



November 29 2022
NREC Council Meeting Minutes
Held at Illinois Farm Bureau and virtually via Zoom

Council Members Present in person: Jeff Kirwan, Don Guinnip, Chuck Cawley, Trevor Sample, Scott Lager, David Wessel, Ronaldo Maghirang

Council Members present via Zoom: Cindy Skrukud, Al Grosboll, Matt Duncan, Tim Laatsch

Staff Present: Julie Hewitt, Shani Golovay

Others attending: Raelynn Parmely, Bethany Jaeger, Drew Thomason

Meeting was called to order by chairperson Jeff Kirwan at 10:09 a.m. and the meeting agenda was reviewed.

Chairman Kirwan asked for a review and approval of minutes of the August 30, 2022 meeting. Minutes were approved with a motion by Chuck Cawley and a second by David Wessel.

On behalf of the NREC Governance Committee, Bethany Jaeger and Drew Thomason with KEB presented the finalized Strategic Plan (attached). Al Grosboll discussed the importance of connecting with legislators, particularly the House and Senate Ag Committee members. He emphasized the importance of building a reserve of “good will” with legislators. Executive Director Hewitt agreed that there is an educational opportunity there but cautioned that we are not a lobbying organization and need to ensure that any communication would be educational only without a legislative “ask”.

Don Guinnip moved and Scott Lager seconded a motion to approve the strategic plan as presented with direction for Julie to explore outreach to legislators. The motion passed and the strategic plan was adopted.

Chuck Cawley provided an update from the Illinois Department of Agriculture on collections. He reported that we have been able to clean up nearly all of the old balances and there was approximately \$80,000 left to collect from 2021. Spring of 2022 invoice levels were at \$1.75 million billed and \$1.5 collected. Fall reports are due on January 30, 2023 and invoices will start going out soon after that.

Matt Duncan, Research Committee Chair, provided an update on the work that the Research subcommittee has done between the August meeting and this one. He reviewed the updated evaluation forms (attached) and addressed questions. Chairman Kirwan requested that “all minimum” be removed from the language on the staff evaluation form. The council asked that “Education/Outreach plans – knowledge transfer” be added to the staff evaluation form.

The Council broke for lunch at 12:25 pm and reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

Matt Duncan continued to lead the discussion on changes to the scoring criteria/process. In order to allow for a more level voice/input on the subcommittees, they will be assigned based on member type (farmer, retailer, agency, environmental) and not just area of interest/expertise. This will allow for each group to have equal voice on each group of projects.

Matt then discussed two different options for rating projects:

- 1) Continue essentially as we have in the past with the subcommittees doing the deep dive on their assigned projects and presenting those to the full committee. They will include their group scoring sheet for reference but each member of the full committee will rate the project based on the updated rubric.
- 2) Subcommittees will review their assigned projects and share their score. The full committee will discuss and then vote to either accept the committee rating or have more discussion and a full committee vote.

Extensive discussion was held that included the pros and cons of both options. Option one could lead to people rating projects when they have not read them or fully participated in the discussions at the subcommittee level. Option two runs the risk of bias at the subcommittee level.

Don Guinnip moved and David Wessel seconded to adopt the first option (each member will rate projects individually based on the rubric). The motion passed by a margin of 4-3.

Matt Duncan moved and Scott Lagger seconded to adopt the updated scoring sheets as revised and add them to the strategic plan. The motion passed.

Don Guinnip moved and David Wessel seconded to go into executive session for staff evaluations at 2 pm. Scott Lagger moved and David Wessel seconded a motion to close executive session at 3:15 pm.

Don Guinnip moved and David Wessel seconded a motion to keep the NREC assessment level at \$.75/ton for 2023. The motion passed and Executive Director Julie Hewitt will notify the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

David Wessel moved and Scott Lagger seconded to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m.



