



U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Last Revision Approved: 12/05/2023

[www.scabusa.org](http://www.scabusa.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>USWBSI Policies and Procedures Amendment Process</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>USWBSI’s Mission Statement</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>USWBSI’s Action Plan</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Structure and Roles of USWBSI Committees and Administrative Office</b> .....	<b>3</b>
	A. Steering Committee (SC).....	3
	B. Executive Committee (EC).....	6
	C. Research Area (RA) Committees.....	7
	D. Coordinated Project (CP) Committees.....	8
	E. Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO).....	10
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Research Plan and Budget Process (RPBP)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	A. Development of Program Descriptions and Research Priorities (PD-RP).....	11
	B. Development of the Request for Pre-Proposals (RFP).....	11
	C. Distribution and Advertisement of Request for Pre-Proposals.....	11
	D. Review Process.....	12
	E. Funding Recommendation.....	12
	F. Handling and Storage of Pre-Proposals.....	13
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Reporting of Progress</b> .....	<b>13</b>
	A. Purpose.....	13
	B. Process.....	13
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Annual National Fusarium Head Blight Forum (NFHB Forum)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
	A. Date and Site Selection.....	13
	B. Development of Program.....	13
<b>IX.</b>	<b>APPENDIX A – Index of Commonly Used Abbreviations/Acronyms</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>APPENDIX B – USWBSI’s Action Plan</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>APPENDIX C – Guidelines for Research-Based Workshops and Planning Meetings</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>XII.</b>	<b>APPENDIX D – USWBSI Code of Conduct</b> .....	<b>16</b>

**I. USWBSI Policies and Procedures Amendment Process**

- A. The Policies & Procedures (P&P) were developed by the NFO in conjunction with the Executive Committee. They were first approved by the Steering Committee (SC) on 7-24-01.
- B. Process for Amending Policies and Procedures.
  - 1. The Executive Committee will review the Policies and Procedures (P&P) periodically and recommend changes to the P&P to the Steering Committee.
  - 2. The P&P may be amended up to one time per year at the SC's spring meeting or at the December meeting if no spring meeting is held. Suggested changes must be submitted to the Networking & Facilitation Office by April 1 or November 1 if no spring meeting held that year.
  - 3. Any member of the Steering Committee may request changes to the P&P.
  - 4. After April 1, the Executive Committee will review all submitted suggested changes. If the Executive Committee agrees with suggested changes, the changes will be incorporated into the current P&P, and then submitted to the SC for final consideration.
  - 5. Any non-policy changes (i.e. language changed to bring in line with current policy) to the P&P require only approval by the Executive Committee.
  - 6. The Executive Committee will inform Steering Committee of all requested changes, including any that were not recommended to be incorporated into the Policies and Procedures.

**II. USWBSI's Mission Statement**

To enhance food safety and supply by reducing the impact of Fusarium Head Blight (scab) on wheat and barley.

**III. USWBSI's Action Plan**

- A. A five-year Action Plan was developed in collaboration with USDA-ARS to set the research goals and priorities for ARS-managed funds that support the U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative. The development process began during the 2006 annual National Fusarium Head Blight Forum (NFHB Forum) and was approved by the Steering Committee in May 2007.
- B. The expected outcomes of the Action Plan are improved research planning and accountability for USDA-ARS funding, greater collaboration among researchers, better communication with the Initiative's stakeholders and public at large, and more rapid attainment of the Initiative's mission (see II above).
- C. The Action Plan is a dynamic document and therefore will continue to evolve and change as needed (see Appendix B for link to current version).
- D. A comprehensive review of the USWBSI Action Plan will be undertaken at least once every new 4-year RFP cycle; but individual sections may be changed iteratively at the request of a RA/CP at a 2-year interval.

**IV. Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

The U.S. Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI) is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. USWBSI recognizes that our research and outreach efforts will have the greatest impact when the Initiative reflects the diverse communities we serve. We encourage individuals from underrepresented groups to apply for funding as the lead or co-PI and to engage in the governance of the USWBSI at every level. Additionally, PIs should consider diversity when recruiting post-docs, graduate students, and technical staff for USWBSI-funded research.

