Responses to FY2020 Food for Progress NOFO Questions

Questions Received June 18 – 24, 2020

1. Why does the budget template downloaded from FAIS state at the top of the first box, "Total Amount of Federal Funds OBLIGATED" when last year it stated "Total Amount of Federal Funds REQUESTED" at the top of that box? If "obligated" is indeed the correct word, how should we interpret that?
   A: The template downloaded from FAIS is used for both applicants and recipients of FFPr and McGovern-Dole funding. For applicants the "Total Amount of Federal Funds OBLIGATED" should be interpreted as "Total Amount of Federal Funds REQUESTED".

2. Where does FAS recommend we budget the third-party M&E firm costs? As part of CCC cost-reimbursable funds? As part of monetized funds?
   A: CCC provided funds are intended for expenses authorized in the agreement, such as expenses for the internal transportation, storage and handling of the donated commodities; expenses involved in the administration, monitoring, and evaluation of the activities under the agreement; and technical assistance related to the monetization of the donated commodities. In general, M&E costs are primarily budgeted against CCC funds but monetization proceeds may also be applied. It is up to the applicant to come up with a plan for how they will best manage Federal award funds.

3. Since M&E is a cross-cutting activity, should all M&E be budgeted under Administrative or should it be allocated across the respective Activities?
   A: A summary of the M&E budget is requested in the Administrative section of the budget narrative. Cost allocation of M&E activities may be spread across multiple relevant activities. Please refer to the budget narrative example in Appendix D of the NOFO for further guidance.

4. For the third-party M&E firm's budget, do we apply the 3% minimum per the NOFO (or a higher percentage if we choose) to the total sales proceeds forecasted or to the combination of total sales proceeds forecasted plus any requested CCC funds?
   A: The M&E budget should encompass at least 3% of the total operating budget (excluding cost share). The total operating budget includes the total anticipated monetization proceeds plus any CCC funds requested.

5. If an applicant sets up a financing mechanism whereby it makes loans to local enterprises, will the applicant own the assets after two loan cycles?
   A: Per regulation, assets held by the project in excess of $5,000 must be disposed of by the applicant at the end of the project. An applicant must propose a strategy whereby they will

exit USDA's stake in the financing mechanism by project close. USDA funds can be used to pay fixed costs on the project, such as salaries, or may be used to buy down the risk of making investments. If a project proposes to make direct loans with USDA funds as part of their investment strategy, they must propose the means by which they will close out the project and comply with asset disposition regulations outlined in 2CFR 200.

6. Can USDA clarify that the business case to be presented in the proposal can apply to promoting cacao + a complementary crop or crops on the same plot (i.e. intercropping), with the business case describing value chains beyond the farm level?
A: Applicants may include intercropping strategies in the business case.

7. For the Colombia and Component 1: Can USDA clarify that the business case to be presented in the proposal can apply to promoting cacao + a complementary crop or crops on the same plot (i.e. intercropping), with the business case describing value chains beyond the farm level?
A: Applicants may include intercropping strategies in the business case and extend these beyond the farm level to demonstrate the case's economic efficacy.

8. On page 18, under the Organizational Capacity and Staffing narrative, USDA requests a brief description of all long-term staff positions and levels of experience. Considering the 3-page limit for this section, would USDA allow applicants to present senior technical staff in the narrative and all long-term staff to in an attachment to the narrative?
A: No. Any content provided beyond the 3-page limit will not be considered. The 3-page narrative must clearly demonstrate organizational capabilities to develop, manage, implement, monitor, report, and provide for accountability and sustainability for the proposed project in the target country(ies). Included within this narrative should be a staffing plan which provides a brief description of all long–term staff positions and levels of experience.

9. On page 29 of NOFO, in In-Country Registration section it notes that "The Applicant must disclose its registration status in the targeted country. Applicants not registered must include a plan to become registered and a timeline to complete the registration process." Can you please specify if it the in-country registration requirement pertains only to a prime or to subs too?
A: Depending on the country, the subrecipient may be required to have a separate in-country registration. For application purposes, the in-country registration information should discuss the applicant's (prime) status and if the applicant is not registered, a plan to become registered along with a timeline to complete the registration process must be included.

10. Can you please confirm if we attach a detailed budget in excel format, do we need to fill in the budget details in FAIS?

A: Yes, the detailed budget (budget summary) can be uploaded as an attachment and submitted in excel format. FAIS requires data entry into the rich textbox in the Budget Narrative tab. Applicants may choose to upload the budget narrative as an Attachment and simply reference in the rich textbox the title of the Attachment.

11. Can you please confirm if we you want to see budget % split by CCC and Monetization or CCC, Monetization Admin and Monetization Activities?

A: While there is no specific percentage of funding recommended for CCC vs. Monetization or Monetization Admin vs. Monetization Activities, please note that CCC funds cannot be used to fund activity costs. See the guidance provided in the budget summary (Appendix C) and budget narrative example (Appendix D) of the NOFO.

12. Can you please confirm if costs related to sub's registration in the country are allowable and can be budgeted in the proposal?

A: Yes. Costs associated with in-country registration of subrecipients are allowable and can be budgeted in the proposal.

13. In the NOFO itself under the Commodity Management, there is no requirement for information on "Sales Proceeds Usage" or "Expected Interest Earned". However, in the PDF titled "Instructions for Submitting Proposals in the FAIS" it references "Sales Proceed Usage Activity Implementation" and "Expected Interest Earned". Can you clarify if this section is supposed to be included in the Commodity Management section of the NOFO, or not? In the past it seems like these two sections were in the Commodity Management section of the NOFO.

A: This year, information on "Sales Proceeds Usage" and "Expected Interest Earned" are requested within Section 1 of the budget narrative. See Appendix D of the NOFO, specifically, the description provided for the initial proposal version of the budget narrative points 5 and 6. In FAIS, applicants may reference the budget narrative in the "Sales Proceeds Usage" and "Expected Interest Earned" sections by saying "See Attachment X Budget Narrative".

14. Can current USDA employees, who do currently not work on FFPr or MGD, provide past performance references?

A: Yes. As stated in June 12th modification to the FFPr NOFO, only current FFPr and MGD staff are precluded from providing past performance reviews (PPRs) for FFPr proposals. Current FFPr and MGD employees are not precluded from providing PPRs on MGD proposals.

15. Can an active project be included as a PPR if it is relevant to the specific opportunity?

A: Yes. Applicants may include a reference with knowledge of the Applicant's performance of a past or active award.

16. Should public-sector entities in Colombia applying for FFPr funding seek exclusivity agreements with Colombian government agencies?

A: No. The NOFO does not require exclusive agreements with Colombian government agencies.