

McGovern-Dole FY2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity Q&A

Correction for Week 03/06/2023

1. **Q:** Is there an update on the planned Public Meeting on FY 2023 funding opportunities for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program and Food for Progress Program?

A: FAS rescheduled the USDA McGovern-Dole and Food for Progress FY 2023 Public Meeting Webinar to Thursday, March 23 from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. More information is available on USDA's website. Click on the following link to access the webinar:
www.zoomgov.com/j/16113754577?pwd=ek0xTFpjSHZ2dHJRUVgrblhML0RFdz09

Meeting ID: 161 1375 4577

Passcode: NOFO

US Toll-free

Access Code: 428308#

(833) 568-8864

(611) 375-4577

Find your local number: <https://www.zoomgov.com/u/acHMcEbIhW>

Week of 03/13/2023

1. **Q:** The heading "Explanation of Need" is included in the Intro/Strategic Analysis section under the Overview and SO1, but not SO2. Is this intentional? Should there be an "Explanation of Need" in both SO1 and SO2 sections or only in the Overview section?

A: The "Explanation of Need" section under SO1 is similar to the "Overview of Context" section in SO2. Please include the details requested under each section, including information on the context, needs, challenges, and gaps related to literacy and education and nutrition and health.

2. **Q:** Is the most current version of the Food Assistance Indicators and definitions from February 2019?

A: Yes, that is the current version of the Guidance on Food Aid Program Standard Indicators handbook.

3. **Q:** Is the most current version of a Learning Agenda Guidelines from February 18, 2016?

A: Yes, that is the current version of the School Meals Learning Agenda.

4. **Q:** Pages 9 and 39 state: "Applicants are strongly encouraged to allocate approximately ten percent of the total proposed federal award amount for local and regional

procurement component.” Based on program design, would USDA allow a higher or lower percentage of the budget for local and regional procurement (LRP)? Must LRP be exactly 10% of the budget?

A: The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 states for McGovern-Dole, “that of the amount made available under this heading, not more than 10 percent, but not less than \$24,300,000, shall remain available until expended to purchase agricultural commodities...”

In accordance with USDA’s current policy and annual appropriations, Applicants must ensure that LRP budget does not exceed 10 percent of the total proposed project.

5. **Q:** Page 63, Appendix C – Global Strategies and Initiatives – states: “If the education and literacy activities in the proposal are to be conducted by a sub-contractor or subrecipient, submission of the sub-contractor or subrecipient’s relevant past performance is strongly encouraged.” Can USDA please confirm that submission of a reference is strongly encouraged for literacy subs even if they do not meet the 30% of the proposed operating budget threshold? Can USDA please confirm that past performance references from subrecipients are in addition to the three references required for prime applicants?

A: As stated in the NOFO in Section 4d, “if a proposed Subrecipient will receive **30 percent or more** of the proposed operating budget, the Applicant must submit one Past Performance Review for the subrecipient to ppded@usda.gov by the closing date of by the closing date of the announcement. FAS will confirm receipt of this review. If applicable, Applicants should provide one Past Performance Review for the Subrecipient in addition to the Applicant’s references.”

Note that Subrecipient references are required only if the “Subrecipient will receive 30 percent or more of the proposed operating budget.” The NOFO also specifies that the Past Performance Review for the Subrecipient is “**in addition to** the Applicant’s references,” so this would be in addition to the 1-3 references for the Applicant.

6. **Q:** Page 60, Country Specific Guidance for Nicaragua states: “A strong application will complement, not replace, Government of Nicaragua efforts and will target schools or districts not previously graduated, preferencing schools that have not previously received school feeding support programming.” Can USDA: A) please define a graduated school, B) confirm whether or not USDA supplemental feeding via imported or LRP commodities can be added to GON school meals if they are insufficient in nutrition, meal size served, and/or number of meals served per week, and C) if graduated schools under previous programs are eligible to receive any non-food assistance.