## V. Structure and Roles of USWBSI Committees and Administrative Office

### A. Steering Committee (SC).

#### 1. Membership

- a) Length of Term – Four (4) years (except for Research Area and Coordinated Project Committee chairs/co-chairs whose term on the Steering Committee is tied to their term or position on these committees). Approximately one-third of the Steering Committee terms will expire every year and will be reviewed for option to renew or rotate off. Members may be re-elected. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms that a member may serve.
- b) Number of Members – 30-38
- c) Committee Positions – Co-Chairs (Researcher and Grower or Industry Representative)
- d) Committee Composition

The Steering Committee shall consist of:

- > Executive Committee members (9)
  - > Research Area and Coordinated Project Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs (10)
  - > Agricultural Experiment Stations (2) – At least one (1) rep from both the North Central (NCRA) and Southern (SAAESD) Regional Associations of Agricultural Experiment Stations Directors shall be appointed for a four-year term. In the fall prior to an expiring term, the NFO will contact the relevant association and request they designate a representative to the steering committee (vote by SC is not required).
  - > Representatives – At least one (1) member, but no more than five (5) (includes Executive Committee members), from at least 90% of the following areas:
    - Wheat Growers (at least one spring and one winter)
    - Barley Growers
    - Durum Growers
    - Wheat Millers
    - Crop Protection Industry
    - Malting, Distilling and Brewing Industry
    - Pasta Industry
    - Seed Industry
    - Public Plant Breeder – Wheat (at least one spring and one winter)
    - Public Plant Breeder – Barley
    - Pathology – Wheat (at least one spring and one winter)
    - Pathology – Barley
    - Food Safety and Toxicology
    - Pre-breeding and Germplasm Development
    - Pathogen Biology and Genetics
  - > The following organizations each appoint one of the representative positions to the Steering Committee, the individuals in the following positions are referenced as Organizational Representatives:
    - Minnesota Barley Council
    - National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG)
    - North American Millers' Association (NAMA)
    - North Dakota Barley Council
    - U.S. Durum Growers Association (USDG)
  - > The USDA-ARS National Program Leader who oversees the USWBSI, is included in all USWBSI Steering Committee communications and meetings, by virtue of their position, however they hold no voting rights and are not listed as a member of the SC.
- e) Commodity Groups (CG)
    - > Each Steering Committee member will be designated (either by self-appointment or by

- Executive Committee) to one of the following commodity groups:
- Barley
  - Durum
  - Spring Wheat
  - Winter Wheat
- > The sole purpose and responsibility of the commodity groups is to nominate their representative(s) for election to the Executive Committee.
2. Election of Members and Filling of Vacancies.
- a) Nomination process and election of Steering Committee members shall take place electronically in the fall of each year.
- > The FHB Community will be solicited for nominations via email to the USWBSI FHB listserv and requested to submit nomination form.
  - > Nominations must include a brief biosketch of candidate, and confirmation the nominee is willing to serve.
  - > The NFO reviews submitted nominations and reaches out to any key groups for nominations if vacancies remain after open nomination request.
  - > The final list of nominations are reviewed with Co-Chairs and upon approval election commences.
- b) Members of the Steering Committee will vote on nominees electronically prior to the Steering Committee Meeting held in conjunction with the annual NFHB Forum.
- > North Central and Southern Regional Agricultural Experiment Station Associations of Directors will nominate their representatives.
- c) Voting Procedure – Election to the Steering Committee will be determined on an individual basis (i.e. casting a vote for an individual nominee is the equivalent of casting an individual ballot). The election will be deemed valid, and a nominee elected if the following criteria are met:
- > A quorum response of the SC is achieved (votes received by more than 50% of the current Steering Committee members). Blank votes will be considered invalid.
  - > Individual candidates are validated when the total number of ‘yes’ votes received is greater than 50% of the sum of the total votes cast (simple majority) and are approved in rank order of ‘yes’ votes received.
  - > Final outcome is subject to the maximum number of representatives per area and the maximum number of Steering Committee members as per the Policies and Procedures. In the event that the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies in any given area, nominee(s) will be appointed in accordance with the total number of ‘Yes’ votes received.
- d) If a Steering Committee member resigns mid-term, the Executive Committee has the authority to appoint a person to serve out the remainder of the term.
3. Meetings.
- a) The Steering Committee shall meet a minimum of once per year at the annual NFHB Forum. The Steering Committee will also meet in the spring prior to a new RFP ‘Call for Pre-Proposals’.
- b) The USWBSI Co-Chairs shall chair Steering Committee meetings.
- c) Attendance by non-members is at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.
- d) The meeting in which the Steering Committee reviews and approves the recommended Budget Plan is a closed meeting (SC members only). However, the Co-chairs may request the Steering Committee waive this policy on an individual basis.
- e) Incoming Steering Committee members are allowed to participate in Steering Committee meetings in observation status only once elected, but prior to term starting, to aid in onboarding.