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2027

Adopted November 30, 2022

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Executive Summary

Background: Created in 2012 by Public Act 97-0960, the Illinois Nutrient Research & Education Council (NREC) is Illinois agriculture's commitment to enhance nutrient utilization, increase crop production and protect water quality. It is funded through an assessment amount per ton of fertilizer sold and managed by a Council of representatives from farm organizations, commercial fertilizer, specialty fertilizer, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and representatives of environmental organizations.

The Council's original strategic plan was developed in 2016 to address the priorities of NREC over a five-year period, culminating in 2021. In 2022, the Council initiated a new strategic planning process to prioritize outreach, education and accountability as it continues to mature as a preeminent organization funding research projects and education programs at the intersection of agriculture and water quality. Kerber, Eck & Braeckel LLP (KEB), a management consulting firm based in Springfield, facilitated the 2016 planning process, and was brought in to facilitate the 2022 process.

The process began with a strategic planning retreat. The Council established priorities for the next three to five years and envisioned the ideal outcome of NREC's efforts. The Governance Committee then developed the strategic plan consistent with the Council's guidance and priorities.

The planning process resulted in three priorities covering three functional areas: Governance and Research, Education and Outreach and Operations. While some goals focus on internal operations, policies and procedures, all goals support the ultimate responsibility of being good stewards of public dollars to achieve the intent of the authorizing statute.

Following is the strategic plan outlining each priority, the strategy to address each priority, and specific steps to implement the plan.

Strategic Plan Strategies

Color Key			
Immediate	Short Term	Long Term	Ongoing
Complete the action steps within 6 months	Complete the action steps of Years 1-2 of the plan	Begin implementing the action steps within the term of this plan; update as things evolve	These actions steps are performed periodically or annually

Strategies for Governance / Research		
Priority	Updated NREC policies to guide the strategic allocation of funds	
Approach	Clarify NREC’s policies around the use of funds for research, demonstrations and cost-sharing programs to meet statutory requirements and ensure a broad application and adoption of NREC-proven best practices	
Action Steps	Primary Activity	Timeframe to Achieve
1.	A. Confirm roles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Chair or Council may assign to the Governance Committee issues needing review and recommendations. b. The Governance Committee oversees the policies and research funding criteria but not the decisions around funding specific grants. c. The Research Committee implements the policies and research funding criteria, elevating to the Governance Committee and the Council when revisions are needed. 	Immediate
2.	A. Implement a revised framework for evaluating research proposals with a new rubric, review process and voting procedures to balance neutrality and subject matter expertise in making funding decisions.	Immediate
3.	A. Clarify the definition of on-farm demonstrations to determine which grant expenditures can count towards the 20% requirement of research funds being allocated to cost-share programs and on-farm demonstrations.	Immediate

	1) Make explicit what is included or excluded from the annual calculation.	
4.	A. Clarify NREC’s approach to funding basic research and applied research. 1) Provide definitions of each.	Immediate
5.	A. Clarify NREC’s stance on funding research involving proprietary nutrients and/or proprietary nutrient management practices. 1) Specify that research must not be designated to marketing a specific product.	Immediate
6.	A. Establish and fulfill the Governance Committee’s responsibility to review the policy annually for input by the Research Committee. B. Establish and fulfill the Research Committee’s responsibility to integrate the above policies into criteria for evaluating research proposals.	Ongoing
Human resources required	• Executive Director: Up to 10 hours annually	
Financial resources required	None	

