

**FY 2026 Food for Progress Notice of Funding Opportunity
Questions and Answers**

May 21- June 2, 2026

- 1. Q: Is USDA willing to schedule a Zoom call with prospective Applicants? We are interested to learn more about USDA priorities and perspectives in Ecuador, Bolivia, and the region to hear Food for Progress insights on USDA’s priorities and areas of interest.**

A: To avoid any actual or perceived unfair advantage, USDA will not hold meetings or engage in discussions with potential applicants regarding the priority country list, the FY 2026 NOFO, awards, or applications. All inquiries must be directed to PPDED@usda.gov by the deadline stated in Section 1.9 Key Dates of the NOFO.

- 2. Q: Section 4.2.c (Plan of Operation) requires applicants to articulate each activity against a six-bullet structure (Target, Process, Economies of Scale, Local Capacity & Exit, Leverage, Subrecipient Roles), while also stating that detailed activity breakdowns will be developed in the post-award work plan. To preserve room for adaptive course-correction during implementation (particularly where post-award stakeholder consultation may surface new priorities) would USDA/FAS accept: a) one undefined or open-ended “responsive” activity; and/or b) one undefined or contingency line item in the Detailed Budget, both clearly labeled and capped by a stated ceiling? If yes, what level of justification is expected at proposal stage?**

A: No. While post-award consultations may refine or adjust specific approaches, all proposed activities must be described with sufficient clarity for USDA/FAS to assess the intent, feasibility, and cost implications during the application review. USDA/FAS does not accept undefined or open-ended interventions, nor does it allow contingency or placeholder budget line items, even if capped and labeled. Similarly, every entry in the Detailed Budget must correspond to a clearly identified and justified cost. Applicants may note where post-award stakeholder engagement could inform sequencing or minor adjustments; however, the activities and associated costs must still be fully defined at the proposal stage to enable meaningful evaluation.

- 3. Q: Page 16 of the NOFO states that “letters of support from entities that are not subrecipients must not be included with the application.” Where applicants commit to substantial private-sector or beneficiary cost share (including the approximately 50% threshold encouraged in Appendix B for infrastructure-related investments), what evidence does USDA/FAS expect at proposal stage to substantiate those commitments?**

Specifically, is a tabular summary of named contributors and contribution values sufficient or does USDA/FAS expect alternative evidence (e.g., MOUs with non-subrecipients, attestations within the Budget Narrative)?

A: Applicants may include a description of named contributors (that are not subrecipients) and contribution values in the organizational capacity and staffing narrative. All proposed cost share must be included in all the following required documents: the budget summary, detailed budget, and budget narrative.

4. **Q: Under 7 CFR 1499.2 and §2.6 of the NOFO, does the lending portion of a partial-guarantee or matching-grant co-investment instrument (i.e., the private capital mobilized through the guarantee or co-investment) count as allowable cost share? If so, how should it be valued for cost-share purposes: face value of the loan, expected disbursement, guarantee exposure, or another metric?**

A: USDA/FAS encourages but does not require voluntary committed cost share. For cost share to be allowable, contributions must meet the criteria in 7 CFR 1499.2 and 2 CFR 200.306.

5. **Q: Section 4.2.b and the scoring rubric at §6.2 reference “return on investment” as a cost-effectiveness criterion. To support consistent treatment across applicants, can USDA/FAS clarify: a) what should be included in the numerator (e.g., U.S. export value created?); and b) what should be included in the denominator (e.g., total federal award,)? Is there a preferred unit of measure (e.g., dollar-per-dollar leverage, internal rate of return, payback period, or other)?**

A: USDA/FAS uses “return on investment” (ROI) metric referenced in Sections 4.2 Content Guidance and 6.2 Review Criteria of the NOFO, as a cost effectiveness indicator to assess how proposed activities translate federal funding into measurable increase in production, and trade related outcomes. Applicants should calculate the ratio of the value of outcomes achieved over total federal award (ROI = Incremental value attributable to the improvement ÷ total federal award). Outcomes could vary depending on the value chain or project focus, and could include increased volumes of market ready output; increased volumes or sales, improved product quality leading to higher market acceptance; enhanced compliance with sanitary/phytosanitary or technical standards that enable market entry; new or strengthened commercial partnerships; reduction in transaction costs or post-harvest losses; improved supply chain efficiency or reliability. USDA/FAS does not prescribe a single unit of measure (e.g., internal rate of return, payback period, dollar-for-dollar leverage). However, applicants must present a clear, evidence-based rationale for how they calculate the projected value of

outcomes and explain why the selected measure appropriately reflects cost-effectiveness for their proposed activity mix.