- f) The USDA-ARS National Program Staff who oversees the USWBSI has a standing invitation to participate in all USWBSI Steering Committee meetings.
4. Voting Procedures.
- a) Quorum.  
A quorum shall consist of more than 50% of the current members. This also pertains to voting electronically.
  - b) Meetings.  
Any subject may be brought to the Steering Committee for consideration in the form of a motion. Once the motion has been made and seconded, it is open for discussion. Members may ask for an electronic vote on any issue brought before the Steering Committee if there are any members not present during the meeting.
  - c) Voting Alternates.  
Only two categories of Steering Committee members can designate a voting alternate if they are unable to attend the Steering Committee meeting:
    - > Organizational Representatives
    - > Research Area and Coordinated Project Committee Chairs (Alternate: Vice-Chair)
  - d) Mail/Electronic Voting.
    - > In addition to votes called for at committee meetings, electronic votes may also be conducted in between committee meetings on issues put forward by the Co-Chairs or the Executive Committee.
    - > Every effort will be made to ensure all members receive information regarding the matter under consideration.
  - e) Results.  
Voting outcome shall be determined by a simple majority of votes cast.
5. Responsibilities.
- Along with providing direction and guidance to the Initiative, the Steering Committee is responsible for the following:
- a) Review and approve research area program descriptions and research priorities.
  - b) Review and approve the process for the development of the annual research plan and budget recommendations, including setting the research category working caps.
  - c) Review and approve the Executive Committee's recommended Research Plan & Budget (RPB).
  - d) Review and approve the structure and/or composition of the Steering Committee, Executive Committee and Research Area and Coordinated Project Committees.
  - e) The Steering Committee authorizes the Executive Committee to act on its behalf.
    - > The Executive Committee must notify the Steering Committee promptly of its actions by e-mail.
    - > The Steering Committee can reverse any decision at the next Steering Committee meeting.

**B. Executive Committee (EC).**

1. Membership.
  - a) Committee Positions – Co-Chairs (Same as Steering Committee Co-Chairs).
  - b) Length of Term – Four (4) years. Approximately one-quarter of the Executive Committee terms will expire every year and will be reviewed for option to renew or rotate off. Members may be re-elected to serve consecutive terms.
  - c) Number of representatives: Nine (9)  
Members must represent at least one of each of the following:
    - > Barley: one representative
    - > Durum: one representative
    - > Spring Wheat: two representatives
    - > Winter Wheat: two representatives
    - > Milling Industry: one representative
    - > Malting Industry: one representative
    - > Private Grower: one representative
  - d) The USDA-ARS National Program Leader who oversees the USWBSI, is included in all USWBSI Executive Committee communications and meetings, by virtue of their position, however they hold no voting rights and are not listed as a member of the EC.
  - e) Executive Committee members shall not serve concurrently as members of Research Area or Coordinated Project Committees.
2. Appointment of Members and Filling of Vacancies.
  - a) Nomination process and appointment of Executive Committee members shall take place electronically in the fall of each year.
    - > Nomination Process: One of the EC members by aligned Commodity Group (as designated under Section B.1.c.) or an aligned representative SC member will be appointed by the Co-Chairs (one or both) to facilitate the nomination and appointment process of their representative for the EC. Members of the Commodity Group will consider nominees and select one for approval by the Steering Committee
    - > Approval Process: A nominee is appointed if both of the following criteria are met:
      - A quorum response of the SC is achieved (votes received by more than 50% of the current Steering Committee members). Blank votes will be considered invalid.
      - Individual candidates are approved if the total number of 'yes' votes received is greater than 50% of the sum of the total votes cast (simple majority).
3. Meetings.

Executive Committee will meet as needed.
4. Responsibilities.
  - a) Review Research Area Program Description-Research Priorities developed by the Research Area Committees in cooperation with the Coordinated Project Committee Chairs.
  - b) On behalf of the EC, the NFO Executive Director (Research Co-Chair) reviews and approves the annual Request for Pre-Proposals document developed by the Networking & Facilitation Office.
  - c) Develop in conjunction with the Networking & Facilitation Office (NFO) the process for evaluating pre-proposals
  - d) Develop annual research plan and budget based on review of pre-proposals and recommendation of review panels for consideration by Steering Committee.
  - e) Planning of Annual NFHB Forum.
    - > Approve the general format for the Annual NFHB Forum.
    - > Select the location and dates for the Annual NFHB Forum.
    - > Forum Organizing Committee to develop the program for the Annual NFHB Forum.

- > At least one member of EC serves as FOC Co-Chair, the other Co-Chair can be selected from the Steering Committee.
  - f) Review and approve the budget for research-based workshops and planning meetings submitted by Research Area or Coordinated Project Committees (See Appendix C for Research-based Workshops and Planning Meetings Guidelines).
  - g) Develop recommendation of appointments for Research Area and Coordinated Project committee positions (Chair/Vice-Chair or Co-chairs) to the Steering Committee for approval.
  - h) Monitor terms of Research Area and Coordinated Project Committee members.
  - i) Review and approve operations of the NFO.
  - j) Review and approve annual calendar/timetable of USWBSI's activities.
  - k) Inform Steering Committee of all executive actions and decisions.
- 5. Voting Procedures.
  - a) Quorum.
 

