

Call for Pre-Proposals and Collaborators for Biodynamic Research Submission Guide

1. Background

The Biodynamic Research Development Program is a project of the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association (BDA). The program is forming in response to direction from BDA members and other stakeholders, who have indicated that research is needed at this time to support the work of biodynamic farmers and the further development of the biodynamic movement.

The goal of the Biodynamic Research Development Program is to advance the understanding and practice of biodynamics by:

- Supporting innovative, rigorous, relevant, and in some cases, publishable biodynamic research;
- Creating a peer learning community of biodynamic researchers;
- Creating and maintaining online resources on biodynamic research for researchers, funders and the general public;
- Fostering research collaboration with farmers and other stakeholders.

The design and implementation of the program is guided by a Steering Team with input from an informal peer group of advisors. Members of the Steering Team are Dr. Walter Goldstein (Lead researcher and Executive Director, Mandaamin Institute), Dr. Jeffrey Endelman (Postdoctoral Associate in plant breeding and genetics), Malcolm Gardner (Independent researcher and leader of Hudson Valley Biodynamic Group), Dr. Jennifer Reeve (Assistant Professor of Organic and Sustainable Agriculture at Utah State University), Robert Karp (Executive Director, Biodynamic Association), and Sarah Weber (Research Coordinator, Biodynamic Association).

For more information on biodynamics, this program and the work of the Association please go to www.biodynamics.com.

2. Overview of Call for Pre-proposals and Collaborators

At this time we are inviting pre-proposals for biodynamic research projects. Submissions will be evaluated by a group of independent reviewers. The authors of the strongest submissions will be invited to a **gathering of researchers** to be held **November 14-15, 2012 in Madison, Wisconsin**, just prior to BDA's biannual Biodynamic Conference, to work on the development of full proposals. Details of the application process and gathering are in section 3.4 below.

PLEASE NOTE, this is not a competitive grant program. The BDA is not offering grants but will actively fundraise for some or all of the proposals developed through this process. The BDA already has one foundation interested in funding biodynamic research and will be cultivating others. One activity of the researcher gathering will be to identify potential project funding sources. Through this shared effort we hope to get several projects funded over time.

If you do not have a research project to propose but would like to be a partner, farmer/cooperator or provide support in some way, you can identify yourself as a collaborator in the submission template below.

Applications are also welcome from individuals, groups and organizations that do not need funding, but would appreciate connection to a group of colleagues who can assist them in improving the design and implementation of their biodynamic research projects.

If you are not interested in attending the meeting, but have a project you would like us to be aware of, please feel free to send a project description.

By making this Call, the BDA hopes to spark a new direction and impetus for biodynamic research through a broad idea collection process.

3. Detailed Application Guidelines and Process

3.1 Who can apply

Any person or organization with an interest in biodynamic research may apply. Participants may include farmers, gardeners, foresters, farmer-researchers, research organizations, members of the education community, non-profit organizations, societies, or others. The applicants and proposed research can be based anywhere in North America.

Reviewers and Steering Team members are also encouraged to submit pre-proposals.

3.2 Research Topics and Approaches

Pre-proposals are invited that address any aspect of biodynamics, following any relevant method or approach (e.g., natural scientific, spiritual scientific, Goethean, social scientific, artistic or other). The research could be experimental or non-experimental, quantitative or qualitative. We encourage diverse approaches, participatory models, innovation, collaboration and involvement of farmers.

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

Pre-proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Relevance and impact for biodynamics: The project makes a difference in the way biodynamics is practiced and understood. The pre-proposal is rooted in an understanding of biodynamics. The current need for the research and contribution to biodynamics is clear.

Rigor: The submission is logically coherent and well articulated. The submission and relevant background is clearly presented.

Feasibility: The methods and resource needs identified in the budget are appropriate and sufficient to effectively carry out the project.

Researcher's/team's capacity: The researcher or project team is capable of implementing the project based on their training and experience in research and biodynamics.

3.4 Process

- Pre-proposals will be received by the Research Coordinator then distributed among a group of independent reviewers (which includes members of the Steering Team). Reviewers and Steering Team members who submit pre-proposals will not be part of the review and selection process for projects for which they are part of the research team. Each pre-proposal will be reviewed by at least two people, if possible including someone knowledgeable in the specific field of the proposed project.
- Reviewers will provide each applicant a set of comments regarding the strengths and suggested improvements for the pre-proposal in light of the evaluation criteria above. The provision of comments constitutes the main aspect of advising/mentoring we are able to offer at this time.
- The Steering Team will then look over all the pre-proposals and reviewers' comments, and select the strongest submissions based on the criteria above. The authors of the selected pre-proposals will be invited to a **researcher gathering November 14th (all day) and morning of the 15th in Madison, Wisconsin**, just prior to BDA's 2012 Biodynamic Conference.
- The BDA will provide food and lodging for participants during the gathering, a portion of the conference fee for those who can stay and attend the BDA conference, and possibly some travel scholarships (depending on needs and budgetary considerations).
- At the gathering, participants will present their pre-proposals and get to know each other. Together, the group will work on further developing the pre-proposals, cross-fertilizing insights and ideas and brainstorming funding opportunities. There will also be time to explore collaboration between or integration of some of the proposals. A main goal of the meeting is to help invitees support and learn from each other.
- Following the meeting, authors will be invited to develop pre-proposals into full proposals. The BDA will work on a fundraising plan with the aim of helping get all or at least several of the proposals funded.
- Summaries of the proposals may be posted on the BDA website and in other media, with the authors' permission so that the wider community can learn from and comment on the whole process. Presentations of some of the research pre-proposals may also be made at the Biodynamic Conference, November 15-18.

