



**Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)  
Operating Guidelines as of 9/26/22**

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of ECOP is to give guidance to issues of importance to the Cooperative Extension Section (CES) of the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly (see APLU Commission on Food, Environment & Renewable Resources organizational chart at [bit.ly/BAAOrg](http://bit.ly/BAAOrg)). ECOP is the representative leadership and governing body of the Cooperative Extension System, the nationwide transformational education system operating through land-grant universities in partnership with federal, state, and local governments.

ECOP focuses on four core themes: 1) Build partnerships and acquire resources; 2) Increase strategic marketing and communications; 3) Enhance leadership and professional development, and 4) Strengthen organizational functioning.

**Mission:**

The mission of ECOP is to strengthen Cooperative Extension at national, state and local levels. To accomplish this mission, ECOP will:

- Develop policy and administrative guidance that facilitates the advancement of CES;
- Engage CES and the public as partners to reflect the identified priorities of the people we serve;
- Actively communicate policy, functions, and actions of CES;
- Collaborate and communicate with external groups important to the CES mission;
- Implement efficient and effective mechanisms to address CES needs;
- Initiate strategic planning, scenario building, and future-centered activities to anticipate needs, opportunities, and options for the CES;
- Support a mechanism by which members collaborate in program identification, development, and delivery for access to audiences anytime and anyplace; and
- Identify opportunities and coordinate efforts to expand resources available to CES.

**Vision:**

The vision of ECOP is to enhance and maintain CES as the most effective and dynamic educational outreach and engagement network in the world.

**Values and Principles:**

- ECOP serves CES, a national educational network;
- ECOP stresses excellence and innovation;
- ECOP builds partnerships to serve its clientele;
- ECOP values diversity and inclusion;
- The work of ECOP is based on the applied scholarship of the Land-grant Universities;
- ECOP is proactively responsive to the changing needs of society;
- ECOP emphasizes the reporting of outcomes, impacts, and results; and
- ECOP seeks continuous improvement in its structure, function, and service.

**Goals:**

Multi-year emphasis areas with annual action plans are established by the ECOP Chair and adopted annually by ECOP.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

### **ECOP**

#### **Membership**

- Three (3) Extension Directors/Administrators from each of the five regions, elected by the Regional Associations, each serving a four-year term on a rotational basis. A quorum is a majority (more than 50%) of these members. The Regional Associations, on a rotational basis, elect the Chair of ECOP. The rotation is as follows: Northeast, Western, North Central, Southern, 1890 Institutions. Changes in the rotation can be accommodated under extenuating circumstances by mutual agreement by affected regions. The past Chair will continue to serve on ECOP, regardless of term of service, for one year after he/she served as Chair. The region will accommodate this rotation by adjusting their member's terms of service, if needed.
- The Chairs of the Budget and Legislative Committee and the Extension Board of Directors (or designees), if not members of ECOP, will serve as ex-officio, non-voting liaisons to ECOP.
- The Director of USDA-NIFA (or designee[s]), the ECOP Executive Director/Administrator (EDA) Team, and the CES representative to the BAA Policy Board of Directors, the BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee, and the BAA Committee on Legislation and Policy serve as ex-officio, non-voting members.
- Additional non-voting liaisons may include representatives from partnering entities as deemed appropriate to the mission of ECOP. These partnering entities (page 4) are encouraged to submit written reports and will be on the ECOP meeting agenda if action is requested.

#### **Role**

- To develop program guidelines and organizational policies and procedures that guide national efforts of the seventy-six 1862 and 1890 institutions that comprise the CES. Interactions with 1994 Institutions Cooperative Extension programs also are encouraged.
- To conduct strategic planning on behalf of the Cooperative Extension System, including identifying and sunsetting priorities and the strategic use of reserve funds.
- To provide a forum for regions in priority setting and action to move the Land-Grant University System, and particularly Cooperative Extension, forward as a national system.
- To work to develop linkages and supportive relationships with partners including federal agencies, national organizations, foundations, non-profits and associations.
- To appoint task forces and work groups made up of experts from each region, diverse institutions, USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and others as needed, with a clearly defined charge, to conduct business on behalf of ECOP and CES.
- To hire and monitor an advocacy firm and initiate efforts to increase the federal resources available to CES when not accomplished by the on-going efforts of the BAA Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC).
- To hire and monitor the ECOP National Executive Director, Staff Associate, and other staff, as needed, in support of ECOP and CES.
- To develop and implement annual goals and to report on accomplishments.
- To routinely evaluate its operational framework with the desired goal of improving processes and outcomes.