A:

- a. As defined in the McGovern-Dole Authorizing legislation 7 USC 1736o-1, under Graduation: “An agreement with an eligible organization under this section shall include provisions-(1) to- (A) sustain the benefits to the education, enrollment, and attendance of children in schools in the targeted communities when the provision of commodities and assistance to a recipient country under a program under this section terminates (cont.)...”
 - b. Per the question on supplementing government rations, please see Section 4 (b) (i) Plan of Operations, Ration Justification. Although the guidance specifies that “Applicants must offer at least three food components” it also provides for the opportunity to explain “Why the project is using less than three food components, if applicable.” Please use this section to justify your organization’s plans to supplement government school meals.
 - c. Graduated schools are eligible to receive McGovern-Dole assistance but as the NOFO states, “A strong application will...target schools or districts not previously graduated, preferencing schools that have not previously received school feeding support programming.” Please also Section 4, Content Guidance of the NOFO (page 19) for more guidance on how you should describe your process for choosing beneficiaries.
7. **Q:** For Nicaragua, are schools in the current USDA program that were damaged by recent hurricanes eligible for continued non-feeding program assistance?

A: Yes, the schools would be eligible for non-feeding program assistance. Please see Section 4 (a) (ii), Country Overview and Context for more guidance on how to describe your method of choosing beneficiaries. However, please note that “providing school meals must be a central part of all McGovern-Dole projects” as cited under Strategic Objective 2 (page 21) of the NOFO.

8. **Q:** For Nicaragua, does USDA have a preference whether or not to continue non-feeding assistance to those schools currently in the program demonstrating a need for further capacity development?

A: See Section 4 (a) (ii), Country Overview and Context for more information on how to describe your method of choosing beneficiaries and geographic areas. Please also see Section 4 (c), Sustainability and Lasting Impact in the NOFO, for more guidance on how to justify continuing activities in existing McGovern-Dole schools and target areas:

“Previous Projects: If Applicants propose continuing an existing project, they must clarify if the project will implement activities with the same beneficiaries towards the same long-term goals as the prior project and how they will build upon previous results to demonstrate progression towards sustainability and graduation. Furthermore, Applicants should demonstrate any prior successes regarding graduation of food assistance, education, or nutrition projects, especially those funded by USG agencies.”

9. **Q:** The most recent Q&A states that the public meeting on the NOFO will take place on Monday, March 13 and that more information is available on the MGD webpage. At the

time of question submission, the MGD webpage does not have any additional information. Could USDA please share more information on how to register for the meeting and/or update the MGD webpage to include this information?

A: FAS rescheduled the event. Please see the first question in this Q&A document for more information.

10. **Q:** The current regulation requires the NGO to contract, supervise and submit discharge surveys when commodity arrives in country. This also implies the NGO must pursue legal action to collect from the shipper (USDA does not and freight forwarder is not paid or responsible for this under FFE and FFPr). For USAID programs, USDA Kansas City contracts surveys, supervises and pursues legal action. Why is there not a consistent approach on this especially as USDA will have substantially more clout with the Carriers?

A: USDA/FAS and USAID programs operate under different regulations and guiding legislation. Please see 7 CFR § 1599.8 - Transportation of donated or procured commodities for more information about FAS and McGovern-Dole requirements.

11. **Q:** On page 50 of the NOFO, both Local and Regional Commodity Procurement and Distribute Plan and the Market Study sections have a deadline provided (i.e. within 30 days and within 90 days). What is the deadline for the monitoring and evaluation requirements? For example, what is the deadline to submit the evaluation plan, the performance monitoring plan, and the project-level results framework?

A: Applicants submit an evaluation plan, performance indicator table, and project-level results framework as part of their application. See section 4 (e) of the NOFO for information: “FAS requires all Applicants to include the following monitoring and evaluation documents in the application:

- Results Framework (RF) (graphic and narrative)
- Performance Indicators Table
- Evaluation Plan”

If an award is made, the Recipient will submit to FAS for approval a performance monitoring plan and an updated evaluation plan that comply with the requirements in 7 CFR section 1599.13 and with IFAD’s Monitoring and Evaluation Policy located at: https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2019-06/fad_mande_policy_feb_2019.pdf

12. **Q:** Is HACCP needed just for industrial processing? Or also for non-industrial as well?