3.5 Process Principles

Throughout this process, the BDA, Steering Team and reviewers aim to uphold the principles of fairness, honesty, open-mindedness and realism.

3.6 Submission Template and Timeline

A submission template outlining the information requested for pre-proposals and collaborators is provided below. Submissions need to be emailed or postmarked by **July 27, 2012**.

4. Questions?

If you have any questions about the Call, or are not sure how it fits with you, feel free to contact the Research Coordinator, Sarah Weber at sarah@biodynamics.com or phone (262) 649-9212 x10.

Call for Pre-Proposals and Collaborators for Biodynamic Research Submission Template

Thank you for contributing your research project ideas to this initiative! Please respond as guided in sections I, II and III in the template below. The pre-proposal is a preliminary concept document. Pre-proposals can be three pages long at the most (plus budget page). Your pre-proposal and its review will remain confidential.

Please email submissions to research@biodynamics.com

If email is not possible, submissions may be mailed to:

Biodynamic Association, c/o Research, PO Box 944, East Troy, Wisconsin 53120-0944

Submissions need to be emailed or postmarked by **July 27, 2012**.

Invitations to the researcher gathering will be extended by October 5, 2012.

Ia. Applicant Information

Date:

Name of Applicant(s) (could be individual/s or organization/s):

Name of Contact Person:

Mailing Address of Contact Person:

Applicant(s) – telephone number, email address:

Contact Person - telephone number, email address:

Project Title:

Biodynamic research focus:

Ib. Collaborator Information

If you do not have a research project to propose but would like to be a partner or farmer/cooperator or provide support in some way, you can identify yourself as a collaborator. In this case, please provide the following:

Date:

Collaborator Name:

Collaborator Contact information - telephone number, email address:

Collaborator Mailing Address:

Collaborator's Background/Experience:

Aspects of biodynamic research that most interest you:

What you can offer in collaboration (e.g. land, supplies, effort, expertise, etc.):

II. Project Description

Background

Provide an introduction and context for the proposed research. What are the research question(s) and, if applicable, hypotheses? Does it relate to or build on current knowledge, practices and/or previous research? If so, how? If the project addresses a research need expressed by farmers please describe the needs and how these were identified.

Project Goals and Objectives

Provide a list of project goals and objectives. Identify any longer term impacts sought as well as shorter term changes or outcomes expected as a result of the research.

Methods, Approach and Duration

Describe the research approach or, if applicable, proposed experimental design. Outline the steps you will take to accomplish the project. Activities should coincide with items in the budget. What will be the duration of the project?

Relevance and Impact for Biodynamics

How will the research contribute to the practice and understanding of biodynamics? Why is this research a priority at this time? How might the results be beneficial to farmers and to the biodynamic movement?

Key Individuals

Who will be doing the work to make the project happen? Provide a brief description of the project leader, key individuals, and organizations that will play an essential role in the project, including their training and experience in research, biodynamics and the project's topic area. Identify participating organizations or partners to be involved in the project and describe what their roles will be. Include a brief synopsis of the mission/goals of the organizations involved.

Participatory Research

If your project involves a participatory approach or aspect (e.g. involving farmers or communities), please describe it here. What role do farmers play in identifying the problem, planning and carrying out the research?

Collaboration

Are you open or seeking to collaborate with others to carry out this project? If so, in what ways and for what aspects of the project? What kind of collaborators are you looking for? Would you be willing to combine efforts with other researchers if they have a similar research proposal?

Education and Outreach

Are you willing to work with the BDA to communicate the research results to a variety of audiences? If so, what role do you see yourself taking?

III. Budget and Resource Needs

Please provide a rough estimate and description of the resource needs and costs anticipated for the project. If your project already has funding or other support, please describe. Sample budget tables are provided below. Please feel free to add to or modify these as needed.

Project Costs and Resource Needs

Cost Details	Description	\$ Value
Personnel		
Materials and supplies		
Equipment		
Land		
Travel		
Communications (phone and internet)		
Printing, copying and postage		
Other direct costs		
Administration		
Total		

Project Contributions

Contribution Source	Contributed Item	Confirmed? Y or N	In-kind or cash?	\$ Value
Totals				