

Source: Biomass R&D Technical Advisory Committee
Advisory To: Biomass R&D Board
Report Date: November 20, 2019
Issue: *Annual BRDI-Specific Recommendations*



The Technical Advisory Committee (the Committee) for the Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI) was authorized through Section 9008(d) of the Food, Conservation, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 and re-authorized in the Agricultural Act of 2014. Section 9008(d)(3)(B) requires the Committee to evaluate the BRDI program against specific criteria and make written annual recommendations to the Biomass Research and Development Board.

The last round of funding awards under the BRDI program was completed in a combined FY2016 and FY2017 solicitation. The Farm Bill did not provide any mandatory funding to the BRDI program in FY2018 or subsequent years. Neither USDA nor DOE have directed any discretionary funds to the BRDI program since the combined FY2016-FY2017 solicitation round. Absent any BRDI program solicitation over the last year, the BRDI-specific criteria the TAC is charged with evaluating annually are not relevant over the 2019 reporting period.

Criteria	Committee Evaluation & Recommendations
i <i>Funds authorized for the Initiative are distributed and used in a manner that is consistent with the objectives, purposes, and considerations of the Initiative.</i>	Not applicable in 2019.
ii <i>Solicitations are open and competitive with awards made annually.</i>	Not applicable in 2019.
iii <i>Objectives and evaluation criteria of the solicitations are clearly stated and minimally prescriptive, with no areas of special interest.</i>	Not applicable in 2019.
iv <i>The points of contact are funding proposals under this title that are selected on the basis of merit, as determined by an independent panel of scientific and technical peers predominantly from outside the Departments of Agriculture and Energy.</i>	Not applicable in 2019.
v <i>Activities under this title are carried out in accordance with this title.</i>	Not applicable in 2019.

The Committee makes the following additional recommendations for further improving BRDI:

- The consensus of the Committee is that the BRDI program has historically been a well-implemented and successful program, funding highly relevant work and yielding positive impacts. New funding for the BRDI program has not been authorized beyond FY2017. The Committee recommends reauthorization of the BRDI program at meaningful funding levels in a new Farm Bill or other reauthorization vehicle or through discretionary funding support.
- The Committee commends DOE and USDA for incorporating the research priorities identified and highlighted by the Committee in the most recent BRDI solicitation and award process.
- The Committee recommends enhanced agency efforts to communicate the successes and impacts resulting from funded BRDI projects, targeted to a general audience.