Strategies for Outreach / Education		
Priority	NREC’s role in translating research to education and adoption	
Approach	Develop structures to leverage affiliate organizations and businesses to foster the adoption and implementation of NREC research-proven practices by ensuring those most trusted by farmers have the right knowledge to provide technical assistance.	
Action Steps	Primary Activity	Timeframe to Achieve
7.	<p>A. Strengthen relationships with individuals and groups that are most trusted by farmers and, eventually, other groups that pay the fertilizer assessment. Understand their communications procedures, frequency and focus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Learn from working with the Illinois Department of Agriculture and Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Partnership to develop a Watershed Academy program. The program initially consists of three regional trainings during the summer of 2023. These trainings will allow NREC to explain what it does and how trainees can share NREC research and best practices with practitioners. There is the possibility of bringing in NREC funded researchers to talk about specific practices and connect those practices back to the research. The target audience is conservation practitioners and others close to the work. 2) Using the lessons learned from the Watershed Academy, partner with interested retailers that can replicate the process of integrating NREC resources into training. 	Ongoing
8.	<p>A. Take inventory of existing internal training programs to identify opportunities for NREC to complement existing programs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Get input on how to integrate NREC resources into their existing training agendas. 2) Get input on their policies and preferences for who/how content is presented or made available. 	Immediate

9.	<p>A. Develop the NREC training content to support the existing internal training programs at stakeholder organizations based on Action Step 8.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the topic of training. 2) Identify the subject matter expert to develop the content. 3) Assign a designated NREC committee to review the training content. 4) Assign the subject matter expert or preferred trainer to deliver the initial training. 	Short Term
10.	<p>A. Develop a train-the-trainer program by creating a pool of individuals who can integrate NREC’s research into the technical assistance they provide in the field.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Obtain commitments by trusted stakeholders to participate for a set term. 2) Orient the pool of trainers. 3) Periodically update the trainers with new content or resources to support their technical assistance. 4) Annually invite feedback from trainers about the resources they need to be effective. 	Long Term
11.	<p>A. Coordinate NREC’s communications plan with NREC’s outreach and education strategies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Encourage trusted stakeholder groups to include NREC messaging in their routine and targeted communications. 2) Reach out to and build awareness among members of the Illinois General Assembly about NREC’s education activities around research-funded best practices. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reach out to and educate legislators who serve on legislative agriculture committees. ii. Reach out to and educate legislators whose districts benefit from NREC-funded research projects. 	Ongoing
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director: Up to 5 hours weekly • Research Manager: Up to 5 hours weekly 	
Financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional costs pending inventory of existing training programs 	

Strategies for Operations		
Priority	Continuous improvement of NREC’s operations and staff resources	
Approaches	<p>Establish practices that ensure the NREC board has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Continuously evaluate operations for efficiencies, staff resources and professional development to ensure the right capacities are in place to efficiently and effectively implement NREC’s strategic plan.</p>	
Action Steps	Primary Activity	Timeframe to Achieve
12.	<p>Formalize succession plans and recruitment of new board members.</p> <p>A. Annually assess stakeholder representation and geographic representation to identify upcoming gaps.</p> <p>B. Partner with leaders of each organization to introduce NREC to their future leadership pools.</p> <p>C. Engage individuals in the future leadership pool in NREC outreach and stakeholder feedback activities.</p> <p>D. Identify the protocol for continuing operations under planned and unplanned absences of board officers and key staff (see a succession planning template based on the Center for Nonprofit Advancement).</p>	Ongoing
13.	<p>Enhance onboarding of new members.</p> <p>A. Convene a formal orientation supported by a folder of material outlining the mission, governance, board roles and expectations.</p> <p>B. Ensure new members are oriented to the full range of stakeholder groups and their perspectives represented on the Council.</p> <p>C. Require new members to join a committee to learn NREC’s functions and processes.</p> <p>D. Annually refresh the orientation for all NREC members, not just new members.</p>	Ongoing
14.	<p>Designate resources for professional development and continuous education of staff.</p> <p>A. Review current skillsets of staff to determine what training and professional development is needed to be effective.</p> <p>B. Use annual staff evaluations to set goals for skills gains.</p>	Ongoing