## **Relationships with Partnering Entities**

It is necessary for ECOP to empower transparent, candid and trust-based relationships as it moves forward on cross-discipline, system-wide initiatives, communicates its positions and values, and builds coalitions while in turn amplifying and supporting the initiatives and values of partner organizations. These relationships are established through and maintained by committee appointments and liaison relationships to and from ECOP and relevant organizations. Generally, these relationships are established to:

- validate a commitment to pursuing mutually beneficial goals;
- enhance communication between and among ECOP and its partners;
- promote complementary work goals, processes, schedules and calendars; and,
- share relevant information about issues and activities.

Committee appointments and liaison relationships are coordinated by ECOP, such that relationships among the organizations are enhanced. These relationships may exist at the ECOP or standing committee level and are approved by and accountable to ECOP. Consequently, upon recommendation by the ECOP Executive Committee, ECOP can create, modify, and extend or discontinue ECOP relationships on behalf of ECOP and its standing committees at any time. The ECOP Executive Committee will review relationships as needed, but at least every two years (spring of odd-numbered years).

ECOP staff will maintain a record of active and past relationships with partnering entities.

### ***Liaisons to ECOP***

Liaisons to ECOP or ECOP committees serve a non-voting, advisory, and informational role. Generally, a liaison to ECOP is expected to

- represent the sending organization's interests and concerns by and while attending and participating in ECOP meetings as designated or invited (face to face and electronic);
- provide to ECOP three written reports annually and oral reports as needed on the intersecting activities of the sending organization. If ECOP action is to be requested on any of the activities, a liaison will submit the request in writing to the ECOP or Committee Chair prior to the meeting;
- alert the ECOP Chair and Executive Director as issues that may impact Cooperative Extension, its partners, goals, and/or activities arise; and,
- report back to the sending organization any and all relevant information that will support maintaining the relationship as outlined above.

### ***Liaisons from ECOP***

Liaisons from ECOP are expected to serve a non-voting, advisory, and informational role, with consideration of reasonable expectations communicated to ECOP by the partner organization prior to appointment. Should the expectations of the relationship change, the partner organization may put those changes to the ECOP Executive Committee for consideration.

Generally, a liaison from ECOP is expected to

- represent the needs, vision, and position of ECOP and the Cooperative Extension system as a whole<sup>1</sup>;
- conduct themselves with respect and in support of the goals of external partnerships as outlined above;
- attend and be attentive during in-person and virtual meetings of the partner organization;

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<sup>1</sup> ECOP's mission, vision, value/principles, and goals are on page 2 of this document.

- provide ECOP with three written reports annually and oral reports as needed on the intersecting activities of the receiving organization; and,
- alert the ECOP Chair and Executive Director of issues that may impact Cooperative Extension, its partners, goals and/or activities.

### ***Appointees from ECOP***

Appointees are individuals who are appointed by vote or recommendation and authorization to represent ECOP within a partnering entity in a work producing, voting, and/or leadership capacity. The expectations ECOP has of an appointee from ECOP includes those of liaisons in addition to reasonable expectations that may be identified by the partner organization on a case by case basis. Additional expectations may include but are not limited to

- providing language or research for products;
- coordinating or convening working groups; and,
- voting on official motions.

### **Active Relationships**

Please see the annually updated ECOP List - [http://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/CFERR\\_Library/ecop-directory/file](http://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/CFERR_Library/ecop-directory/file) for a list of active liaison and appointee relationships to and from ECOP.

## **OFFICERS AND STAFFING**

### **Chair**

#### **Selection**

The ECOP Chair is a voluntary assignment and will be elected from among the representatives of one of the five (5) identified regions on a rotational basis. The commitment of Chair is a three-year term inclusive of one (1) year as Chair-Elect, one (1) year as Chair, and one (1) year as Immediate Past Chair. In cases of need, regions may switch their turns in the rotation.