A quorum shall consist of more than 50% of the current members. This also pertains to voting electronically.
  - b) Meetings.
 

Any subject may be brought to the Executive Committee for consideration in the form of a motion. Once the motion has been made and seconded, it is open for discussion. Members may ask for an electronic vote on any issue brought before the Executive Committee if there are any members not present during the meeting.
  - c) Electronic Voting.
    - > In addition to votes called for at committee meetings, electronic votes may also be conducted in between committee meetings on issues put forward by the Co-Chairs or committee members.
    - > Every effort will be made to ensure all members receive information regarding the matter under consideration.
  - d) Results.
 

Voting outcome shall be determined by a simple majority of votes cast.

### C. Research Area (RA) Committees.

1. Membership.
  - a) Committee Positions - Chair and Vice-Chair or Co-Chairs.
  - b) Length of Term.
    - > Chair/Vice-Chair/Co-Chair – Two (2) year term, with option to reappoint for a maximum of two consecutive terms in any given period of service.
    - > Members – Four (4) years. Members may be reappointed.
    - > Terms begin January 1 and end December 31
  - c) Number of Members – Four (4) minimum.
  - d) Committee Composition.
    - > To the extent possible, members should represent different aspects of the research area.
    - > If possible, no two members should represent a single institution.
    - > At least one member should be someone who does not receive funding through the USWBSI, or at the very least, through the research area for which he/she is a committee member.
    - > Review Panels – At least one external reviewer should be added to each Research Area Committee for the review of pre-proposals if warranted.



2. Election of Members and Filling of Vacancies.
  - a) Elections of research area members will take place in the fall.
  - b) Nomination Process for Member Appointment.
    - > Nominees for committee members will be selected by researchers and stakeholders connected with the research area.
    - > The current RA Committee Chair will facilitate the nomination process.
    - > Selected nominees will then be submitted to the NFO, for inclusion in the election ballot for steering committee - final approval.
  - c) Committee positions (Chair/Vice-chair) shall be appointed by the Executive Committee
    - > Individuals being considered for chair positions must be current members of the Research Area Committee.
    - > If possible, the Chair and Vice-Chair of a committee should not be from the same institution.
  - d) Filling of Vacancies.
 

If a Research Area Committee member resigns mid-term, the Executive Committee will appoint an individual to fill the vacant seat for the remainder of the term.
3. Responsibilities.
  - a) Research Area Committee Members
    - > Draft Program Descriptions and Research Priorities for the Request for Pre-Proposal process based on the Action Plan
    - > In role of review panel member, review and provide recommendation for funding of pre-proposals providing chair with input on final recommendations for the Executive Committee.
  - b) Research Area Committee Chairs
    - > Act as liaison between the Executive Committee and/or the Networking & Facilitation Office and their respective committees.
    - > Serve as members of the Steering Committee.
    - > Work with their members to draft annual Research Area Program Description- Research Priorities based on the Action Plan.
    - > Draft and submit Research Area Workshop proposals to the Executive Committee for consideration.
    - > Annually nominate an individual to serve on the Forum Organizing Committee.
    - > In role as Review Panel Chair:
      - Facilitate the review of pre-proposals submitted to their research area.
      - Develop recommendation of funding for consideration by the Executive Committee.
      - Provide comments/suggestions for proposed recipients and non-recipients to be included in the notification of funding.

#### **D. Coordinated Project (CP) Committees**

1. Membership.
  - a) Committee Positions - Chair.
  - b) Length of Term.
    - > Chair – Two (2) year term, with option to reappoint for a maximum of two consecutive terms in any given period of service.
    - > Members – Four (4) years. Members may be reappointed.
    - > Terms begin January 1 and end December 31
  - c) Number of Members – Three (3) minimum.