	<p>C. Revisit individual goals quarterly to identify adjustments or supports needs.</p> <p>D. Identify the cost/benefit analysis of outsourcing certain functions.</p>	
15.	<p>Establish a responsibility of the board and Executive Director to annually evaluate the human and financial resources required to implement current NREC strategies.</p> <p>A. Ensure the Executive Director’s monthly reporting to the Board elevates any upcoming capacity concerns for board discussion and action. Include a specific budget request, if applicable.</p> <p>B. Revise the executive director evaluation tool to annually assess progress and capacities needed to effectively implement the strategic plan, as well as opportunities or resources needed to improve routine operations.</p>	Ongoing
16.	<p>Ensure regulatory compliance.</p> <p>A. Meet statutory and legal requirements.</p> <p>B. Manage financial operations and communications to ensure public accountability.</p> <p>C. Actively oversee research submittals and operations of funded projects.</p> <p>D. Support NREC Council and Committees in conducting business that meets regulatory compliance while making progress on implementing the strategic plan.</p>	Ongoing
17.	<p>Maintain relationship with Illinois Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>A. Update Department leadership on NREC activities.</p> <p>B. Continue working relationships with relevant Department Divisions and Bureaus.</p>	Ongoing
Human resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director: Up to 20 hours annually • Board Chair and Executive Committee: Up to 10 hours annually 	
Financial resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The individual cost of professional development courses or resources. Include an annual estimate within the NREC budget line item for professional development. 	

Appendix 1

Revised Policy Language

On-Farm Demonstrations and Cost-Sharing Programs

On-farm demonstrations include, but are not limited to, projects in which a landowner and/or farmer is reimbursed for the use of their time, land and/or resources to conduct the project, field days and/or workshops to demonstrate best practices.

Guide for determining what money in a grant can be included when calculating NREC on-farm demonstration funding:

Definitions:

The following will be included when calculating the percent of grant funding NREC approves for on-farm demonstrations:

- Any direct farmer or landowner payment regardless of the purpose (either directly from NREC or as part of the grant)
- Personnel time and benefits essential to the on-farm demonstration program
- Travel expenses essential to the on-farm demonstration program
- Equipment and supplies essential to the on-farm demonstration program
- Cost of a demonstration event and/or field day
- Field work in collecting samples
- Outreach in any capacity for a grant that meets the definition of an on-farm demonstration program

The following will be excluded when calculating the percent of grant funding NREC approves for on-farm demonstrations:

- Basic research (as defined by NREC policy)
- White paper grants

Rationale:

- The legislation that created NREC requires at least 20 percent of the Council's annual assessment revenue allocated to research projects in a given year be used for on-farm demonstrations and cost-sharing programs that address water quality issues.
- Providing direct financial assistance to applicants of a competitive grant allocates funding to a small number of recipients as an incentive for participating in a program that is not funded by NREC, with no demonstrable feedback on the adoption of best practices on a broad scale. When funding cost-sharing programs, the Council should ensure the broadest impact of its projects as possible because its projects are funded by money collected at a statewide level.

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Division of Funding between Basic and Applied Research

The Council will ensure the majority of its funding is used for applied research. The Council will consider funding basic research when a project informs future applied research or clearly rises to the level of importance for nutrient management.

Definitions:

Applied Research

Applied research generates outcomes that can be immediately applied to current nutrient management practices.

Basic Research

Basic research generates outcomes that cannot be applied to current nutrient management practices but can inform future applied research.

Rationale:

- The entities that are paying the assessment fee on fertilizer benefit more quickly and are more likely to adopt practices that are informed by applied research.
- Outreach to practitioners is easier, more effective, and more relevant when it is conducted around applied research.
- Basic research projects usually have other funding sources.
- Basic research can help inform applied research that NREC is funding, so it must not be dismissed out of hand.

Funding of proprietary products

The Council will not fund research of proprietary products except in extraordinary circumstances approved by a majority of voting Council members. Extraordinary circumstances include research of proprietary products that could be scaled up for broader application by stakeholders that pay the assessment on fertilizer. The research must *not* be designed to market a specific project.

