

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation and Foreign Agricultural Service

Quality Samples Program

NOTE: If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, if applicable, and then to register immediately in SAM at www.sam.gov. It may take 4 weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration before your registration is active in SAM. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in Section D of this NOFO, “Content and Form of Application Submission.”

A. Program Description

Issued By: Commodity Credit Corporation and Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of Global Programs

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.605

CFDA Title: Quality Samples Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: Quality Samples Program (QSP)

NOFO Number: 2021–05

Authorizing Authority for Program: The QSP is authorized under Section 5(f) of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act, 15 U.S.C. 714c(f).

Appropriation Authority for Program: Funding for the QSP is provided under 15 U.S.C. 714b(i).

Announcement Type: New.

Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities

The QSP is designed to encourage the development and expansion of export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities by assisting U.S. entities in providing commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities. The QSP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) on behalf of the Commodity Credit Corporation. QSP participants will be responsible for procuring (or arranging for the procurement of) the commodity samples, exporting the samples, and providing the on-site technical assistance necessary to facilitate successful use of the samples by importers. Participants that are funded under this announcement may seek reimbursement from FAS for the sample purchase price and for the cost of transporting the samples domestically to the port of export and then to the first foreign port or point of entry. Transportation costs from the first foreign port or point of entry to the final destination are not eligible for reimbursement. FAS will also not reimburse the costs incidental to purchasing and transporting samples, such as: inspection or documentation fees, certificates of any kind, tariffs, demurrage, etc. Although providing technical assistance is required for all projects, the costs of providing such technical assistance are not reimbursable under the program. A QSP participant will be reimbursed after FAS reviews its reimbursement claim and determines that the claim is complete.

B. Federal Award Information

Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the NOFO: The QSP will provide up to \$2.5 million in FY 2021 funding to support eligible projects. USDA makes no commitment to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards regardless of whether or at what level program funding for FY 2021 is provided.

Total Award Funding: \$2,500,000

Estimated Number of Awards: It is anticipated that FAS will issue 10–20 awards under the 2021 QSP, subject to programmatic approval and available funding. In general, all qualified proposals received before the submission deadline will compete for funding.

Period of Performance: Awards will generally be granted for a project period of one year. FAS will entertain requests to extend the agreement expiration date of an award, up to a maximum award length of five years. Extension requests must be made at least 45 days in advance of the agreement expiration date and must include a justification as to why the extension of the award is necessary and how the extension would effectively support the program’s purpose. (Please see *H. Additional Information*)

Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): 12/01/2020.

Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): 12/31/2021.

Funding Instrument: Grant.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Any United States private or government entity with a demonstrated role and interest in exporting U.S. agricultural commodities may apply to the program, excluding FAS Posts. Government organizations consist of Federal, State, and local agencies. Private organizations include non–profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and profit–making entities.

All applicants must have an active registration in the SAM database at www.sam.gov – pending or expired registrants are not eligible. This requirement must be met by the closing date of the announcement and will not be waived. Please contact the program officer listed if you have questions about this requirement.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Eligible Commodities: U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, produced entirely in the U.S., or a product of an agricultural commodity.

2. Eligible Markets: Proposals may target any foreign market.

3. Eligible Activities: To be found eligible for consideration, QSP proposals must address the following criteria:

- Projects should benefit the represented U.S. industry and not a specific company or brand;
- Projects should develop a new market for a U.S. product, promote a new U.S. product, or promote a new use for a U.S. product rather than promote the substitution of one established U.S. product for another;
- Commodities provided under a QSP project must be available on a commercial basis and in sufficient supply;
- The QSP project must either subject the commodity sample to further processing or substantial transformation in the importing country, or the sample must be used in technical seminars in the importing country designed to demonstrate the proper preparation or use of the sample in the creation of an end product;
- Samples provided in a QSP project shall not be directly used as part of a retail promotion or supplied directly to consumers. However, the end product (that is, the product resulting from further processing, substantial transformation, or a technical preparation seminar) may be provided to end-use consumers to demonstrate the consumer preference for that end product to importers;
- Samples shall be in quantities less than a typical commercial sale and limited to the amount sufficient to achieve the project goal (e.g., not more than a full commercial mill

run in the destination country); and

- Projects should be completed within one year of FAS approval.

