

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Score (1-5)	Weight
<p>1. Brand Story: The application demonstrates a strong and compelling sense of identity and WHY their brand is in existence.</p> <p><i>**Tip: Strongly influenced by questions 1 and 2. The more information, the better, this is an invitation to use this prompt to tell us a story.</i></p>		50%
<p>2. Community Connection and Cultivation: The application highlights a strong degree bond and reciprocity with the brand's respective community. There is clarity in HOW the brand is committing to community.</p> <p><i>**Tip: Strongly influenced by questions 1 and 3. This is an invitation to tell us a story or share an example!</i></p>		30%
<p>3. Verification Value: The application places a high value on the verification (i.e. access to retail buyers, new eaters, etc.) and has provided clarity in the specifics of that value.</p> <p><i>**Tip: Largely influenced by question 4.</i></p>		20%

Each applicant is evaluated along 3 weighted criteria and awarded a score from a 1-5 for each criteria. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of 2 members of the selection committee and the scores will be averaged. There is no one right way to answer the questions. Below is our attempt to describe to you what is informing our decision making.

Brand Story - It makes us believe your “why” - as in WHY is your business in existence, the essence and identity of the brand. The brand or product(s) are filling a unique and innovative role in the food space and/or has a defined purpose or set of values.

What does a 1 look like:

- Lack of clarity (the “why” is not clear)

What does a 5 look like:

- The “why” is clear and compelling.

Community Connection and Cultivation: We want to see that you are not just selling to your community, but are an integral part of it. We want to know HOW your business is connected to your community. For example, your brand or product aims to serve the essence/uniqueness of your community; creating access to flavors, feelings, and traditions that are not readily available. Your brand seeks to support the integrity and transparency of a BIMPOC-centric value web, from farmer to consumer. Or perhaps your company has a social focus and reinvests a percentage of your profits back into a meaningful cause. There are LOTS of ways to give back and be connected. We want to know how YOU are doing it.

What does a 1 look like:

- The community connection is not clear or defined.
- The “what” and the “how” are not clear.

What does a 5 look like:

- A community connection is defined.
- The “what” and the “how” are clear and compelling.

Verification Value: We recognize that third-party clean labels can be important to open up access to sales channels, new customer segments, or just validating the hard work that goes into building a sustainable supply chain. We want to understand the impact of Non-GMO Project verification on your products.

What does a 1 look like:

- The applicant expressed a low benefit of verification; it is “a nice to have.”
- The value of verification is unclear

What does a 5 look like:

- The applicant expressed a high benefit of verification; it is “a need to have.”
- The value of verification is clear