Rationale:

- There is an ethical dilemma in using public funds to research proprietary products. NREC funds must be used to share information about best practices, not to promote a specific product.
- Updates and changes to proprietary products happen so quickly that NREC-funded research would lag too far behind the product pipeline to be useful.
- Research around proprietary products should not be completely dismissed because there are some instances where funding such research could coincide with NREC's vision and goals and foster broader adoption of best practices.

Appendix 2

Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council

Executive Director Evaluation Tool

Updated November 2022

Dates of performance review:	
Executive Director Signature:	
Board Chair Signature:	

Appendix 2 (Continued)

OPERATIONS (strategic plan priority)

Strategic Plan Priority:

Continuous improvement of NREC’s operations and staff resources

2022 Strategic Plan Goals the Executive Director is Responsible For:

- Formalize succession plans and recruitment of new board members
- Enhance onboarding of new members
- Establish a responsibility of the Board Chair and Executive Director to annually evaluate the human and financial resources required to implement current NREC strategies

The Executive Director leads key activities in the Operations priority. Rate the Executive Director’s performance in the following areas. Enter your score in the green boxes below using the following scale.			
4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations
Criteria			Rating
Communication Examples of communication-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director communicate clearly around the action steps and goals described in the strategic plan relating to operations? • Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding the progress being made on the action steps and goals described in the strategic plan relating to operations? 			
Organization Examples of organization-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal review? • Is the executive director tracking progress on the strategic plan goals related to operations and noting areas where changes are needed? 			
Implementation Example of implementation-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director execute or follow up on action steps described in the strategic plan relating to operations as well as any commitments made in communications with the Council? 			
OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)			
Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.			

Appendix 2 (Continued)

OPERATIONS (routine functions)

As part of the Executive Director’s role in routine operations, evaluate the performance in the following categories.

Enter your score in the green boxes below using the following scale.

4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations

General Performance of the Executive Director Relating to Routine Operations

Criteria	Rating
<p>Communication Examples of communication-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director communicate clearly around routine operations? Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding routine operations? 	
<p>Organization Examples of organization-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal review? Is the executive director tracking progress made on routine operations and noting any areas where changes are needed? 	
<p>Implementation Example of implementation-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director execute routine operations? Does the executive director follow up commitments made in their communications and during Council meetings relating to routine operations? 	

Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.

Specific Routine Operations Categories

Maintained, executed and reported NREC Annual Calendar of Activities	
Assisted the Council in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities	
Assisted NREC committees in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities	

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Provided all Council members with a monthly report of activities	
Oversaw and managed NREC staff	
Ensured NREC completed its legal requirements to avoid compliance-related findings	
Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.	
OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)	

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Outreach and Education (strategic plan priorities)

Strategic Plan Priority:

NREC’s role in translating research to education and adoption

2022 Strategic Plan Goals the Executive Director is Responsible For:

- Strengthen relationships with individuals and groups that are most trusted by farmers and, eventually, other groups that pay the fertilizer assessment
- Take inventory of existing internal training programs to identify opportunities for NREC to complement existing programs
- Coordinate NREC’s communications plan with other trusted stakeholder groups to ensure routine and targeted distribution of NREC messaging

The Executive Director has a lead role in implementing activities under the Outreach and Education priority. Rate the Executive Director in the following areas.			
Enter your score in the yellow boxes below using the following scale.			
4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations
Criteria			Rating
Communication Examples of communication-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director communicate clearly around the action steps and goals described in the strategic plan relating to outreach and education? • Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding the progress being made on the action steps described in the strategic plan relating to outreach and education? 			
Organization Examples of organization-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal use? • Is the executive director tracking progress made on strategic plan relating to outreach and education, noting areas where changes are needed? 			
Implementation Example of implementation-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director execute or follow up on action steps described in the strategic plan relating to outreach and education as well as any commitments made in communications to the Council? 			

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.

OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)	
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Appendix 2 (Continued)

Outreach and Education (routine functions)

Evaluate the performance of the executive director in routine Outreach and Education operations in the following categories.

Enter your score in the yellow boxes below using the following scale.