QSP projects shall only target foreign importers and audiences who:

- Have not previously purchased the U.S. commodity that will be supplied under QSP;
- Are unfamiliar with the variety, quality attributes, or end–use characteristics of the U.S. commodity;
- Have been unsuccessful in previous attempts to import, process, or market the U.S. commodity (e.g., because of improper specification, blending, formulation, sanitary, or phytosanitary issues);
- Are interested in testing or demonstrating the benefits of the U.S. commodity; or
- Need technical assistance in processing or using the U.S. commodity.

4. Ineligible Activities: QSP funding may only be used for generic activities. For–profit entities may not use program funds to conduct private business, promote private self–interests, supplement the costs of normal sales activities, or promote their own products or services beyond specific uses approved by FAS in a given project.

Other Eligibility Information

Proposals should include a justification for funding assistance from the program – an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without Federal funding assistance and why the participating organization(s) would be unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance. Proposals that counter national strategies or duplicate activities planned or already underway by U.S. non–profit agricultural commodity or trade associations will not be considered.

Other Submission Requirements and Information

Funding Limits: Individual projects that include further processing or substantial transformation of the sample will be limited to \$75,000 of QSP reimbursement per project, while

projects comprised only of technical preparation seminars will be limited to \$15,000 of QSP reimbursement. Applicants may submit more than one proposal, and the number of projects per participant will not be limited. Financial assistance will be made available on a reimbursement basis only; cash advances will not be made available to any QSP participant. FAS will not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to the approval of a proposal.

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

There is no MOE requirement for the QSP program.

Cost Share or Match

Although highly encouraged, there is no cost share requirement for QSP proposals. FAS will, however, consider the applicant's willingness to contribute resources towards the project, including cash, goods, and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties, when determining which proposals are approved for funding.

D. Application and Submission Information

Key Dates and Times

Date Posted to Grants.gov: May 11, 2020

Application Submission Deadline: The initial QSP application deadline is 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Friday, June 26, 2020. Incomplete applications or applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement by the program deadline will not be accepted for review.

QSP proposals will continue to be accepted and reviewed throughout the remainder of the fiscal year after the initial program deadline only if QSP funding remains available, as set forth in this notice. FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all proposals. All proposals received by the initial program deadline of 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Friday, June 26, 2020, will be considered for funding in the initial allocation tranche. Proposals not approved for funding during this initial review period will be reconsidered for funding after the review period only if the

applicant specifically requests such reconsideration in writing and only if funding remains available. Proposals received after 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Friday, June 26, 2020, will be considered for funding in the order received only if funding remains available.

Anticipated Funding Selection Date: FAS anticipates that the initial funding selections will be made by the end of December 2020.

Anticipated Award Date: FAS anticipates that the initial awards will be announced by the end of February 2021.

Address to Request Application Package: For a hardcopy of the full NOFO please write or fax a request to:

USDA FAS GP POD

NOFO Request

1400 Independence Ave., S.W.

STOP 1042, Room 6512

Washington, DC 20250–1042

FAX: (202) 720–9361

Address to Submit Application Package: To be considered for the QSP, an applicant must submit an application through the web-based Unified Export Strategy (UES) system. The UES allows applicants to submit a single consolidated and strategically coordinated proposal that incorporates requests for funding for all of the FAS market development programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that they face, identify activities that would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants must contact FAS' Program Operations Division to obtain UES website access information. The UES may be found at the following URL address:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/>.

Content and Form of Application Submission

To be considered for the QSP, an applicant must submit to FAS an application package consisting of:

- (1) A QSP project proposal that includes the information contained in this notice;
- (2) Standard Form 424, “Application for Federal Assistance” (SF-424); and
- (3) Standard Form 424A “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” (SF-424A).

