The 12-state North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA) manages a portfolio of multistate research (with some integration of Extension and teaching) projects with diverse priority areas that stimulate collaborative, value-added, coordinated, synergistic research-led projects. Once operational, these 5-year projects methodically and incrementally advance science and education across NC and other participating states. Faculty-led projects with other institutions, state and federal agencies, countries, and the private sector are common. Most projects submit multiple project renewals.

To further increase national impact and stimulate a higher level of collaborative NC research across institutions, NCRA directors have agreed, as a pilot, to support a focused, innovative, high quality, and action-oriented NC-led research project that will have immediate impact within a two-year timeframe. In addition, the project must have true collaborations that synergize activities across participating states rather than independent efforts that are merely compiled. We encourage partnerships with existing NC multistate projects, states and other regions, as these may enhance impacts. The existing 500-series of multistate framework would be efficient and appropriate for this application given the use of federal Hatch Multistate Funds. As these are capacity funds, no indirect costs are allowed.

The thematic focus for the current round of funding is on climate change. In addition, proposals must contextualize activities within a framework that highlights DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) impacts, for example through specific partnerships with 1890 and/or 1994 Land-grant institutions. Directors’ priorities may change foci with future calls. A total of $60,000 per year is available from the NC Hatch Multistate funds and it is anticipated that one proposal will be funded. The maximum request for a single proposal is $60,000 for a duration of up to two years. At the end of the one- or two-year project, a formal presentation will be given to NC directors. Deliverables are expected to be multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary, and include action-oriented items such as a planning grant leading to successful team competitive grant submissions, development of new technologies and SBIR proposals.

Applicants should submit the following:

1) Proposal not to exceed four pages.
2) Direct involvement of at least four North Central region states (and other entities).
3) Proposal format
   a. Title
   b. Project Directors/co-directors and NC state affiliations
   c. Project Justification and Challenges to be Addressed
   d. Multistate Project(s) Involved and Leveraged
   e. Collaborative Approaches
   f. DEI integration
g. Action-oriented Expected Results and Impacts
h. Detailed budget and justification (federal Hatch funds as graduate research assistantships, hourly labor, equipment, supplies, travel, publications)
i. Additional participants (not counted in four-page limit)
j. CVs for PD and co-directors (not counted in four-page limit)

Proposals are due to the NCRA office in c/o Chris Hamilton (christina.hamilton@wisc.edu) on January 14, 2022, by 5 pm EST. The NC Multistate Review Committee (MRC) will review applications based upon responses to the above proposal elements, with the potential for ad hoc review, and make recommendations to the NCRA directors during the NCRA spring meeting (March 28-30, 2022) with an anticipated start date of May 1, 2022. Questions should be directed to the above email address.