



FY27 REQUEST FOR CONCEPT (RFC)

Direct Request for Concepts (RFC) questions to: research@indianasoybean.com

Submission Deadline: February 4, 2026 (Midnight EST)

Purpose of the Request for Concept:

The Indiana Soybean Alliance, Inc. (ISA) & Indiana Corn Marketing Council (ICMC) are seeking Requests for Concepts for FY27 research and projects fitting the Strategic Focus Areas identified in Attachment 2. The Strategic Focus Areas were created and approved by the Farmers of the Board of Directors. Invitations for full proposals (RFP) will be made from the pool of reviewed concepts. Concepts building on prior program work and/or new concepts are encouraged. Inclusion on the strategic priority list does not imply ISA/ICMC will fund all projects or areas; decisions will be based on affordability, impact, and alignment with ISA/ICMC Strategic Focus Areas.

Timeline:

By January 6, 2026	Request for Concept (RFC) made available at https://incornandsoy.org/reporting/ . Those invited to submit were sent an email with this information.
February 4, 2026	Deadline to submit Request for Concepts to ISA/ICMC (must hit final submit by midnight EST).
By April 3, 2026	Invitations and guidelines for full proposals (RFP) are sent via email. Full proposals will be accepted by invitation only. If RFC is not moving forward to RFP, you will be notified.
May 13, 2026	Deadline to submit full proposals (RFP).
By June 30, 2026	Notification sent if RFP is not moving forward to final August approval.
By September 15, 2026	Subcontractors are notified of funding decisions.
October 1, 2026	FY27 Research and program work begins (or other date as identified).

Instructions:

- Concepts should be submitted through the online form which can be accessed at <https://incornandsoy.org/reporting/>
- The questions asked in the online form are summarized in Attachment 1. Each question has character limits to ensure the concept's total length fits on two pages. ISA and ICMC receive over 300 concepts per year, so concise submissions are appreciated and necessary for review.



- You will have two options to complete the Request for Concept
 - Option 1: Complete the entire form at one time on web link listed above.
 - Option 2: Complete over multiple sittings. Follow the instructions on the webpage for this option and you will receive a link via email that you can complete. You will need to enter a title for your Concept.
- You will have the opportunity to review and edit the completed form before submission. You should print the completed form for your records before submission. You will receive an email confirmation that your form has been received. **PLEASE NOTE, WHEN YOU PRINT YOUR FORM, ANY UPLOADED ATTACHMENTS WILL NOT BE MERGED TO THE FORM AND INCLUDED IN YOUR PRINTING. IF YOU RECEIVE EMAIL CONFIRMATION, IT IS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THE FORM INCLUDING ANY ATTACHMENTS WAS APPROPRIATELY RECEIVED.**
- RFC questions on the site or submission should be directed to: research@indianasoybean.com.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION KEY CRITERIA:

Concepts will be distributed to the relevant committees for review and scoring. The Board Committees will evaluate the concepts based on the following criteria.

- Value – How will this project make a real difference for Indiana farmers?
- Profit & Well Being: Will this project improve profitability (yield, expense reduction, market expansion), cash flow, farmer health or consumer perception of agriculture?
- Local Impact: Does the project have a straight line back to Indiana farms or the agricultural communities within Indiana?
- Research Viability – How likely is the research concept to be technically and commercially viable for success through adoption.
- Collaboration – What capabilities, expertise, and relevant partnerships exist within or outside your organization that can be leveraged for success (including your engagement with farmers).

Overall Guidance:

ISA Mission: The Indiana Soybean Alliance proactively works with partners to improve opportunities for Indiana soybean farmers.

ICMC Mission: The Indiana Corn Marketing Council promotes innovative solutions to grow the value of corn in Indiana from seed to consumer.

ISA/ICMC seeks project concepts aligned with one or more of the following four Strategic Focus Areas. Additional guidance is provided below and in [Attachment 2](#).

1. Market Development

Concepts should accelerate demand for, or expand market access to, soybeans/corn or soybean- and corn-based products in domestic or international markets. This includes biodiesel, renewable diesel, ethanol, livestock and meat products, and high oleic soybeans and high oleic soybean oil.

Key Audiences:

Exporters of meat and poultry, fuel distributors, retailers, food service entities, and domestic and international consumers.



2. Sustainability

Concepts should address the environmental, social, and/or economic sustainability of soybean and corn production.

Environmental Sustainability

Concepts may include basic or applied research that helps farmers adopt practices improving soil health and reducing nutrient loss, including analysis of the on-farm economic impacts of those practices.