6. **Q: May the Implementer contract a host-country financial institution to act as fiduciary administrator of a dedicated FFPr-funded guarantee or credit-enhancement account, structured as a procurement of services under 2 CFR 200.317–200.326 (not as a sub-grant or subrecipient relationship), and at what stage does USDA/FAS expect the arrangement to be formalized: a Letter of Interest at submission, an MOU pre-award, or a signed services agreement post-award?**

A: Applicants may contract a host-country financial institution to act as a fiduciary administrator of a dedicated FFPr-funded guarantee or credit-enhancement account following award negotiations between USDA/FAS and the Applicant in the event of a successful Application. If an MOU, or any other form of support, is reached with a financial institution during the proposal stage, Applicants may note that in the narrative.

7. **Q: For Morocco - Food Safety and Cold Storage in the Livestock Value Chain: Appendix B (NOFO p. 45-47) cites per-capita poultry consumption (20.9 kg in 2024) alongside red meat (>17 kg) within Morocco’s livestock landscape and frames the priority sector as “Food Safety and Cold Storage in the Livestock Value Chain.” Does USDA/FAS consider activities targeting peri-urban poultry slaughter and cold-chain infrastructure to be in scope under this priority sector, or should applicants confine the proposal to red-meat species?**

A: USDA/FAS considers activities targeting peri-urban poultry slaughter and cold-chain infrastructure to be within scope under the FY 2026 programming priorities for Morocco.

8. **Q: For each country, USDA has provided an anticipated operating budget including the amount for monetization proceeds and the amount for CCC Admin. Can USDA please confirm that program income (from interest on monetization proceeds) can be added on top of these amounts, or if USDA intended the monetization proceeds figure to include both the monetization proceeds and the interest on proceeds?**

A: Yes, interest earned on monetization proceeds is considered program income and must be applied on top of the anticipated operating budget amounts provided in each country guidance document. The monetization proceeds outlined in the country guidance are based on estimated monetization values and do not include program income. For further information on program income, see 2 CFR 200.307, as well as the definition of “program income” in 7 CFR 1499.2 and 7 CFR 1499.11 in the program specific regulation.

9. **Q: Page 26 Section 6.2 Review Criteria for the Monitoring and Evaluation section states that USDA/FAS will evaluate Applicants on their provision of “a comprehensive, technically sound description of the Program-Level results framework and narrative theory of change.” However, Section 4.2 Content Guidance pages 16-17 limits the Results Framework to a graphical representation of the project’s theory of change, and the narrative explanation of the Results Framework has been removed. The instructions for the Monitoring and Evaluation Brief do not include a narrative theory of change. Could USDA please clarify whether a description of the Results Framework and a narrative theory of change should be provided, and will be evaluated, within the Monitoring & Evaluation Brief?**

A: No, a narrative theory of change should not be provided and is not identified in the M&E Content Guidance on pages 16-17, as noted. It is an error that it was still listed amongst 6.2 Review Criteria. Applicants will not be assessed on this item and are not directed to provide it in the Monitoring and Evaluation Brief or elsewhere.

10. **Q: Could USDA please confirm that the Monitoring and Evaluation section of Appendix A – Application Content Checklist should read: Project-Level Results Framework, Performance Indicators, Monitoring and Evaluation Brief?**

A: USDA/FAS confirms that Appendix A – Application Content Checklist should include: 1) Program-Level results framework, 2) Performance Indicators, and 3) Monitoring and Evaluation Brief. The NOFO has been updated accordingly to clarify this information.