SF-424 and SF-424A are standard forms required for use as cover sheets for submission of applications and related information under discretionary programs. All applicable boxes in the SF-424 and SF-424A must be completed. If known at the time of application, details of budget line categories in SF-424A may be provided but are not required. The SF-424 and SF-424A must be signed by the applicant. FAS will return incomplete SF-424 and SF-424A forms, which may cause delays in processing an application.

Applicants must provide a breakout of their total program request by the cost categories delineated on the SF-424A, and the submission must be accompanied by a supporting budget narrative that explains how each of the costs were estimated and allows the FAS to assess the reasonableness of the costs. In the budget narrative, applicants should discuss each line-item, how it was derived, what it includes, etc. **We acknowledge that this program does not permit certain types of expenses. Please state that the request is zero for any that are not applicable.**

FAS stands ready to answer any questions about the budget narrative required by form 424 or the budget narrative in the application itself, and staff can provide additional guidance to applicants that need help in meeting this requirement. Insufficient detail may delay review of your application.

All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine

that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations.

a. Personnel: Costs of employee salaries and wages. For each staff person, provide the name (if known), title, time commitment to the project as a percentage of a full-time equivalent (FTE), annual salary, and grant funded salary.

Do not include the costs of consultants, subgrants or contractors. Consultants, subgrants and contractors are to be included under “Contractual.”

b. Fringe Benefits: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate. Provide the method used to calculate the proposed rate amount. If a fringe benefit has been negotiated with, or approved by, a cognizant federal agency, attach a copy of the negotiated fringe benefit agreement. If no rate agreement exists, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc. Identify the base for allocating these fringe benefit expenses. (Attach the agreement to the application package.) For foreign entities this may not apply.

c. Travel: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (do not include costs of sub-contractor, subgrantees or consultant travel). For each proposed trip, provide the purpose, number of travelers, travel origin and destination, number of days, and a breakdown of costs for airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals. The basis for the airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals must be provided, such as past trips, current quotations, Federal Travel Regulations, etc.

d. Equipment: Any article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5000. For each type of equipment requested, provide a description of the equipment, the cost per unit, the number of units, the total cost, and a plan for use on the project, as well as use or disposal of the

equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy or section of its policy which includes the equipment definition.

NOTE 1: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, calibration and maintenance services, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.

NOTE 2: Prior to the purchase of equipment in the amount of \$5000 or more per unit cost, the Recipient must obtain the written approval from FAS, unless the equipment was approved in the initial award. The Recipient shall maintain an annual inventory, which will include a brief description of the item, serial number and amount of purchase for equipment purchased with grant funds, or received under a grant, and having a \$5000 or more per unit cost. The inventory must also identify the sub-award under which the equipment was purchased. Maintenance and insurance will be the responsibility of the Recipient. Title of equipment will remain with the Recipient until closeout when disposition will be provided in writing by FAS within 120 days of submission of final reports.

e. Supplies: Supplies are tangible personal property other than that included in the equipment category if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information which supports the amount requested. A computing device is a supply.

f. Contractual: Costs of all contracts for services and goods that further the work of the project. Do not put sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that do not perform work to further the project. This includes the types of sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that work for the Prime awardee exclusively, (i.e., landscapers, trash collectors, etc.) These costs belong under other cost categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, other, etc .

Include third party evaluation contracts (if applicable) and contracts with secondary recipient organizations. Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Identify proposed sub-contractor work and the cost of each sub-contractor. Provide a detailed budget for each sub-contractor that is expected to perform work estimated to be \$25,000 or more, or 50% of the total work effort, whichever is less.

- Identify each planned subcontractor and its total proposed budget. Each subcontractor's budget and supporting detail should be included as part of the applicant's budget narrative.
- Provide the following information for each planned subcontract: a brief description of the work to be subcontracted; the number of quotes solicited and received, if applicable; the cost or price analysis performed by the applicant; names and addresses of the subcontractors tentatively selected and the basis for their selection; e.g., unique capabilities (for sole source subcontracts), low bidder, delivery schedule, technical competence; type of contract and estimated cost and fee or profit; and, affiliation with the applicant, if any.
- All required flow down provisions in the award must be included in any subcontract.
- In this section also include subgrantees. Provide information for each planned subgrant. Identify each planned subawardee and its total proposed budget. Include a brief

description of the work to be performed.

g. Other Direct Costs: Any other items proposed as direct costs that do not fall under the budget categories listed above. Provide an itemized list with costs, and state the basis for each proposed item.

h. Indirect Costs: If indirect costs are included in the budget, include in the budget narrative a description of how the indirect costs were calculated. Include the following information:

- Indirect cost percentages used;
- Indirect cost base;
- How the indirect cost base was calculated;
- How the indirect cost was calculated.