#### **Role**

- The Chair serves as the primary contact point for CES on matters related to governance, advocacy, and leadership for the system.
- The Chair will develop an annual set of action strategies to accomplish the multi-year goals of ECOP and present them at the annual NEDA meeting.
- The Chair will interact with the EDA Team on a regular basis.
- The Chair will serve as the direct supervisor for the ECOP Executive Director.
- The Chair, or designee, will represent ECOP and CES by giving presentations and attending meetings of national scope.
- The chair, or designee, together with the Executive Director and other members of the EDA Team, will attend meetings with agencies and organizations with the goal of creating, sustaining and enhancing strategic partnerships.

## **Chair-elect**

### **Selection**

The commitment of Chair-elect is the beginning of the three-year duty as ECOP Chair. In cases of need, regions may switch their turns in the rotation.

### **Role**

- The Chair-elect will perform the duties of the Chair in his/her absence.
- The Chair-elect will be informed on all critical communication by and with the ECOP Chair in order to create a smooth leadership transition.
- The Chair-elect will serve as liaison to ESCOP.

## **Immediate Past Chair**

### **Selection**

The Immediate Past Chair is the last segment of a three-year term of duty as ECOP Chair. The Immediate Past Chair shall remain on ECOP for one additional year in order to complete the term as Past Chair, if necessary.

### **Role**

- The Immediate Past Chair has direct responsibility for orientation of the incoming Chair.
- The Immediate Past Chair will serve on committees as needed as a regular member of ECOP.
- The ECOP Immediate Past Chair, together with the ECOP Executive Committee and an appointed committee as needed, will plan the National Extension Directors and Administrators (NEDA) and Cooperative Extension Section Business Meeting. This meeting is scheduled in the fall to allow for occasional joint meetings with the Experiment Station Section.

**Executive Director/Administrator (EDA) Team** <http://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/cooperative-extension-section/ecop-members/ecop-documents/EDA%20Team%20Responsibilites.pdf>

### **Function**

The EDA Team works in partnership with ECOP to accomplish its goals. The team establishes a directory which identifies who has responsibility for various functions.

### **Composition**

The 7-person team is composed of a full-time Executive Director and Assistant Director, housed in Washington, DC, and 25 percent full-time equivalent of each of five regional Executive Directors and Administrators representing the Northeast, South, North Central, West, and 1890 Regions. The regional EDAs are employees of their respective regions and the ECOP National Office staff are employees of APLU through an agreement with ECOP.

### **Process**

The National Executive Director coordinates the work of the team and, on behalf of the team, is responsible to ECOP for direction, priority-setting, and accountability.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES OF ECOP**

### **Executive Committee**

#### **Membership**

- One ECOP member per region, identified by the respective regional associations, including the current chair, immediate past chair, and chair-elect. Any vote of the Executive Committee requires a quorum of the 5 voting members (3 members).
- Serving in ex-officio, non-voting capacity:
  - The Director of USDA-NIFA (or designee[s])
  - The chair of the Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) unless appointed to the Executive Committee by his/her respective region
  - The Cooperative Extension Section representative to the BAA Policy Board of Directors

#### **Role**

- Conduct ECOP business requiring immediate attention when ECOP is not in formal session. Report interim action to ECOP during regularly scheduled meetings.
- Identify and set annual goals guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values, and Annual Action Plan. Develop work plans, and track and annually report outcomes and indicators of success.
- Develop and approve ECOP meeting agendas, incorporating time for committee and liaison action items.
- Appoint, coordinate, monitor and dismiss working groups, for defined purposes and time periods, as needed to conduct the work of the Executive Committee, recommending action to ECOP and other standing committees as appropriate. Regularly report the status of these groups to ECOP.
- This committee reports to ECOP.

### **Professional Development Committee**

#### **Membership**

- One ECOP member per region as identified by the respective regional associations, with one member designated as the Committee chair and one as vice chair. Any vote of the Professional Development Committee requires a quorum of the 5 voting members (3 members).
- Other ex-officio, non-voting members may vary based on the priorities and interests of the Professional Development Committee (e.g., Joint Council of Extension Professionals [JCEP], Extension and others as appropriate).