11. **Q: Could USDA please confirm that the SF 242A [SF-424A] form is not required to be submitted as part of the proposal application?**

A: The SF-424A form is not required. Please refer to Appendix A- Application Content Checklist for a list of all required content and forms.

12. **Q: May Applicants include a brief Acronym List as an attachment to the Cover Sheet, which will not count against the page limit?**

A: Yes, Applicants may include an Acronym List, which will not count against the page limit.

13. **Q: Page 11, Section 4.1.b – Required Content and Forms limits the Budget Narrative to 16 pages. Since significant detail is needed to display to USDA/FAS what is in our budgets, can USDA FAS consider increasing the Budget Narrative page limit?**

A: No, the page limits cannot be increased.

14. **Q: Page 48 section Appendix B – Country Guidance states, “USDA/FAS has identified Luzon and Visayas as potential regions for assistance. Applicants should define a targeted area comprising any combination of the two regions that is both cost effective, close to a processor (or end-market), and aligned with the technical approach.” Can USDA clarify if this means we can choose to work in one of or both Luzon and Visayas? Or, does it mean we must work in both of those island groups, but it’s up to us to select the specific provinces we work within that.**

A: Applicants may propose working in either Luzon, Visayas, or both, with a key emphasis on cost-effectiveness of the project and long-lasting impact.

15. **Q: Page 26, Table A. Content and Points lists the application sections in a different order than is listed in Appendix A – Application Content Checklist on page 26. Which application section order should we use?**

A: Application sections should be uploaded to FAIS individually. The order in which application sections are uploaded does not affect how the application is received. All sections are incorporated into the system the same way regardless of upload order. Applicants are encouraged to use the document checklist provided in Appendix A - Application Content Checklist of the NOFO as a tool to ensure consistent labeling when uploading all required materials.

16. **Q: For the purposes of this NOFO and the Morocco country guidance, does USDA consider poultry to be included within the term “livestock”?**

A: Yes, USDA/FAS considers the poultry value chain to be included within the term “livestock.”

17. **Q: Is Honduras eligible to submit a proposal under the FY 2026 Food for Progress Notice of Funding Opportunity?**

A: No. Per Section 1.5 Funding Opportunity Number of the FY 2026 NOFO, USDA/FAS has specified the priority countries and their respective Funding Opportunity Numbers. Only applications aligned with these listed Funding Opportunity Numbers are eligible for submission.

18. **Q: If Honduras is not currently an eligible or priority country under this funding round, could you kindly indicate whether there are other USDA/FAS funding**

mechanisms, programs, or upcoming opportunities for which Honduras may be eligible?

A: USDA/FAS encourages Applicants to periodically check www.grants.gov for Notice of Funding Opportunities.

19. Q: Would the Government of Honduras, through the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG), be eligible to serve as the lead applicant, or would applications generally need to be submitted through universities, non-profit organizations, international organizations, or other eligible entities?

A: Please refer to Section 2.1 Eligible Applicants of the NOFO. Please be sure to review the additional eligibility criteria carefully.

20. Q: Would universities be considered eligible applicants under USDA/FAS funding opportunities of this nature?

A: Yes, universities and colleges are eligible applicants for the Food for Progress NOFO. Please refer to Section 2.1 Eligible Applicants of the NOFO. Please be sure to review the additional eligibility criteria and the definitions provided in 7 CFR 1499.2

21. Q: Are there any program guidelines, concept note templates, country eligibility references, strategic priorities, or preparatory documents that you would recommend reviewing in advance to facilitate future proposal development?

A: Applicants are encouraged to review the NOFO in its entirety, as it serves as the authoritative source for all eligibility criteria, technical instructions, and documentation necessary for the development of a complete and compliant proposal.

22. Q: Do you have any resources that can help us develop accurate commodity price estimates for our proposal?

A: Yes. In addition to noting that the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) publishes data on commodity procurement, we recommend reviewing the AMS International Commodity Procurement Information page, which provides detailed reports and historical pricing information. You can find it here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/reports/international-commodity-procurement-information>. This resource can help you build more accurate and well-supported commodity price estimates for your proposal.