstrations, online trainings, published press articles, tours, webinars, presentations, workshops or field days, and other educational activities.

Producers must also include the number of participants who attended the activities. In addition, a description of the educational and outreach activity or resource must be provided.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes is part of the reporting system that gathers data to measure the impact of the Southern SARE Producer Grant project on the farming community.

The Learning Outcomes section indicates how many farmers or others who participated in the project gained knowledge, attitude, skills and/or awareness as a result of the project.

Project Outcomes

Project Outcomes is part of the reporting system that gathers data to measure the impact of the Southern SARE Producer Grant project on the farming community.

The Project Outcomes section describes and assesses how your project has affected agricultural sustainability or will contribute to future sustainability. It includes the number of farmers who changed or adopted a practice, number of new working collaborations and any recommendations for future study.

Guidelines for Acknowledging Funding

As Southern SARE grantees work on their outreach plans and develop project products related to their grant, they are required by USDA-NIFA to acknowledge SARE funding in the materials that are developed.

The following guidelines are intended to assist grantees as they develop grant-related materials, such as posters, presentations, published journal articles, fact sheets, bulletins, videos, webinars and other products. Contact Ian Bennett at ian.bennett25@uga.edu for questions regarding SARE acknowledgement guidelines.

The use of the SARE logo is required.

The following sample acknowledgement is required for all initiatives supported by NIFA and funded by SARE: "**This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number XXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX through the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program under subaward number FS21-XXX. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.**" Grantees must reference the prime award under which they originally received the grant, adding reference to the Southern region and the SARE project number.

In addition to the acknowledgement statement, whenever practical, grantees are required to include NIFA's official identifier in publications, posters, websites, presentations and other materials resulting from their award.

Grantees must include the following disclaimer on all publications and materials, except for scientific articles or papers published in scientific journals: "**Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**"

Accompany a photo release form with project products that have been developed granting SARE rights and permissions to use the images, videos and/or figures in current and all future information projects. Uses may include (but are not limited to) the internet, news releases and print publications.

Quick Links

SARE Grant Management System: http://projects.sare.org

Financial Requirements: https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/financial-requirements/

Reporting Requirements: https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/reporting-requirements/

Guidelines for Acknowledging Funding: https://southern.sare.org/grants/manage-a-grant/guide-lines-for-acknowledging-funding/

For general questions on conducting your grant project: Candace Pollock-Moore, Producer Grant Manager at cpollock@uga.edu

For questions during the budget revision process: Tydaisha White, SSARE Grants Assistant at tydaisha.white@uga.edu

For questions related to invoicing and reimbursement of expenses: Denise Quick, SSARE Associate Accountant at denise.quick@uga.edu

For budget modifications, change in scope or objectives, change in PI, no-cost extensions, or other grant management related questions: Tydaisha White, SSARE Grants Assistant at tydaisha.white@uga.edu

For reporting requirements or issues with accessing the SARE Grant Management Database: Candace Pollock-Moore at cpollock@uga.edu

For communications, media relations, public relations and acknowledgement guidelines: DaraMonifah Cooper, SSARE Communications Specialist at daramonifah.cooper@uga.edu