#### **Role**

- Guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values, goals, and Annual Action Plan, identify, recommend, and deliver actions on professional and organizational development for Extension Directors and Administrators and all Extension professionals. Develop work plans, and track and annually report outcomes and indicators of success.
- Promote, support, and manage national Extension awards to recognize, honor, and promote outstanding Extension work across the nation.

- Prioritize the needs and develop strategies to enhance the orientation and onboarding of new Extension Directors and Administrators.
- Create and/or promote professional and organizational development communication networks and systems for national sharing and learning.
- Appoint, coordinate, monitor and dismiss work groups, for defined purposes and time periods, related to national priority professional and organizational development initiatives. Regularly report the creation, status, and conclusion of these groups to ECOP.
- This committee reports to ECOP.

## **Program Committee**

### **Membership**

- One ECOP member per region as identified by the respective Regional Associations, with one member designated as the Committee chair and one as vice chair. Any vote of the Program Committee requires a quorum of the 5 voting members (3 members). Develop work plans, and track and annually report outcomes and indicators of success.
- The CEO of the Extension Foundation will serve as an ex-officio non-voting member.
- Other ex-officio, non-voting members may vary based on the priorities and interests of the Program Committee (e.g., National Urban Extension Leaders [NUEL], Regional Rural Development Centers [RRDC], National 4-H Council, NIFA and others as appropriate).

### **Role**

- Guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values and goals, and Annual Action Plans identify and recommend action on emerging future programs, program related issues and delivery systems important to the Extension System.
- Regularly scan the Extension System to identify critical issues and to determine if an issue requires a rapid system-wide response.
- Guided by ECOP, oversee the work of the Program Action Teams (PATs) that focus on high priority issues that benefit Extension at the national level programming.
- Promote, support, and manage the National Extension Diversity Award recognizing, honoring, and promoting inclusive programming for and with diverse audiences.
- Appoint, coordinate, monitor and dismiss work groups, for defined purposes and time periods related to national program development priorities. Regularly report the creation, status, and conclusion of these groups, including PATs to ECOP.
- Create program communication networks and systems for national sharing and learning.
- This committee reports to ECOP.

## **Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) Membership**

- Three (3) representatives from each region, elected by the Regional Associations, each serving a 3-year term on a rotational basis. Any vote of the BLC requires a quorum of the 15 voting members (8 members).



- One BLC member is appointed as chair by the ECOP Executive Committee. The chair serves a three-year term which can be renewed. The chair represents the Cooperative Extension Section on the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC), and on the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy (ESCOP) Budget and Legislative Committee, as a non-voting, ex-officio member, and reports from both groups to ECOP.
- One BLC member is appointed as vice-chair by the BLC membership and assumes responsibilities of the chair when the chair is absent. The vice-chair serves a three-year, renewable term and can assume the chair position at the approval of the ECOP Executive Committee.
- Serving in and ex-officio, non-voting capacity:
  - The Cooperative Extension Section representative to the BAA Policy Board of Directors
  - The Cooperative Extension Section representative to the BAA Committee on Legislation and Policy
  - Liaisons from the USDA-NIFA, Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET), Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy Budget and Legislative Committee (ESCOP BLC), Board on Human Sciences (BoHS), and Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP)

## **Role**

- Guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values, goals, and Annual Action Plans, establish federal legislative, budget and advocacy agenda and strategies for CES. Develop work plans, and track and annually report outcomes and indicators of success.
- Actively engage, represent, and encourage support and implementation of Extension's legislative and budget priorities to the Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC), and the Committee on Legislation and Policy (CLP).
- Provide training, communication documents, and support about the impact and value of Extension's programs, for Extension Directors and Administrators, and Extension affiliated education and advocacy related groups, trainings, and conferences (e.g., PILD, CARET, 4-H groups, etc.), that can be used for Federal budget education and advocacy purposes.
- Work with the advocacy firm engaged by the BAA Policy Board of Directors to identify and communicate strategies for moving the BAC and other Extension federal authorization and appropriations agendas forward.
- Scan the federal landscape, including USDA and other federal departments, to identify legislative and budget opportunities in alignment with ECOP's priorities.
- Manage decision-making regarding advocacy efforts including signing onto letters, delivering briefings and presentations, and other activities by working through the ECOP Executive Committee.
- Appoint, coordinate, monitor and dismiss working groups, for defined purposes and time periods, related to Extension priority budget and advocacy initiatives. Regularly report the status of these groups to ECOP.
- This committee reports to ECOP.