Key Audiences: Farmers, conservation groups.

Social Sustainability

Concepts should include outreach to consumer audiences—from children through adults, as well as local community leaders. Projects should connect these audiences to corn and/or soybean farmers and communicate positive messages related to environmental stewardship, food safety, and economic impact. Advocacy activities are **not** permitted.

Key Audiences: Consumers, community leaders (e.g., local economic development organizations, legislators, county officials), educators, and other stakeholders inside or outside agriculture.

Economic Sustainability

Concepts should focus on systems or research that improve farm profitability through cost-of-production efficiencies, on-farm economics or yield enhancement.

Key Audiences: Farmers, industry partners.

3. Value Creation

Concepts should increase the value of Indiana soybeans and/or corn by advancing new food products with soybean ingredients or new industrial uses of corn- and/or soybean-based products, leveraging research and strategic partnerships to move concepts toward commercialization.

Key Audiences: Commercial entities capable of bringing value-added products to market.

4. Producer Engagement

Concepts should increase farmer awareness of checkoff return on investment and/or create new opportunities for farmers to engage with ISA and/or ICMC. Concepts can include projects that give back to farmers and their communities (i.e. farmer safety programs, etc.).

Key Audiences: Farmers and stakeholders who influence farmer decision-making.

Reviewer-Friendly Submission Tips

- Use **short paragraphs and bullets** (no dense blocks of text)
- Limit each subsection to **3–5 bullets or a short paragraph**
- Keep headings bold and consistent so reviewers can scan quickly
- Think: “*Would a farmer board member understand this in five minutes?*”
- What is on the mind of our farmer board members?
 - *Trade and Markets*
 - *Reduction of input costs*
 - *Disease pressures*
 - *Operating lines of credit vs. cost of carry cash flow*

See [Attachment 3](#) for reminders regarding compliance requirements for funding.

Attachment 1

Request for Concept – FY27

Content requirements for submission:

1. **Descriptive Stand-Alone Concept Title** (255 character limit):
2. **Contact Information:** Organization, Project Lead Name, Address, Phone, Email
3. **Proposed Duration with Start and End Date:**
Our fiscal year FY27 is Oct 1, 2026 to Sept 30, 2027. ISA approves funding annually for projects and initiatives can be multi or single year in nature.
4. **Budget Estimate:** Please provide an estimated cost for completing this project.
5. **Concept Description:** Briefly describe the concept, what problem it addresses, and the intended outcome of the project. (1,500 character limit).
6. **Value to Indiana Farmers:**
 - A. **Farmer Profitability and Well-Being** (750 character limit)
 - a. **How will this project make a real difference for Indiana farmers?**
Describe how the project is expected to:
 - Improve profitability (yield, cost reduction, price premiums, or market access)
 - Improve cash flow or risk management
 - Support farmer health, safety, or overall well-being
 - Improve consumer perception of agriculture (if applicable)

Explain the cause-and-effect relationship between the project's activities and the benefits delivered to Indiana farmers.

- B. **Local Indiana Impact** (750 character limit)
What is the direct connection to Indiana agriculture?

Explain the "straight line" back to:

- Indiana soybean and/or corn farms
- Indiana agricultural communities
- Indiana-based infrastructure, markets or supply chains

If benefits are regional or national, clearly state how Indiana farmers are part of that benefit.

- C. **Research or Concept Viability** (750 character limit)

How likely is this concept to succeed in real-world adoption?

Address:

- Technical feasibility (proof points, prior work, pilot data or readiness level)
- Commercial viability or scalability (path to adoption, barriers, timeline)
- Risk and assumptions that could affect success

Focus on practicality, not academic interest alone.

7. **Outcomes and Measures of Success:** (1,500 character limit)

Expected Outcomes

List the top 3-5 outcomes the project intends to deliver.

Success Indicators

Briefly describe how success will be measured (quantitative or qualitative), such as:

- Adoption metrics
- Market outcomes
- Cost or yield impacts
- Engagement or awareness indicators

8. **Collaboration & Capacity** (750 character limit):

How is your team positioned to deliver results?

Describe:

- Key capabilities and expertise within your organization
- Strategic partners (industry, research, extension, farmers, or others)
- How farmers are engaged in the concept (input, pilots, validation, outreach, etc.)
- What is your communication plan? How will you communicate to the target market for this project and/or research and the farmers who fund?