4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations

General performance of the Executive Director relating to routine Outreach and Education operations

Criteria	Rating
<p>Communication Examples of communication-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director communicate clearly around routine outreach and education activities? Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding routine outreach and education activities? 	
<p>Organization Examples of organization-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal review? Is the executive director tracking progress on routine outreach and education activities and noting areas where changes are needed? 	
<p>Implementation Example of implementation-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director execute routine outreach and education? Does the executive director follow up commitments made in communications and during Council meetings relating to outreach and education? 	

Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.

Specific Outreach and Education Routine Operations Categories

<p>Maintained the NREC communications channels and ensured timely distribution of relevant information (website, press releases, newsletters, webinars, et cetera)</p>	
<p>Developed and deployed communications regarding NREC activities with stakeholders, including but not limited to outreach to farmers, the fertilizer industry, and others in the agriculture community</p>	

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Work with the Research Director for timely project reporting by researchers and compilation for annual report	
Serve as a primary point of contact for the Council with external organizations and route questions, inquires, and requests as appropriate	
Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.	
OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)	

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Governance and Research (strategic plan priorities)

Strategic Plan Priority:

Updated NREC policies to guide the strategic allocation of funds

2022 Strategic Plan Goals the Executive Director is Responsible For:

- Implement a revised framework for evaluating research proposals with a new rubric, review process and voting procedures to balance neutrality and subject matter expertise in making funding decisions
- Establish and ensure the Governance Committee’s responsibility to review the policy annually for input by the Research Committee
- Establish and ensure the Research Committee’s responsibility to integrate the above policies into criteria for evaluating research proposals

As a lead in key strategic plan activities under the Governance and Research priority, rate the Executive Director in the following areas. Enter your score in the blue boxes below using the following scale.			
4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations
Criteria			Rating
Communication Examples of communication-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director communicate clearly around the action steps and goals described in the strategic plan relating to governance and research? • Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding the progress on the action steps and goals described in the strategic plan relating to governance and research? 			
Organization Examples of organization-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal use? • Is the executive director tracking progress made on strategic plan relating to governance and research, noting areas where changes are needed? 			
Implementation Example of implementation-related criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the executive director execute or follow up on action steps described in the strategic plan relating to governance and research as well as any commitments made in communications with the Council? 			

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.

OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)	
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Appendix 2 (Continued)

Governance and Research (routine functions)			
<p>Evaluate the performance of the executive director Governance and Research routine operations. Place a score in the box on the right using the scale below.</p> <p>Enter your score in the blue boxes below using the following scale.</p>			
4	3	2	1
Exceeded Expectations	Met Expectations	Partially Met Expectations	Failed Expectations
General performance of the Executive Director relating to routine Governance and Research operations			
Criteria			Rating
<p>Communication</p> <p>Examples of communication-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director communicate clearly around routine governance and research responsibilities of the Council? Does the executive director communicate often enough regarding governance and research responsibilities of the Council? 			
<p>Organization</p> <p>Examples of organization-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director ensure all Council materials are easily accessible and available for public and internal use? Is the executive director tracking progress on routine governance and operations responsibilities, noting areas where changes are needed? 			
<p>Implementation</p> <p>Example of implementation-related criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the executive director execute routine governance and research responsibilities of the Council? Does the executive director follow up commitments made in communications and during Council meetings relating to routine governance and research responsibilities of the Council? 			
<p>Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.</p>			
Specific Governance and Research Routine Operations Responsibilities			
<p>Oversee and maintain NREC corporation documents, bylaws, policies and procedures</p>			
<p>Coordinate with necessary entities for accounting, tax and auditing needs</p>			

Appendix 2 (Continued)

Assure compliance with relevant state and federal laws (Freedom of Information Act, statute establishing NREC, etcetera)	
Maintain contracts, payments and budget reviews for grant recipients for contractual and financial oversight of research projects	
Explain each rating that exceeds or falls below expectations in the space below.	
OVERALL Segment rating (Average of above)	