- d) Committee Composition.
  - > If possible, no two members should represent a single institution.
  - > Review Panels – At least one external reviewer will be added to the Coordinated Project Committee for the review of pre-proposals if warranted.
2. Election of Members and Filling of Vacancies.
  - a) Elections of committee members will take place in the fall.
  - b) Nomination Process for Member Appointment.
    - > Nominees for committee members will be selected by researchers and stakeholders connected with the coordinated project either by commodity or region.
    - > The current CP Committee Chair will facilitate the nomination process.
    - > Selected nominees will then be submitted to the NFO for inclusion in the election ballot for steering committee final approval.
  - c) Committee Chair shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.  
Individuals being considered for Chair must be current members of the Coordinated Project Committee.
  - d) Filling of Vacancies.  
If a Coordinated Project Committee member resigns mid-term, the Executive Committee will appoint an individual to fill the vacant seat for the remainder of the term.
3. Responsibilities.
  - a) Coordinated Project Committee Members
    - > Develop coordinated project proposal by incorporating proposed research projects submitted to and reviewed by their committee.
    - > Draft Summary of Progress based on detailed progress reports submitted by cooperating PIs for each proposed research project included in the funded coordinated project.
    - > In role as member of a review panel, review and provide recommendation for funding of pre-proposals providing chair with input on final recommendations for the Executive Committee.
  - b) Coordinated Project Committee Chairs
    - > Act as liaison between the Executive Committee and/or the Networking & Facilitation Office and their respective committees.
    - > Serve as members of the Steering Committee.
    - > Work with Research Area Committees to draft annual Research Area Program Description-Research Priorities based on the Action Plan.
    - > Draft and submit Planning Meeting Proposals to the Executive Committee for consideration.
    - > Coordinate with other CP Chairs to annually nominate an individual to the Forum Organizing Committee.
    - > In role as Review Panel Chair:
      - Facilitate the review of pre-proposals submitted to their Coordinated Project area
      - Develop recommendation of funding for consideration by the Executive Committee; and
      - Provide comments/suggestions on proposed recipients and non-recipients to be included in the notification of funding.

**E. Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO).**

1. Purpose.  
The purpose of the Networking & Facilitation Office is to act as the administrative and communication headquarters for the USWBSI.
2. Personnel.
  - a) Executive Director
  - b) Director of Operations
  - c) Independent Contracted Positions for key responsibilities
  - d) Support staff for administrative and grant management responsibilities
3. Responsibilities.
  - a) Operations and Financial Management
    - > Provide vision for the administration and execution of the evolving responsibilities of the NFO.
    - > Oversee the business plans and fiscal operations that support the strategic plans and goals of the USWBSI.
    - > Develop annual NFO budget and documentation to support the NFO operations.
    - > Monitor and track NFO award spending and financial status.
    - > Ensure effective, user-friendly administrative operations for all USWBSI leaders, researchers, and stakeholders with a focus on minimizing barriers and time arising from administrative burdens that would impede the Initiative's success.
    - > Foster a working environment for the NFO team to advance organizational strategies through innovation and collaboration.
  - b) Facilitate Communication.
    - > Administrative support for Steering Committee and Executive Committee.
      - Organize Steering Committee and Executive Committee meetings and communications.
      - Record and distribute minutes.
      - Inform Executive Committee of Networking & Facilitation Office activities.
      - Inform Steering Committee of Executive Committee actions, meetings, etc.
      - Facilitate communication between Steering Committee, Executive Committee and Research Area and Coordinated Project Committees.
      - Monitor terms for all USWBSI committees and facilitate nomination and election processes.
    - > Act as liaison between USWBSI and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS).
    - > Manage the USWBSI's Website.
    - > Oversee the USWBSI communications plan and strategy, including production and distribution of Fusarium Focus Newsletters, advocacy materials, social media, general communications, and press releases.
    - > Maintain email list serves.
    - > Act as a rapid clearinghouse of scab related questions.
  - c) Conference Management/Educational Programming.
    - > Annual National Fusarium Head Blight Forum.
      - Select conference location and lodging in city selected by the Executive Committee.
      - Work with the Forum Organizing Committee (FOC) Co-Chairs to facilitate the ideas and efforts of the FOC.
      - Coordinate all facets of conference arrangements including:
        - Pre-registration and conference check-in.
        - Facilitate program development and speaker/session arrangements

- Coordinate special events/workshops/socials
- Coordinate poster sessions for virtual/in-person viewing.
- Compile and produce forum proceedings.
- Secure sponsor donations.
- > Provide organizational support for Scabinar, Early Career Meetups, as well as additional workshops, events, programs, webinars held throughout the year.
- d) Request for Pre-Proposal Process.
  - > Draft Request for Pre-Proposals (RFP) and Continuation Requests, incorporating feedback received from previous year's review panels, and submit the document to the NFO Executive Director (Research Co-Chair) for final approval.
  - > Distribute the Request for Pre-Proposal/Continuation Request Application using various electronic mailing lists.
  - > Facilitate review process for pre-proposals and continuations.
  - > Notify applicants of funding recommendations.
  - > Forward USWBSI's annual Research Plan and Budget (i.e. grant proposals) to USDA-ARS.
- e) Resource Management/Accountability Center.
  - > Maintain records on all pre-proposals, projects, and grants submitted and recommended for funding to USDA-ARS.
  - > Generate and process progress-reporting forms.
  - > Oversee production and management of the USWBSI's Website including various databases pertaining to research and administrative aspects of the USWBSI.
  - > Maintain records of all committee activities and actions.
  - > Generate reports requested by committees.