Foreign public entities and foreign organizations may request, and upon approval from FAS use the de minimis rate of 10%, or some other rate in excess of the de minimis rate of 10%, up to 13%, if there is historical evidence that such a rate has been used in the past. However, if the foreign entity has a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement it may be used.

Attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If the applicant is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not also be charged as direct costs to the award. If the applicant is requesting a rate which is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

Any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200 States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in §200.403 Factors Affecting Allowability of Costs, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as a non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. For more information, see 2 CFR Part 200.414 .

In addition to the required SF-424 and SF-424A forms, each applicant must also complete and certify to the grants “Representations and Certifications” and “Grants Certifications” in SAM.gov by the application deadline. All applicants must also answer “Yes” to the question in the Grants Certification section of SAM asking whether the applicant “Wishes to apply for a Federal financial assistance project or program, or is currently the recipient of funding under any Federal financial assistance project or program?” FAS will verify in SAM.gov that the proper forms are completed. If they have not been, the applicant will be contacted and directed to do so. Your award will not be issued until the proper forms are completed within the SAM.gov portal. If required, the SF-LLL form, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,” must also be submitted.

QSP project proposals must contain complete information about the proposed projects, including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Organizational information, including:
 - i. Organization’s name, address, Chief Executive Officer (or designee), Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN);

- ii. A Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number;
 - iii. Type of organization;
 - iv. Name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the primary contact person;
 - v. A description of the organization and its membership;
 - vi. A description of the organization's prior export promotion experience; and
 - vii. A description of the organization's ability to implement the required trade/technical assistance component.
2. Market information, including:
- i. An assessment of the market;
 - ii. A long-term strategy in the market; and
 - iii. Appropriate trade data for the years 2018 through 2024.
3. Project information, including:
- i. A project title (that includes the commodity);
 - ii. The amount of funding requested;
 - iii. The beginning and end dates for the proposed project;
 - iv. A brief description of the specific market development trade constraint or opportunity to be addressed by the project;
 - v. A description of the activities planned to address the constraint or opportunity, including how the sample will be used in the end-use performance trial, the attributes of the sample to be demonstrated and its end-use benefit, and details of the trade/technical servicing component (including who will provide and fund this component);
 - vi. A description of the sample to be provided (i.e., commodity, quantity, quality, type,

and grade), including a justification for why a sample with such characteristics is needed (this justification should explain why the project would not be effective with a smaller sample);

- vii. An itemized list of all estimated costs associated with the project for which reimbursement will be sought; and
 - viii. The importer's role in the project regarding handling and processing the commodity sample.
4. Projects should include performance measures for quantifying progress and demonstrating results. In the development of performance measures, FAS believes the measures should meet the following criteria:
- Aligned: The indicator should, as closely as possible, measure exactly the relevant result.
 - Clear: The indicator should be precise and unambiguous about what is being measured and how. There should be no doubt on how to measure or interpret the indicator.
 - Quantifiable: The indicator(s) should sufficiently capture all of the elements of a result.
 - Include an identified methodology: The data can be obtained to inform the indicator in a timely and efficient manner and the data are of high-quality.
5. Information indicating all funding sources and the amounts to be contributed by each entity in support of the proposed project. This may include the organization that submitted the proposal, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Contributed resources may include cash, goods, or services.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's policy (68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003)) regarding the need to identify entities that are receiving government awards, all applicants must submit a DUNS number. Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at <http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>. An applicant may request a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711.