## **4-H Leadership Committee**

### **Membership**

- Five (5) 4-H Program Leaders and five (5) Extension Directors/Administrators selected by each of the regional associations (one PL and one D/A per region) from the five Cooperative Extension regions. Any vote of the 4-H Leadership Committee requires a quorum of the 10 voting members (6 members). Decisions regarding 4-H governance, policy, and organizational recommendations will have two-thirds or more support within the committee before being brought to ECOP for discussion and approval.
- One representative from the National 4-H Council and one representative from USDA-NIFA will serve as ex-officio non-voting members.
- The committee will be co-chaired by an Extension Director/Administrator and a 4-H Program Leader (PL) selected from within the committee by committee members. Co-chairs will serve a staggered two-year term and may be reappointed.
- ECOP will appoint a Liaison to the committee, who will be an ex-officio member and attend meetings as needed to enhance communication with ECOP on matters related to 4-H.
- Terms of service will be on a four-year rotational basis. Members can be reappointed.

### **Role**

- Guided by the ECOP mission, vision, values, goals, and Annual Action Plans, provide leadership for Cooperative Extension's 4-H Positive Youth Development Program that is reflective of the vision and mission of 4-H. Develop work plans, and track and annually report outcomes and indicators of success.
- Provide a forum for the primary partners in the 4-H program, including Land-Grant University Extension Directors/Administrators and 4-H Program Leaders, National 4-H Council, and USDA-NIFA, to engage in regular and substantive discussion to align and coordinate national 4-H governance policies, programs, processes, activities and events for effective and efficient delivery across the nation.
- Lead the Cooperative Extension System toward regular and substantive dialogue about issues of national importance to the 4-H program, facilitating a strategic and systematic response to critical challenges and opportunities in front of 4-H, and helping define a coordinated approach to the implementation of the national 4-H mission and vision.
- Develop a bold vision and plan for engaging more youth in the 4-H program that reflects the diversity of youth in the US.
- Promote, communicate, and market 4-H, executing and sustaining a unified brand.
- Attract, and generate more resources for the 4-H program.
- Appoint, coordinate, monitor and dismiss working groups, for defined purposes and time periods related to the Extension 4-H program's priorities. Regularly report the creation, status, and conclusion of these groups to ECOP.
- This committee reports to ECOP.

## **OTHER GROUPS**

### **Extension Foundation**

The Extension Foundation is part of the Cooperative Extension System. As a 501(c)(3) foundation, it

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operates under separate rules while maintaining close alignment with ECOP.

### **National Impacts Database Committee [with Experiment Station Section]**

This committee reports to the ECOP Executive Committee.

### **Other Task Forces, Innovation Teams, and Think Tanks**

Special task forces, innovation teams, and think tanks will be appointed as needed to carry out the work of the ECOP and the CES. One of the standing committees or one of the Committees of ECOP will coordinate these short-term groups. These groups are meant to be flexible and dynamic—they will be task-focused depending upon ECOP's goals and priorities.

### **Amendments to the Operating Guidelines**

The ECOP Executive Committee will frame any changes to this document for consideration and vote by the full ECOP Board. Any changes would be distributed at least two weeks in advance of scheduled vote.

History: 11.06.02 – Date of origin

11.21.02 – Revised.

12.09.02 – Revised.

12.14.16 – Revised.

12.20.02 – Revised.

1.13.03 – Revised.

3.11.03 – Revised.

5.27.03 – Revised.

10.30.03 – Revised.

10.14.10 – Marked for Revision.

[3.20.12](#) – Edited and revised.

[2.27.14](#) – ECOP BLC portion revised.

12.16.14 – Revised to reflect changes in ECOP Organizational chart.

12.14.16 – Revised to reflect changes in organizational structure.