## VI. Research Plan and Budget Process (RPBP)

- A. Development of Program Descriptions and Research Priorities (PD-RP).
  1. Research Area Committees, working in cooperation with the Coordinated Project Committees shall draft program descriptions and research priorities based on the Initiative's Action Plan. Drafts of the research priorities shall be posted on the Web for feedback from the Steering Committee, Executive Committee, and the community at large. Drafts continue to evolve as input is acquired.
  2. Final drafts are submitted to the Executive Committee and Steering Committee for approval at the spring Steering Committee meeting.
- B. Development of the Request for Pre-Proposals (RFP).
  1. The Networking & Facilitation Office shall develop the Request for Pre-Proposals, incorporating feedback from previous year's research committees/review panels, and the Executive Committee.
  2. Indirect Cost (IDC) Rate Policy: Because Fusarium head blight is such a severe problem for the U.S. wheat and barley industries, USWBSI's review process focuses on the competitiveness of total projects costs (i.e. direct and indirect) to maximize total funding used for research.
- C. Distribution and Advertisement of Request for Pre-Proposals.
  1. To the extent possible, electronic copies of the Request for Pre-Proposals shall be distributed to the following:
    - a) Current and former USWBSI researchers.
      - > Non-funded researchers who previously submitted pre-proposals.
      - > Previous attendees of the National Fusarium Head Blight Forums.
    - b) Electronic notices shall be sent to the following:
      - > FHB Listserv
      - > Agricultural Experiment Station Directors

- > Extension Service Directors
  - > Administrative Heads
  - > Academic Heads
  - > USDA-ARS-National Program Staff (NPS)
  - > GrainGenes Listserv
  - > 1890 Land Grant Institutions
- c) Electronic versions shall be posted on the Initiative's Web site.
- D. Review Process.
1. Setting of Working Caps (WC).
    - a) The Steering Committee will be provided with relevant information from previous year's funding allocation.
    - b) Steering Committee members will then submit their individual recommendation for percentage of allocation for each research area and coordinated project.
    - c) Input will be summarized and redistributed to the Steering Committee for open discussion.
    - d) A final vote of the Working Caps along with option for comments is distributed a second time and results are reviewed by the Executive Committee.
    - e) A summary of the Steering Committee's comments will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration in developing final recommended working caps. The EC will utilize a No Outlier Average determined using a Whisker Plot when assessing the compiled SC results for a final recommendation on the Working Cap.
    - f) The Executive Committee will develop recommended working caps and submit them to the Steering Committee for final approval.
  2. Processing and Review of Pre-Proposals.
    - a) Pre-proposals are confidential documents that include all information/documents required to evaluate the value of the project.
    - b) Research Area (RA) and Coordinated Project (CP) Based Pre-Proposals
      - > Review of Pre-Proposals - Year 1
        - Once pre-proposals are received by the Networking & Facilitation Office, access will be provided to the appropriate Review Panels, as well as the Executive Committee, along with review guidelines and working caps.
        - After the review panels have reviewed their assigned pre-proposals, the Chair shall collect their committee's review summaries. In conjunction with the Vice-Chair, an overall summary of reviewers' ratings will be compiled into a comprehensive funding recommendation and submitted to the Executive Committee for review. Review Panel chairs will then forward the original review summaries (individual and overall) to the Networking & Facilitation Office, prior to the annual forum.
      - > Review of Continuation Awards - Year 2/3/4: The Review Panels and the Executive Committee will review the continuation funding requests to determine funding recommendation for year 2/3/4.
  3. The Executive Committee shall meet with each of the Review Panel Chairs and Vice-Chairs (if applicable) to discuss their panel's recommendations.
- E. Funding Recommendation.
1. Once the Executive Committee has received the Review Panels' recommendation regarding submitted pre-proposals, the Executive Committee shall reconcile the recommendations with the available funds.
  2. The Executive Committee shall then present a proposed funding allocation to the Steering Committee for recommendations and approval.
  3. Once the Steering Committee approves the budget allocation, the Networking & Facilitation Office shall email notification to all researchers who submitted a pre-proposal.

