

Food for Progress FY2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Questions and Answers

Questions received to PPDED@usda.gov through May 09, 2024

1 Q. Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-FAS-10606-0700-24. I'm interested in this grant. How may I go about applying for this Opportunity?

A. Please Review **Part D. Application and Submission Information**, page 12 of the NOFO for instructions to apply.

2 Q. Regarding Page 17 under Organizational Capacity, can USDA clarify if in addition to the Chief of Party other positions need to be named for other Key Personnel?

A. Please review page 16, **subsection d. Organization Capacity and Staffing, Organizational Chart and Key Personnel**. Applicants must include an appropriate and adequate organizational chart that identifies Key Personnel positions. Only the CV for the Chief of Party is required for the proposal.

3 Q. Could USDA confirm whether matching funds contributed by non-Federal entities as part of a FFPR project matching grant can be considered as cost share?

A. Please review **7 CFR section 1499.2** (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-XIV/subchapter-C/part-1499>) and **2 CFR section 200.306** (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/section-200.306>) for further clarification on matching funds. Quick definitions references can be found on page 32 and 89.

4 Q. Could USDA confirm whether loans from non-Federal financial institutions to FFPR project implementing partners that are leveraged and/or facilitated by the project can be considered as cost share?

A. Please review **7 CFR section 1499.2** (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-XIV/subchapter-C/part-1499>) and **2 CFR section 200.306** (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-D/section-200.306>) for further clarification on matching funds.

5 Q. As indicated in Appendix A, Budget, template for Detailed Budget provided at grants.gov as part of the section "related documents" with the NOFO is not available. Could USDA provide the budget template?

A. Please find the uploaded template here: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/353809>.

6 Q. On Page 21 USDA requests that "More detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the Applicant's Monitoring and Evaluation staff should be included in the staffing plan and organizational chart." Can USDA explain what such a description should include?

A. Please review page 16, subsection d. Organization Capacity and Staffing, Organizational Chart and Key Personnel, "The Organizational Capacity and Staffing section should also include

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a staffing plan that demonstrates the technical and geographic expertise required for efficient and effective project implementation, administration, and management. The staffing plan should include a brief description of all long-term staff positions and required levels of experience.”

7 Q. Will USDA consider removing the requirement for the organizational chart, as this typically demonstrates reporting relationships and management structure that will be described elsewhere in the application?

A. No, please review page 16, subsection d. Organization Capacity and Staffing, Organizational Chart and Key Personnel.

8. Q. Would USDA consider allowing use of 10pt font on tables, textboxes, and graphs?

A. Yes, 10 pt font size is permissible in tables, textboxes, and graphs.

9 Q. P. 17, Content Guidance, Past Performance Review. This section states, “If a proposed subrecipient will receive 20% or more of the proposed operating budget for the project, the Applicant must submit one Past Performance Review from a reference for the subrecipient to ppded@usda.gov by the closing date of this announcement.” While not required, are applicants permitted to submit a Past Performance Review for a proposed subrecipient who will receive less than 20% of the operating budget?

A. No, Applicants should not provide Past Performance Reviews for subrecipients receiving less than 20% of the operating budget.

10 Q. P. 17, Content Guidance, Past Performance Review. This section states, “Applicants should identify references for at least one and no more than three grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts implemented by the organization within the previous five years.” Could USDA confirm that one of the three total PPRs submitted is inclusive of a subrecipient PPR?

A: No, one Past Performance Review from a reference for the subrecipient is in addition to the “at least one and no more than three” requested of the primary Applicant. Thus, an Applicant could submit up to four Past Performance Reviews if there is a proposed subrecipient receiving 20% or more of the budget.

11 Q. P. 42, Appendix A, Application Content Checklist. This section states that a detailed budget template is “provided at grants.gov as part of the section “related documents” with this NOFO”. USDA has provided a summary budget template. Will USDA provide a detailed budget template?

A. Please find the uploaded template here: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/353809>.

12 Q. Will USDA allow applicants to submit a Table of Contents and Acroymns list?

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A. Applicants may, but are not required to, include a table of contents and acronyms list with no page limits.

13 Q. Can USDA please confirm that they will be allowing regional monetization?

A. Per Part **5. Content guidance**, subsection **f. Commodity Management (10 pages)**, page 22 **Commodity List** “Applicants must provide the following information: - Destination Country or Regions”.

14 Q. The NOFO states in Appendix A that a Detailed Budget template is provided at grants.gov as part of the section “related documents,” however that document has not been added to grants.gov. This was flagged in the first round of Q&A posted on May 7 (Q9) and USDA responded that the template was added, however USDA included the Budget Summary Template and not the Detailed Budget Template in the related documents section. Can USDA please add the Detailed Budget Template to grants.gov or specify direct applicants where we can find this template?