4.11.19 – Revised to reflect the addition of 2 sections, Relationships with Partnering Entities and Amendments to the Operating Guidelines.

8.13.20 – Revised to provide greater clarity and consistency to the roles and responsibilities of ECOP Standing Committees.

4.2.21 – Executive Director corrected document to reflect the wishes of ECOP to have the Chair-elect serve as liaison to ESCOP (see 5.b, page 4, of [Minutes of October 2018](#)). Modified name of eXtension Foundation to Extension Foundation.

9.26.22 – Revised to include the addition of Processes, Principles, and Use of Reserve Funds Guidance; role of the Program Committee-Program Action Teams (PATs); and change in terms for the 4-H Leadership Committee.



## **Processes and Principles**

### **National Priorities, New Partnerships, Funding Opportunities, and Use of ECOP Reserve Funds**

#### ***I. Identifying ECOP National Priorities***

**Purpose:** To convey the processes and principles by which ECOP reviews existing national priorities and identifies Cooperative Extension Section (CES) emerging national priorities to determine where ECOP leaders will focus their time and attention.

#### **What are ECOP Priorities?**

- ECOP priorities are those few topics/issues that are system-wide or for the benefit of the national system and that receive heightened attention and perhaps resources.
- Priorities are reviewed annually, and emerging priorities are identified, prior to the start of a ECOP Chair's term. On very rare occasions, an emerging priority may surface off-cycle.
- Priorities could be related to program, budget, policy, or structure.
- Heightened attention can take the form of targeted advocacy, formation of a task force or committee, allocation from the ECOP Strategic Priorities budget line or other partnership and resource assistance or consideration of the structural elements/limitations of how extension works in parallel or in collaboration across the country.

#### **Criteria for Determining ECOP Priorities**

- Identified national priorities fall under one of the ECOP Standing Committees who own the work.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Examples:**

- For a programmatic priority: A new/emerging national-level program priority is submitted to the ECOP Program Committee for review, vetting, and if endorsed, presented by the Program Committee to the ECOP Executive Committee for consideration during the June Executive Committee Meeting. Upon consideration, the Executive Committee can recommend review by ECOP, or provide guidance for further development of the idea.
- For a budget priority: A new/emerging budget priority proposal is submitted to the ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee for review, vetting, and if endorsed, presented during the

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<sup>1</sup> Teams working on specific efforts within ECOP Standing Committees (Program Committee's Action Teams for example), including liaisons from partnering groups, work within the appropriate ECOP Standing Committees structures and processes to bring issues and opportunities to the ECOP membership.

June Executive Committee Meeting by the BLC to the ECOP Executive Committee and/or ECOP for review/consideration/approval.

- For policy priorities: A policy priority proposal is submitted to the ECOP Budget and Legislative Committee for review, vetting, and if endorsed, presented during the June Executive Committee Meeting by the BLC to the ECOP Executive Committee and/or ECOP for review/consideration/approval.
- For structural priorities: Consideration and/or improvement of the structural elements/limitations of how extension works in parallel or in collaboration across the country.
  - On rare occasions, the ECOP Chair, along with the ECOP Executive Committee will appoint a special committee as an ownership group.
  - Priorities must fit within the structure of ECOP to ensure that proposed ideas and projects are manageable.

### **Process for Becoming a National ECOP Priority**

1. An annual review of existing priorities will be conducted by the ECOP Executive Committee in June.
2. ECOP Standing Committees, or Regions (through ECOP Standing Committees) can bring forward an emerging priority proposal to be considered by the ECOP Executive Committee (during the June ECOP Executive Committee Meeting). **Proposals are due to the ECOP National Office Executive Director by May 31<sup>st</sup>.**
  - Prior to developing the proposal, the Standing Committee, in consultation with the EDA Team, should review existing priorities to ensure that the proposed issue is not already being addressed under existing priorities.
  - The proposed emerging priority can be programmatic, budget, policy, or structure related.
  - Proposed priorities are identified by ECOP Standing Committees or Regions as important, relevant, and timely.
  - Proposal leaders should reflect the intent of their constituency and not just individual thoughts and wishes.
  - Proposals may consider opportunities to maintain, incorporate, or advance current efforts.
  - The proposed priority addresses an emerging need.
  - The proposal clearly states the intended outcomes and measures of success, any budgetary needs, duration for the priority, and a method to sunset or transition the work.
3. The ECOP Executive Committee evaluates proposal(s) and votes on which ones will move on to full ECOP for a vote.
  - An overview of existing priorities will be presented at NEDA, annually.
  - Identification of proposed priorities and associated terms will be presented and considered for approval at NEDA, annually.
  - Annual priorities will be finalized during NEDA.
  - New proposals not identified as emerging priorities may be reconsidered in a future year or may be vetted through the appropriate ECOP Standing Committee for future consideration to advance the work and intent of the proposal.