In addition, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25, each entity that applies to the QSP and does not qualify for an exemption under 2 CFR §25.110 must:

- (i) Be registered in SAM at www.sam.gov prior to submitting an application or plan;
- (ii) Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FAS; and
- (iii) Provide its DUNS number, or a unique identifier as a DUNS replacement, in each application or plan it submits to FAS.

Applicants are encouraged to register or update their SAM registration early to avoid delays in processing their application. The registration process can take approximately four weeks to be completed. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines. This requirement must be met by the application deadline and will not be waived. Applicants with pending or expired registrants are ineligible. Applicants whose names are published as ineligible in SAM due to a violation of a Federal statute are not eligible to apply to the QSP program. Applicants should check their SAM status prior to submitting their application or plan.

FAS will not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FAS is ready to make the award, FAS may determine

that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. For questions about this requirement, please contact Curt Alt at (202) 690–4784, Senior Director, Program Operations Division, Global Programs or at curt.alt@usda.gov.

Intergovernmental Review

An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicant(s) must contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the State's process under Executive Order 12372 (see <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html>.) Name and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/spoc_1_16_2020.pdf.

Funding Restrictions

Only those QSP activities that are approved in each applicant's agreement may be implemented, and those activities must be implemented during the program period specified in the agreement. Requests for activity changes during the program period must be approved in advance by FAS. The QSP operates on a reimbursement basis.

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400 or this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Also, FAS grant agreement funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant agreement funds and non-monetary support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Also, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

Management and Administration (M&A) Costs

M&A costs are not allowable under the QSP program.

E. Application Review Information

Application Evaluation Criteria

Prior to making an award, FAS will review all proposals for eligibility and completeness. FAS will, subject to the availability of funds, approve those applications that it considers to best meet the requirements set forth in this announcement. FAS may, when appropriate to the subject matter of the proposal, request the assistance of other U.S. Government experts in evaluating the merits of a proposal. All reviewers will be required to sign a conflict of interest form, and when conflicts of interests are found the reviewer will be recused from the objective review process.

Application Evaluation Criteria

FAS is required, as per 31 U.S.C. 3321 and 41 U.S.C. 2313, to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM, the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC). An applicant, at its choice, may review this information and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM, FAPIIS, and FAC. FAS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.205 "Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants."

Review and Selection Process

The purpose of the application review is to rate the qualifications, quality, and appropriateness of projects, determine the reasonableness of project budgets, make recommendations on meritorious proposals for funding, and submit the proposals and funding

recommendations to appropriate officials for decision making. FAS conducts the following process in reviewing applications and allocating available QSP funds:

Sufficiency Review (Phase 1): In Phase 1, FAS conducts an initial review (sufficiency check) of all applications received to determine the completeness of the application and responsiveness to this announcement. If an applicant is determined to be ineligible per Section C, “Eligibility Information,” of this announcement, FAS will not consider the application and will take no further action on it. If an application is determined to be incomplete, FAS will notify the applicant and request that the applicant send in the missing information within 30 days to complete its application. Applications that meet the requirements and are found to be responsive to this announcement will move on to the Phase 2 review.

Agency Review (Phase 2): Eligible proposals will be evaluated by the appropriate Commodity Branch in FAS’ Cooperator Programs Division. The Commodity Branches will review each eligible application against established criteria and will score and recommend funding for each application using the following criteria, with each criterion weighted equally at 10%.

Proposals should achieve a minimum score of 80% to qualify for approval:

1. Whether or not appropriate trade data for the years 2018–2024 are provided;
2. Whether the benefits of the project would accrue to the entire industry;
3. The appropriateness of the proposed sample size for the project;
4. The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the proposal;
5. The extent to which the proposal is targeted to a market in which the United States is generally competitive;
6. The potential for expanding commercial sales in the proposed market;
7. The nature of the specific market constraint or opportunity identified and how well it is

addressed by the proposal;

8. The extent to which the importer's contribution in terms of handling and processing enhances the potential outcome of the project;
9. The amount of reimbursement requested and the organization's willingness to contribute resources towards the project, including cash, goods, and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties; and
10. How well the proposed technical assistance component assures that performance trials will effectively demonstrate the intended end-use benefit.