4. The Review Panel chairs shall provide comments and recommendations to be included in the letter of notification. Additionally, the Executive Committee may offer comments on the final funding decisions. The instructions for resubmitting final proposals shall be included for those researchers recommended for award funding to USDA-ARS. Final proposals are submitted to the Networking & Facilitation Office as aggregate single PI grants (i.e. may contain multiple projects).
  5. The Networking & Facilitation Office will forward the grant proposals as a comprehensive recommendation to USDA-ARS.
    - a) All Research Grant Agreements that are recommended by the USWBSI are for a one-year award period.
    - b) Grant proposals are confidential documents.
    - c) PIs shall submit electronically one non-technical abstract for each USWBSI recommended project that will be made public through the Initiative's Web site.
- F. Handling and Storage of Pre-Proposals.**
1. Original submissions of pre-proposals will be confidentially stored by the NFO for three years.
  2. The Executive Committee will have access to pre-proposals for up to one year.
  3. The Review Panels will no longer have access immediately following the final submission of all grant applications to USDA-ARS.

## **VII. Reporting of Progress**

ARS contractually requires a Final Performance Report (FPR) for all Research Grant Agreements (RGA).

### **A. Purpose.**

1. Accountability.
2. Real-time communication among scientists.

### **B. Process.**

1. Principal Investigators (PIs) are required to submit a Performance Report (PR) for each single year an award is received. A Final Performance Report is required at the end of the final year of the Research Agreement.
2. The Networking & Facilitation Office, working with the Executive Committee and ARS, will generate the FPR forms. The Performance Reports will be sent to the Principal Investigators in early June. Principal Investigators shall complete the report, with signature, to the Networking & Facilitation Office by mid-July. The Networking & Facilitation Office shall then forward the PRs to ARS's Grants and Agreements Management Branch (GAMB)
3. USDA-ARS requires Final Performance Reports be accessible to the public. Therefore, the Final Performance Reports shall be made available through the USWBSI Website.

## **VIII. Annual National Fusarium Head Blight Forum (NFHB Forum)**

### **A. Date and Site Selection.**

1. The Executive Committee will select NFHB Forum dates and the city in which it will be held.
2. Prior to finalizing the dates, feedback from the scab community will be solicited for possible conflicts with other events.

### **B. Development of Program.**

1. The Executive Committee shall approve the general format.
2. The Executive Committee will appoint a Forum Organizing Committee, which should include members from the research area and coordinated project committees, to develop the research sessions for the NFHB Forum.
3. The Forum Organizing Committee (FOC) will be responsible for development of the program, speaker solicitation, and onsite speaker moderation and engagement. Additionally, they will provide input on new offerings and opportunities to enhance the program.
4. Speakers for NFHB Forum Program should be finalized by late-August or early September.

**IX. APPENDIX A – Index of Commonly Used Abbreviations/Acronyms**

ADODR - Authorized Departmental Officer's Designated Representative  
 AES – Agricultural Experiment Station  
 ARS – Agricultural Research Service  
 BAR-CP – Barley Coordinated Project  
 CG – Commodity Group  
 CP – Coordinated Project  
 CPC – Coordinated Project Committee  
 DON – Deoxynivalenol  
 EC – Executive Committee  
 ESCOP – Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (Agricultural Experiment Station)  
 FHB – Fusarium head blight or scab  
 FOC – Forum Organizing Committee  
 FPR – Final Performance Report  
 FST – Food Safety and Toxicology (Research Area)  
 GAMB – Grants and Agreements Management Branch (USDA-ARS)  
 GDER – Gene Discovery and Engineering Resistance (Research Area)  
 HWW-CP – Hard Winter Wheat Coordinated Project  
 IDC – Indirect Costs  
 MGMT – FHB Management (Research Area)  
 NCE – No-Cost Extension  
 NCRA – North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
 NFO – Networking & Facilitation Office  
 NPS – National Program Staff  
 PBG – Pathogen Biology and Genetics (Research Area)  
 P&P – Policies and Procedures  
 PD-RP – Program Descriptions and Research Priorities  
 PI – Principal Investigator  
 RA – Research Area  
 RAC – Research Area Committee  
 PD-RP – Program Description and Research Priorities  
 RFP – Request for Pre-Proposals  
 RGA – Research Grant Agreements (ARS awards)  
 RRPB – Recommended Research Plan & Budget  
 RP – Review Panels  
 SAAESD – Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors  
 SC – Steering Committee  
 USWBSI – U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (or the ‘Scab Initiative’)  
 USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture  
 VDHR – Variety Development & Host Resistance (Research Area)  
 NWW – Northern Winter Wheat Region (VDHR Coordinated Project)  
 SPR – Spring Wheat Region (VDHR Coordinated Project)  
 SWW – Southern Red Winter Wheat Region (VDHR Coordinated Project)  
 WC – Working Caps

**X. APPENDIX B – USWBSI’s Action Plan****USWBSI’s Action Plan** (<https://scabusa.org/about#action-plan>)

Last revised: 5/2023

**XI. APPENDIX C – Guidelines for Research-Based Workshops and Planning Meetings**

Last Revised: 6/21/21

In order to better facilitate the exchange of information, Research Area and Coordinated Project Committees are encouraged to develop workshops or planning meetings for their research area or coordinated project. There is a line item in the budget for the Networking and Facilitation Office (NFO) to provide financial support for said workshops or planning meetings.

