University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of ACES
Dudley Smith Initiative - Request for Proposals

The Dudley Smith Initiative invests in short-term (1-2 year) DSynergy and longer-term (2-4 year) DSystems applied research and outreach programs. This notice serves as a Request for Proposals for funding in both the DSynergy and DSystems programs to begin in the spring of 2024.

Introduction
Dudley Smith, Jr., a landowner with family roots in Christian County, recognized the long-term economic challenges facing agriculture in Illinois and the social impacts of these challenges on rural communities. Mr. Smith’s generous gift to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of ACES includes a farm of ~220 acres located in Christian County and an endowment to support the Dudley Smith Initiative (DSI) in research and outreach activities.

The goal of the DSI is to embrace technological advancements while enhancing resource stewardship and sustainability in agricultural systems. Agricultural community systems include producers, manufacturers, laborers, distributors, retailers, consumers, markets, financial institutions, public policies, and natural resources. By understanding the interactions among the components of the agricultural system, the DSI strives for integrated sustainability in Illinois agriculture.

Recognizing that agricultural systems are dynamic and evolve as new knowledge is acquired, the DSI supports research and outreach activities with potential to create new strategies and technological advances that invigorate agricultural systems and communities in Illinois.

More information about the DSI, grants, research projects and events can be found at: https://dsi.aces.illinois.edu/.

DSI Program Descriptions
The Dudley Smith Initiative invests in short-term (1-2 year) DSynergy and longer-term (2-4 year) DSystems applied research and outreach programs.

The DSynergy Program supports one or two-year projects for research teams seeking synergistic solutions. Successful proposals in this program will have the following characteristics:

- Incorporate the synergies among the social, economic, biologic, and natural resource components of the agricultural system;
- Include both a short-term focus and vision for longer-term applications, and take an innovative approach to solving applied problems in agriculture.
The DSynergy proposal should describe opportunities for creative approaches to agricultural challenges within the framework of the DSI, address the strengths of the investigators, explain the long-term vision of the team and describe potential synergies. Preference will be given to proposals that have a clearly defined plan for how the DSynergy project can lead to future funding from external sources or contribute to a broader, and more comprehensive, DSystems project in the future.

The DSystems Program is a multi-year (2-4 years), funding program focused on broad agricultural community systems. Successful proposals in this program will have the following characteristics:

- Combine scientific creativity with a clear vision of potential outcomes (e.g., new approaches in research, education, and/or outreach);
- Exploit technological advances and seek to turn knowledge into useful application;
- Incorporate the synergies among the social, economic, biologic, and natural resource components of the agricultural system;
- Balance short-term benefits with long-term impacts;
- Include outreach activities involving Christian County stakeholders and may utilize resources located at the Dudley Smith Farm as appropriate.

The DSystems proposal should describe the opportunity to address a specific challenge in agriculture, explain the research and outreach methods to be applied, and present the participants and their roles as well as the expected agricultural systems impacts.

**Proposal Details**

The scope of the research topics proposed in both programs must integrate applied agricultural systems and research meeting the general goals of the DSI program. **Outreach activities are important elements in this funding program.**

Each proposal should clearly outline milestones, deliverables, and timelines. Include sufficient technical information and describe the contextual framework as it relates to the goals of the DSI program. Do not lapse into jargon and technical details not easily understood by informed non-specialists.

Of the acreage at the Dudley Smith Farm, the northeastern corner of the farm is committed to continuing water quality research that has been conducted since 2017. Approximately 40-50 acres of row crop acreage and pasture paddocks at the Dudley Smith Farm can be incorporated into the research and outreach plans.
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<td>Proposal Page Limit</td>
<td>6 pages</td>
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<td>Research Budget</td>
<td>up to $45,000/year</td>
<td>$75,000-100,000/year</td>
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<td>Project Length</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
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<td>January 2024-December 2025</td>
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<td>November 15, 2023 by 5 PM CT</td>
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**Eligibility Information**

Teams of academic personnel in the College of ACES, including faculty, campus-based staff, and off-campus Extension educators, are eligible to apply to this program. Additional stakeholders, contributors, and collaborators may be included in the research team. Investigators may integrate the use of resources located at the Dudley Smith Farm in Christian County but are not required to do so.

**Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines**

The proposal must conform to the following requirements:

1. Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger. A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas/equations, figures, tables, or diagram captions. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable.

2. Margins, in all directions, must be at least 1 inch.

3. The proposal narrative should describe:
   a. opportunities for creative approaches to agricultural challenges within the framework of the DSI
   b. describe the methods to be applied
   c. address the strengths of the investigators
   d. explain the long-term vision of the research team
   e. describe potential synergies

4. Include a References and Bibliography document (no page limit) citing relevant published work.

5. Include a CV for all principal and collaborating investigators of no more than 2 pages per PI/Co-PI.

6. Include an itemized budget with justification (no page limit).
NOTE: Because of its internal nature, DSI funding may not be used to cover summer salaries for personnel with less than a 12-month academic appointment or for indirect costs. Funding may be applied to reasonable departmental expenses associated with the research if the expenses are itemized and justified.

An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted as a single, combined pdf file to aces-or-support@illinois.edu by 5:00 PM CT on November 15, 2023. Questions may be directed to Barbara Godlew via aces-or-support@illinois.edu.

Review Process

The ACES Office of Research will consult with the following advisory bodies in evaluating proposals and awarding funding:

- An ad hoc committee of ACES department heads, faculty, and Extension administrators will provide the primary technical reviews.
- An external Dudley Smith Advisory Committee will provide stakeholder review of impacts and outcomes.

Award Reporting Requirements

Awarded projects will be required to:

1. Provide public-ready summary content for the DSI website within 30 days of award and within 30 days of project end.

2. Participate in Dudley Smith Engagement Activities.

   The events are held at the Dudley Smith Farm in Christian County, the University of Illinois Extension Office in Taylorville, or the University of Illinois Campus in Urbana. These meetings highlight research activities funded by the DSI program.

   Events in Christian County will address the interests of producers and community members while campus-based events will address interests of peer researchers. At least one member of the research team is required to participate in the event to present information and results from your research.

   The DSI will cover the cost of transportation, meeting facilities, presentation materials, and other incidentals identified and agreed upon in advance. The project team will be responsible for the time to prepare and deliver the presentations. A representative in the ACES Office of Research will coordinate these events and assist teams in planning for their participation.

3. Participate in mid-year project meetings with DSI management representatives.
Micah Pope of Centrec Consulting Group, LLC will schedule meetings roughly mid-way through each year of the funding period. Collaborating researchers are encouraged to attend the mid-project meeting. The project team will be required to provide a brief update of recent and planned activities.

4. Submit a project final report.

Specific content of the report may vary depending on the nature of the research and the target audiences. A representative of the ACES Office of Research will work with the project teams to define these parameters.

Information Meeting
The Dudley Smith Initiative (DSI) is hosting a seminar on September 20, 2023 from 11:30am to 1:00pm at the ACES Library. This seminar will provide an overview of the program and include presentations by current DSI-funded research teams. Office of Research staff will be present to answer any questions about the program or RFP. Please RSVP to this event by September 15, 2023.

Program Contacts
Barbara Godlew (godlew2@illinois.edu)
Micah Pope (mpope@centrec.com)