A: Please see Section 4 (f) (ii), Procurement Method for Locally and Regionally Procured Commodities in the NOFO for more information. The requirements apply to “all processed and unprocessed locally and regionally procured commodities,” and therefore would also apply to non-industrial processing. Note that HACCP is required only “...If

the Secretary has determined that the target country does not have nutritional, quality, labeling, and food safety standards for a commodity that the project will procure locally in that country or procure regionally and shipped to the country for distribution.” See the full excerpt below:

“Processed and unprocessed locally and regionally procured commodities must satisfy the target country’s relevant nutritional, quality, labeling, and food safety standards of the target country as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. If the Secretary has determined that the target country does not have nutritional, quality, labeling, and food safety standards for a commodity that the project will procure locally in that country or procure regionally and shipped to the country for distribution, the Recipient must ensure that, when it procures such commodity, the commodity complies with the Codex Alimentarius Recommended International Code of Practice: General Principles of Food Hygiene CAC/RCP 1-1969 Rev 4-2003, including Annex Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System and Guidelines. Applicants must demonstrate that they have considered how to meet the standards and have plans or protocols in place to meet them during project implementation.”

13. **Q:** For Mozambique, could you please confirm and clarify that the project would potentially cover 69 districts across 4 provinces? How many are we expected to cover?

A: Per the Mozambique country guidance in Appendix B of the NOFO, “A strong application should focus on the sustainability of school meals in Nampula and consider expanding to the provinces of Zambezia, Niassa, or southern Cabe Delgado (in the districts of Metuge, Montepuez, Chiure, and/or Ancuabe) and build on lessons learned from past and current McGovern-Dole and LRP projects to improve school meals, literacy, and school-based health outcomes in the targeted communities.”

The NOFO country guidance may highlight priority regions within countries, but FAS does not require Applicants to target specific regions. Strong applications will provide a clear justification of the Applicant’s method for selecting beneficiaries and geographic areas, as stated in Section 4 (a) (ii) Country Overview and Context.

14. **Q:** Would FAS please indicate whether the online portal FAIS has any file size restrictions when uploading documents?

A: FAIS has a size limitation of 15MB per file.

15. In the M&E Policy, it states that, “Organizations submitting proposals under any of the food aid solicitations may propose to engage with partners with strong expertise in evaluation to assist in evaluation design, implementation, data collection, and analysis.” Could you confirm that this means that an organization may include a named subrecipient in their proposal who would serve as the independent third-party evaluator?

A: As stated in in Section 4 (a) (iii) of the NOFO, “Please review the International Food Assistance Division’s Monitoring and Evaluation Policy for information that will shape the evaluation plan.” A key excerpt from the evaluation policy is copied below:

“As specified in regulations (see 7 CFR Part 1499.13, 7 CFR Part 1599.13, and 7 CFR Part 1590.13), evaluations will be independent and conducted by a third party. Specifically, the regulations specify that the third party conducting the evaluation:

- Is financially and legally separate from the participant's organization;
- Has staff with demonstrated knowledge, analytical capability, language skills and experience in conducting evaluations of development programs involving agriculture, education, and nutrition;
- Uses acceptable analytical frameworks such as comparison with non-project areas, surveys, involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation, and statistical analyses;
- Provides a detailed outline of the evaluation, major tasks, and specific schedules prior to initiating the evaluation.”

Given FAS’s requirement that evaluations must be conducted by a third party that is “financially and legally separate from the participant's organization,” a Subrecipient would be prohibited from conducting a McGovern-Dole evaluation. The policy does not suggest a Subrecipient relationship, but rather that an implementer may consult with evaluation partners to provide monitoring and evaluation technical assistance beyond implementing project evaluations.

16. Q: What is the page limit for the Organizational Capacity Section?

A: As stated in Section 3 (b), Required Content and Forms in the NOFO the total limit for Organizational Capacity and Staffing is 8 pages. Please review Section 4 (d) for more information on attachments that do not count toward the page limit.

17. Q: What is the page limit for the Commodity Management Section?

A: As stated in Section 3 (b), Required Content and Forms in the NOFO the total limit for Commodity Management is 6 pages.

18. Q: Are non-priority countries eligible to apply for McGovern-Dole funding?

A: Please refer to NOFO Q&A document from week 2/27/23 posted on Grants.gov