Given that checkoff funds are farmer-funded, proposals should clearly demonstrate how benefits and outcomes will be communicated back to Indiana farmers



2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Our Vision: Indiana farmers lead in responsibly growing soybeans for use in products worldwide.

Our Mission: The Indiana Soybean Alliance proactively works with partners to improve opportunities for Indiana soybean farmers.

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:



MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Work with partners to accelerate demand for Indiana soybeans in all forms

Objectives

- Increase livestock and meat exports from Indiana
- Increase exports for US soybeans and soybean products
- Expand the demand for high oleic soybeans and high oleic soybean oil
- Increase demand for biodiesel and renewable diesel produced in Indiana



SUSTAINABILITY

Implement environmental, economic and community outreach programs

Objectives

- Increase farmer adoption of improved nutrient and soil health systems
- Through community partnerships, strengthen consumer's trust in farmers by highlighting shared economic, environmental and social values
- Invest in research that helps farmers produce soybeans more economically



VALUE CREATION

Increase the value of Indiana soybeans by bringing new food and industrial uses to market through partnerships and research

Objectives

- Increase the number of soybean-based industrial products in the market
- Increase the number of foods with soybean ingredients in the market



PRODUCER ENGAGEMENT

Engage more deeply with Indiana's 20,000+ soybean farmers and give back to farmer communities

Objectives

- Increase understanding of the return of checkoff programs back to the farm
- Fund programs that allow ISA to engage more deeply with Indiana farmers and their communities

Learn more at: Incornandsoy.org



2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

Our Vision: Indiana corn farmers are recognized as trusted stewards of the land; actively growing solutions for farm, food, and energy security.

Our Mission: The Indiana Corn Marketing Council promotes innovative solutions to grow the value of corn in Indiana from seed to consumer.

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:



MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Work with partners to accelerate demand for Indiana corn in all forms

Objectives

- Increase livestock and meat exports from Indiana
- Expand exports for US corn and corn products
- Increase demand of ethanol produced in Indiana



SUSTAINABILITY

Implement environmental, economic and community outreach programs

Objectives

- Increase farmer adoption of improved nutrient and soil health systems
- Through community partnerships, strengthen consumer's trust in farmers by highlighting shared economic, environmental and social values
- Invest in research that helps farmers produce corn more economically



VALUE CREATION

Increase the value of Indiana corn by bringing new corn industrial uses to market through partnerships and research

Objectives

- Increase the number of corn-based industrial products in the market



PRODUCER ENGAGEMENT

Engage more deeply with Indiana's 20,000+ corn farmers and give back to farmer communities

Objectives

- Increase understanding of the return of checkoff programs back to the farm
- Fund programs that allow ICMC to engage more deeply with Indiana farmers and their communities

Learn more at: Incornandsoy.org

Attachment 3

Checkoff Guidelines per Compliance Manual

- 1) Patents, copyrights, inventions, or publications (“Intellectual Property”) developed using checkoff funds must remain the property of ISA/ICMC. However, where additional funding is provided by the party receiving checkoff funds, that party may maintain an ownership interest in any Intellectual Property created, provided ISA/ICMC retain certain rights regarding the Intellectual Property.
- 2) Funding of capital equipment with checkoff funds for plans or projects is prohibited unless the equipment is: (a) purchased in conjunction with the plan or project; and (b) necessary for completion of the plan or project. ISA/ICMC must retain its ownership interest in the capital equipment during and after the completion of the plan or project.
- 3) Funding of academic chairs and endowments is prohibited unless the following guidelines are followed:
 - a. The contract must identify the academic chair or endowment must identify the purpose of the objectives of the funding which must be for soybean research, promotion, consumer information and/or industry information.
 - b. The contract must be renewable on an annual basis and ISA/ICMC must authorize the funding annually in writing.
 - c. The contract must allow ISA/ICMC to have input and consent regarding whom is awarded the funding.
 - d. The contract must require deliverables consistent with the purpose and objectives of the funding to be delivered.
- 4) Sponsorships paid with checkoff funds are prohibited unless it is an activity that ISA/ICMC pays for in exchange for specific checkoff-related deliverables or performance measures sufficient to justify the amount of the sponsorship.
- 5) Donations to building funds or foundations with checkoff funds are prohibited unless there are specific checkoff-related deliverables and/or performance measures sufficient to justify the amount of the donation.
- 6) Other funding prohibitions:
 - a. Any activity to influence government policy or action
 - b. University principal investigator salaries
 - c. University overhead/indirect costs
 - d. Spouse/family expenses
 - e. Open bars
 - f. Personal expenses