NREC RESEARCH PROPOSAL SCORING

FUNDING HISTORY – add this in

STAFF REVIEW – GENERAL

	Yes	No
Was the application complete and received by the deadline?		
Was the Summary sheet attached with all relevant fields completed?		
Does the proposal clearly define the project objectives and goals?		
Does the work plan clearly define the procedures or methods to be utilized?		
If field-based research is being planned, is a specific site(s) clearly identified?		
Is the proposed timeline appropriate for the scope of the work?		
Does the proposal include an intention to publish the data in a peer reviewed journal?		
Does the proposal include a plan for outreach/knowledge transfer?		
Does the proposal include collaborative work across departments, universities or other stakeholders?		
Does the proposal outline a plan to provide economic analysis of the practices being studies?		
Does the project address potential environmental outcomes?		
Does the proposal directly address a need defined in the current RFP?		
<i>If yes, please check the priorities which are addressed by this proposal.</i>		

N Management Systems	
Cover Crop Systems	
Technical assistance to educate on tillage and 4R principles	
Phosphorus	
Innovative/forward-looking research	

STAFF REVIEW – PROJECT TEAM AND FACILITIES

	Yes	No
Does the key personnel have adequate expertise to complete the project?		
Have the facilities necessary for completion of the project been identified and are they available?		
Project coordination – is this clearly articulated with defined roles		

STAFF REVIEW – BUDGET

	Yes	No
Does the salary exceed 45% of total grant request?		
<i>If yes, is the project proposed a literature review or white paper or otherwise a reasonable scope that is personnel heavy?</i>		
<i>If yes, did they provide detailed justification?</i>		
Is this project receiving funding from additional sources?		
<i>If yes, please provide details below</i>		
Will NREC funding be used to leverage additional funds for this project?		
<i>If yes, please provide details below</i>		

Does this proposal include tuition remission? (not allowed)		
Does this proposal count as on-farm demonstration or cost share?		
<i>Please explain and provide total \$ and % of total project</i>		
	Total \$	% of project

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

	Yes	No
This project meets requirements for consideration of funding?		
This project should be sent for external peer review?		
This project should be sent to committee for consideration?		

NREC RESEARCH PROPOSAL SCORING – COMMITTEE

Please rate each category on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest

SCIENTIFIC MERIT

- As proposed, the findings of this study can provide transferable data and direction _____
 - The project centers on a researchable problem related to nutrient management in the State of Illinois _____
 - The proposal includes management practices that are applicable to agricultural systems in the state. _____
 - The project serves as a model for other nutrient management research projects _____
- SUBTOTAL** _____

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PLANS

- The outreach plan aligns with NREC’s goals and priorities and is likely to reach an appropriate audience _____
 - The project collaborators have a demonstrated ability to translate scientific data to farmer/stakeholder audiences _____
 - The education plan is likely to provide engaging and cutting edge concepts to drive nutrient management decision _____
- SUBTOTAL** _____

BUDGET AND TIMELINE

- Funding requested is appropriate for work proposed _____
 - Timeline proposed is reasonable for the included scope of work _____
 - A clear, realistic and achievable plan is included for project completion _____
- SUBTOTAL** _____

IMPACT

- The project furthers the understanding of the agronomic, economic, and environmental impacts of current practices outlined in the Illinois NLRS _____
 - Project identifies potential new agronomic, economic, and environmental practices that could further the understanding of nutrient loss _____
 - The practice(s) or concepts being studied are practical and adoptable _____
- SUBTOTAL** _____

ALIGNMENT WITH REPRESENTATIVE ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES

- The proposed project aligns with the priorities of the organization that I have been appointed to represent _____
 - I am comfortable with the practices and processes being utilized in the project _____
 - From the perspective of the organization I represent on this committee, the project collaborators can adequately represent the intent of NREC and support the organization’s goals. _____
- SUBTOTAL** _____

TOTAL _____

SCORE _____