- Existing priorities are expected to develop sustainable and standalone qualities that allow them to continue without direct ECOP funding, in that the work: 1) was accomplished, 2) found sustainability through grants and/or funding and a leadership structure; 3) is represented within an ECOP Standing Committee; (4) has earned independent standing or coordinating committee (i.e. Crop Protection Program); (5) has transferred to a new owner; JCEP, for example, if the work was related to professional development.

## **II. *Identifying New ECOP Partners and Funders***

**Purpose:** To convey the processes and principles by which ECOP identifies new national-level partnerships and funding opportunities to determine where ECOP leaders will focus their time and attention. New partnership and funding opportunities can arise at any time during the fiscal year.

### **Who Currently Makes Requests to ECOP for System-Wide Partnerships and New Funding Opportunities?**

- Extension Deans/Directors
- Extension Foundation
- Federal Agencies
- National Organizations
- Industry
- Legislators
- Private Foundations
- National 4-H Council

### **Criteria for Determining New ECOP Partnerships and Funding Opportunities**

- Opportunity is a current ECOP priority.
- Opportunity supports the entire system.
- Potential for new or increased system-wide funding.
- Clear objectives and evaluation plan.
- Timeline? A one-time opportunity or long-term partnership.
- Institutional leadership support from Extension Dean/Directors/Administrators.

### **Example:**

- Federal Agency approaches Director/Dean/Administrator with a funding/partnership opportunity for the system such as the CDC NIFA EXCITE Program.

### **Process for Making the Decision on a New Partner or Funder of ECOP**

- Opportunities for partnerships arise at any time in the fiscal year.
- An annual review of existing partners and funders will be conducted by the ECOP Executive Committee in June.
- All new requests for a partnership or funders must be submitted to the National Extension Office.
  - Request will be logged into a tracking system.
  - ECOP Chair will determine when/where to direct the request.

- ECOP Standing Committees
- Program Action Team
- ECOP Executive Committee
- ECOP
- CES

### **Timing for Making the Decision on a New Partner or Funder of ECOP**

Timing is not as important as the process.

Requests can be made any time and should follow the process outlined above.

### **Process for Making the Decision on a New Partner or Funder of ECOP**

- The request is submitted to the National Extension Office.
- National Office discusses the request with ECOP Chair and determines the next steps and review if needed.
- Request is reviewed by ECOP Executive Committee and moved to ECOP if needed.
- Final approval and vote will be taken at the CES level.

### **III. Use of ECOP Reserve Funds**

**Purpose:** To convey guidance around the purpose and use of ECOP reserve funds.

- Reserve funds may accumulate within ECOP due to unforeseen circumstances that include position vacancies, reduced travel, or a non-completed planned activity. Reserve funds can accumulate in any fiscal year but are generally not anticipated to accumulate.
- While reserve funds are not intended to accrue, nor be replenished through increased assessments, they represent an ECOP resource available for emergencies, or to address unique opportunities.
- Since ECOP is not positioned to intentionally build reserve funds, expenditure of reserve funds must be intentional and well-planned.
- During the annual budget process, ECOP will assess its reserve funds status. If there are excess reserve funds in any given year, ECOP may determine a process for the expenditure of these funds. However, this will likely not occur on a regular basis.
- Considerations in determining the desired level of reserve funds:
  - Emergency needs (6 months bare bones operating funds).
- Unscheduled unique opportunity that presents a novel programmatic and financial return.

**Proposed targeted reserve amount for FY23, FY24, and FY25 is: \$250 -350k**