FAS will also consider the following unweighted criteria when reviewing each proposal:

- The quality of the performance measures and how effective they will be in demonstrating the impact of the project;
- The assessment of the market;
- The long-term strategy in the market; and
- Export goals in each country.

FAS may, when appropriate, solicit and consider feedback on the proposals from appropriate overseas Posts in their review and in determining the recommended funding level for each applicant, and may request the assistance of other U.S. government subject area experts in evaluating the merits of a proposal.

Final Review and Allocation Decision Making (Phase 3): Meritorious applications and the recommended funding levels for each are provided to the FAS leadership, including the Deputy Administrator of Global Programs and the FAS Administrator, for review and final concurrence. When determining final allocations, the Agency leadership may elect to review and adjust the funding recommendations and/or take recommendations out of order based on factors such as Agency priorities, priority markets, program impact, the record of performance of the organization

in managing past QSP funds, and the organization's likelihood of success.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Notice of Award

FAS will notify each applicant in writing of the final disposition of the submitted application. FAS will send an approval letter and agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the details of each project, responsibilities of the participant, levels of funding, timelines for implementation, and reporting requirements.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which are available online at:

https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp. The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award, the potential awardee should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Participants must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

QSP projects are subject to review and verification by FAS's Compliance and Security Division. Upon request, a QSP participant shall provide to FAS documentation that supports the

participant's reimbursement claims. FAS may deny a claim for reimbursement if the claim is not supported by adequate documentation.

Reporting

A written evaluation report must be submitted via the UES within 90 days of the expiration or termination of each participant's QSP agreement. Evaluation reports should address all performance measures that were presented in the proposal and must include the following standard performance measures: (1) the number of people/organizations/companies trained, (2) the percent of trainees that have a better understanding of the commodity qualities and uses, and (3) the number of people requesting additional information about the commodity by the date of the final report.

Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

An interim financial report must be submitted after each program year in a multi-year agreement, and a Final Financial Report (FFR) must be submitted no later than 90 days after the activity is completed or the agreement is terminated. This report must provide a final accounting of all project expenditures by cost category and include the accounting of actual contributions made to the project by the applicant and all other participating entities. The FFR is available online at: <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149786>.

Program Performance Reporting Requirements

QSP participants must provide interim and final performance reports for each approved project, each of which evaluate the QSP project using the performance measures presented in the approved proposal, as set forth in the written program agreement. An interim report must be submitted after each program year, and a separate final report no later than 90 days after the activity is completed or the agreement is terminated. All performance reports must be submitted through the UES.

Monitoring

FAS, through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, FAS will review grant recipients' files related to the grant-funded program. As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review grant-related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their grant program.

Close Out Reporting Requirements

Within 90 days after the activity completion date, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, FAS will confirm that the participant has provided all of the required reports and will review the reports for completeness and content. Once the required reports are approved, FAS will prepare a closeout letter that advises the participant of the award closeout procedures. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be de-obligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the FFR.

G. Awarding Agency Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

1. Application Submission Contact(s) and Program Support: For additional information and assistance, contact the Program Operations Division, Global Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture by courier: Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250, or by phone: (202) 720-4327, or by fax: (202) 720-9361, or by e-mail: podadmin@usda.gov.

2. Grants Management Contact(s): Eric Bozoian, Grants Management Specialist, Foreign

Agricultural Service, United States, Department of Agriculture, e-mail: Eric.Bozoian@usda.gov, phone: (202) 378-1054.

H. Additional Information

1. Extensions: Extensions to this program are allowed. Applicants may request a no-cost extension in order to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 45 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to approval by FAS.

2. Prior Approval: The Recipient shall not, without the prior written approval of the FAS Program Manager, request reimbursement, incur costs, or obligate funds for any purpose pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the approved Budget Period/Performance Period.

3. Budget Revisions:

a. Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed twenty percent of the total budget approved in this Award require prior written approval by the FAS Program Manager.

b. The Participant shall obtain prior written approval from the FAS Program Manager for any budget revision that would result in the need for additional resources/funds.

c. The Participant is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval of the FAS Program Manager.

4. Program income: Program income is not allowed in the QSP.