**Guidelines for Submitting Proposals:**

- Workshop proposals are developed and submitted through the Research Area or Coordinated Project Committees for consideration by the Executive Committee.
- Proposals must be received by the NFO by the second Tuesday of March for consideration by the Executive Committee for the current and upcoming fiscal years.
- All proposals received by this deadline will be considered simultaneously by the Executive Committee. In the event that budget resources are not fully employed, proposals received after the deadline and approved by the EC will be considered by the EC in the order in which they are received.
- A maximum of three workshops or planning meetings will be eligible for financial support each fiscal year, although the EC has the authority to waive the maximum if resources are available.
- A research area or coordinated project committee can only submit one proposal per fiscal year.
- Proposals should contain the following:
  - Name(s) of Workshop or Planning Meeting Coordinator (not necessarily the Research Area Committee or Coordinated Project Committee chair).
  - Purpose/Description of Workshop.
  - Relevance to the USWBSI’s mission and Action Plan.
  - Detailed Budget.

**Workshop Participation**

- Executive Committee approved workshops or meetings should be announced through the FHB Listserv with a stated deadline for receipt of application by interested parties. Physical and financial resources may limit the number of participants.
- Interested parties will be encouraged to contact the workshop or meeting coordinator, but may also work through the NFO.
- An appropriate broad-based representation of scientists and stakeholders is encouraged.

**Guidelines for Financial Support by the NFO**

- Final allocation of resources will be decided by the NFO and the workshop coordinator as soon as possible after the application deadline.
- All participants will be notified prior to the workshop of the maximum amount of travel funds that will be available.
- Travel reimbursement will be managed through the NFO.

**Sponsorship**

Organizers are encouraged to seek corporate sponsorship for their workshops or meetings.

**Final Report**

The Research Area or Coordinated Project Chair, or the Workshop Coordinator, will submit a final report to the NFO following the workshop. Reports will be distributed to the Executive Committee and posted on the Initiative’s Web site.



## XII. APPENDIX D – USWBSI Code of Conduct

Established: 9/15/2023

The USWBSI promotes an environment that is inclusive of all people, recognizing their unique abilities, strengths and differences and is committed to providing a safe and productive working environment for all. The USWBSI outlines the following expectations for the USWBSI community and expects that all parties affiliated with the USWBSI also acknowledge and comply with this Code of Conduct.

### Expected Behavior

- Treat all participants with kindness, respect, and consideration, valuing a diversity of views and opinions (including those you may not share).
- Communicate openly, with respect for other participants, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
- Refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech directed toward others.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants. Alert authorities if you notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress.
- Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue, hotels, USWBSI-contracted facility, or any other venue of USWBSI affiliated activities.
- Within the conduct of USWBSI events, attendees may enjoy alcoholic beverages. Responsible consumption of alcohol is expected.

### Unacceptable Behavior

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form will not be accepted. Harassment includes speech or behavior that is not welcome or is personally offensive. Behavior that is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another, so use discretion to be certain respect is communicated. Harassment intended in a joking manner still constitutes unacceptable behavior.
- Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to:
  - Physical or verbal abuse
  - Unwelcome or offensive verbal comments or exclusionary behavior related to age, appearance or body size, employment or military status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, individual lifestyle, marital status, national origin, physical or cognitive ability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, race, or religion
  - Inappropriate physical contact
  - Unwanted sexual attention
  - Use of sexual or discriminatory images in public spaces or in presentations
  - Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following
  - Taking photographs or recording of another individual's oral presentation or poster when indicated that photography or recording is not permitted
  - Sustained or repeated disruption of talks or other events
  - Bullying behavior
  - Retaliation for reporting unacceptable behavior

### Notification

If you are being harassed, observe someone else being harassed, or have a concern(s) that constitutes an immediate or serious threat to public safety, you should contact local authorities (by calling 911) and notify facility security immediately.

If you are not in immediate danger but feel that you are the subject of unacceptable behavior, have witnessed any such behavior, or have other concerns, please contact the USWBSI NFO ([nfo@scabusa.org](mailto:nfo@scabusa.org) or call 517-290-5023) or contact any member of the USWBSI Executive Committee (see listing at <https://scabusa.org/committees>). The USWBSI will evaluate the situation on a case-by-case basis. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, expulsion of an individual from attendance at or participation in an event without prior warning or refund; and limits, restrictions, or conditions on participation in or attendance at future USWBSI events.