A. Please find the uploaded template here: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/353809>.

15 Q. The "FY 2015 Food Aid Proposal Guidance" lists standard activities. However, the NOFO does not specify the use of this guidance document and its standard activities. Does this imply that it does not matter if applicants customize activity titles?

A. Please review page 12-part **D. Application and Submission Information** for updated instructions. Proposal guidance documents have been upgraded and can be found on the FAIS homepage.

16 Q. Additionally, is the FY 2015 Food Aid Proposal Guidance document considered obsolete?

A. Please review page 12-part **D. Application and Submission Information** for updated instructions. Proposal guidance documents have been upgraded and can be found on the FAIS homepage.

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17 Q. Would USDA please confirm whether applicants are allowed to propose a budget exceeding the outlined operating budget in the NOFO, provided they demonstrate the source of funds and do not request additional commodity tonnage to surpass the proposed operating budget? For instance, if the NOFO specifies an "Estimated Total Award Value" of \$34.6 million for a particular country and an "Anticipated Operating Budget" of \$16 million, with the remainder for freight, can the applicant propose a \$20 million "Anticipated Operating Budget" as long as the "Estimated Total Award Value" does not exceed \$34.6 million?

A: Applicants should only propose an operating budget up to the total anticipated operating budget listed for each country in Appendix B. The estimated award level is to allow for the incorporation of commodity and freight price volatility. The 70% threshold is a reporting requirement in the Farm Bill. The monetization plan needs to ensure that the monetization proceeds reach the operational budget per the country guidance. The estimated award level is to allow for the flexibility to respond to commodity and freight price volatility. The final award may be adjusted to account for current market realities. The monetization plan should be developed within the estimated award value to reach the project budget, taking into consideration a highly volatile commodity market and the relatively high cost of U.S. flagged vessels. Cost recovery is based on the actual transaction and calculated based on final sales of the commodities. In addition, please review page 10, **Part B Federal Award Information**. "Please refer to Appendix B, Country Guidance, for specific budget ranges for each country. Each Country Guidance includes the Award Value (Total commodity cost + CCC admin funds + freight) as well as the Anticipated Operating Budget (anticipated monetization proceeds + CCC admin funds). This Anticipated Operating Budget may also be supplemented by any cost share the Applicant proposes, which is not included in the default Anticipated Operating Budget figure provided in the Country Guidance." Any cost beyond the "Anticipated Operating Budget" will be considered cost share.

18 Q. NOFO page 42, section 2. Required Content and Forms, Budget states "Detailed Budget (template provided at grants.gov as part of the section "related documents" with this NOFO)". Can USDA please upload the Detailed Budget template to grants.gov?

A. Please find the uploaded template here: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/353809>.

19 Q. NOFO page 16, Section 5. Content Guidance, Subsection d. Organizational Capacity and Staffing states "Applicants are encouraged to include U.S. minority- and women-owned small businesses." Would USDA please confirm that a small business can charge a fee on its proposed budget under this NOFO?

A. Yes, a fee can be charged provided it is allowable. It is recommended the Applicant review 2 CFR section 200.101 (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200>) for information concerning flow downs to subawards to subrecipients. Pass-through entities must comply with the requirements described in subpart D [§§ 200.331](#) through [200.333](#).

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20 Q. Would USDA please upload USDA-funded FFPr project reports from 2022 and 2023 to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC)?

A: USDA will make an effort to upload evaluations of current Food for Progress projects in priority countries to the DEC while the NOFO is open. We acknowledge we are experiencing a slight backlog in terms of uploading evaluation reports. However, we encourage Applicants to search the DEC for all of the evaluations of projects in priority countries that *are* available on the DEC, including those for older projects, as they may provide good learning. Also, anyone may email PPDED@usda.gov with a request for evaluations in specific priority countries, and we will individually send any evaluations that are cleared and available to the requestor, even if not yet on the DEC.

21 Q. NOFO page 46, paragraph number 4 would USDA please clarify if the “illustrative results framework” should be included as part of the Project-Level Results Framework in the Monitoring and Evaluation section?

A. That’s correct. Please include “Project-Level Results Framework” in the M&E section.

22 Q. NOFO page 55, paragraph number 3 under the Country of Madagascar description section states “Applicants are expected to provide data driven based justification for proposed value chains in the food basket, categorized by its role in improving access to nutritious food and by its opportunity to increase trade via end market opportunities.” Would USDA please clarify if there is a preferred number of value chains for offers to focus in each target areas, that are Toliara and Fort Dauphin?

A: Applicants are required to assess agricultural viability of crops illustrated under Madagascar’s Country Guidance supported by crop production and agricultural trade data for both domestic and export markets. There is not a total number of value chains requirement. However, applicants will need to consider several factors that may limit the number of value chains selected including, but not limited to types of crops given climatic conditions in the targeted area, market opportunity for identified crops, resources constraints vs anticipated project impact, number targeted beneficiaries, agricultural trade environment etc.

23 Q. Regarding the selection of value chains in the Madagascar proposal, are there any crops that USDA would advise bidders to avoid because of the Bumpers Amendment? Knowing this information beforehand would prevent bidders from submitting proposals to USDA that would later be rejected due to violation of the Bumpers Amendment.

A: Applicants are encouraged to review FY2018 Public Law 115-141 (7025b) for a full description of the Bumpers Amendment. Please refer to the country guidance when prioritizing crop selection.

24 Q. The Madagascar country guidance mentions that the Food for Progress project shall align with the USG’s Feed the Future Initiative for Madagascar. Therefore, we request that USDA shares a copy of the Feed the Future Madagascar Country Plan with prospective bidders.

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A: Madagascar's Feed the Future Country Plan is currently unavailable until final release by USAID. However, applicants are encouraged to align their proposals with the overall Feed the Future initiative objectives more broadly.

25 Q. On page 54 of the NOFO, USDA states: "The project will focus on a food basket approach incorporating value chains that are vital in enhancing food security and income by strengthening staple and nutritious food availability, while also including select agriculture products with potential for export markets." Can USDA please specify what is meant by a food basket approach? Specifically, is USDA requesting the bidder to work at a household food basket level, or rather requested to look at a food basket at a market level?

A: Food for Progress seeks to address two key challenges in Madagascar (1) food insecurity and (2) increase in smallholders' income through improved productivity and enhanced trade. Applicants are encouraged to address these two challenges through a food basket approach identifying a mix of crops, both critical at mitigating food insecurity including, but not limited to food staples as identified in the country guidance and providing opportunity for households to generate income via cultivating select cash crop for both domestic and export markets.

26 Q. NOFO page 63/64, paragraph 5 under "Metrics" states, "Applicants should include all relevant standard indicators in their proposal and capture additional climate smart results with custom indicators as needed (see page 15 of this NOFO). Beyond the use of standard Food for Progress indicators, Applicants should consider their specific proposed activities and desired results and include indicators or special studies that reflect any of the below themes. The proposed project will consider overarching themes focused on:

- Improving skills and creating opportunities for women, youth, and disadvantaged populations
- Increased access to finance for producers and SMEs
- Climate Smart Agriculture"

Would USDA please clarify if these are overarching themes to focus on for both the project and indicators? If these are themes for both the project and indicators, would USDA consider removing the requirement to measure increased access to finance as the Activity will only support the demand side of finance (e.g., capacity building for producers and producer organizations) and will not strengthen the supply side (e.g., banks and microfinance institutions)?

A: These are overarching themes to focus on for both the project and indicators. In consideration of access to finance, proposed indicators do not need to be custom and standard indicators can be used. As stated on page 61 of the NOFO, "applicants should consider all donor efforts and ensure activities are not duplicitous " Although not a separate activity, access to finance should remain close to addressing challenges experienced in Rwanda's agriculture sector and it's important to track financial related activities that are proposed as components of anticipated activities. Proposed activities should connect beneficiaries to current donor activities in Rwanda, where appropriate.

27 Q. NOFO page 61, paragraph 4, under "Component 1" states "Activities centered on developing recommendations and notifications of trade regulations and laws are to be aligned

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with internationally recognized science-based standards.” Would USDA please clarify what “notifications” refers to in the context of laws and regulations? Is “notifications” meant to refer to surveillance systems, emergency plans, and/or response plans?

A: Notifications refers to policies and regulations such as, surveillance systems, emergency plans, response plans, incident management protocols, containment procedures, etc. It is meant to ensure coordination in the development of recommendations, and that announcement(s) are effective and transparent.

28 P. 49, Appendix B Country Guidance, Cambodia. This section states the goal is to “strengthen Cambodia’s food safety standards and increase horticultural productivity through the adoption of climate smart practices and technologies.” Can USDA please confirm if the overarching goal is to improve horticultural productivity or if it is to improve the food safety ecosystem with a significant focus on horticulture as a value chain of importance?

A: Per Appendix B Country Guidance, the FFPr Program is seeking to strengthen and improve Cambodia’s Food Safety Systems to meet international standards and increase horticultural productivity. Identify a key horticultural value chain where food losses can be avoided through an improved food safety systems in multi-sectoral approach including food standards compliance in tourism.

29 Q. P. 49, Appendix B Country Guidance, Cambodia. Could USDA confirm that cash crops such as cassava, pepper, banana, cashew and mango are included in its definition of horticulture?

A: Per Appendix B Country Guidance, applicants are encouraged to look at current activities by other donors to avoid duplication. The country guidance encourages applicants to build upon existing investments provided by the Government of Cambodia and others to prioritize maximum leverage all along the value chain. Additionally, refer to Component 3 and 4 for further information on page 52 of the FY24 FFPr NOFO.