

McGovern-Dole FY2021 Notice of Funding Opportunity
Questions and Answers

All questions received up to and at the public meeting (04/20/2021)

1. Q: Could you please clarify when questions about the NOFO are submitted and when the answers will be posted?

A: Questions may be submitted at any time prior to 5:00:00 P.M. EDT on May 28, 2021. Responses to questions will be posted weekly (beginning on April 23, 2021) on Grants.gov under the Related Documents tab of the NOFO. Questions regarding these NOFOs will be considered to the extent practicable and should be submitted to ppded@usda.gov.

2. Q: Is the priority list of countries exclusive, or is there the possibility of submitting a project for other countries?

A: FAS will accept applications for projects in non-priority countries, however FAS will give priority consideration to fund proposals for the priority countries identified in the NOFO. Per Part A Section 5 of the NOFO, interested parties may submit an application for a project in a non-priority country using the identification number “USDA- FAS-10.608-0700-21-(000) –Non-priority country applications.”

3. Q: The NOFO specifies a funding estimate of between \$10 million and \$25 million per award but does not provide an individual award funding ceiling. Could USDA kindly specify if there is a maximum ceiling an organization should not consider going above for one country?

A: Per Part B Section 1 of the NOFO, the estimated number of awards that will be funded is ten. The estimated funding amount per award is \$10 - \$25 million. The award ceiling is \$25 million.

4. Q: What is the minimum and maximum funding for which an organization or group can apply?

A: Please refer to Part B Section 1 of the NOFO: the estimated funding for awards is between \$10 and \$25 million. Applicants should submit proposals worth between \$10 and \$25 million.

5. Q: Are non-governmental organizations eligible to apply for your funding under the category of " Private voluntary organizations or other organizations"?

A: Non-governmental organizations are listed as eligible entities in the Notice of Funding Opportunity under Part C Section 1 - Eligible Applicants. Please see 7 CFR Section 1599.2 for the definition of a private voluntary organization.

6. Q: Is a consortium of non-governmental organizations eligible to apply for funding?

A: An application may only have one entity as the prime applicant. This eligible entity must have a distinct and active SAM.gov registration and DUNS number. All other entities involved in a consortium must be proposed as subrecipients. All subrecipients must have an active SAM.gov registration and DUNS number by the time a subaward is signed. Once submitted, a proposal's prime applicant may not change.

7. Q: Are new applicants that do not have a System for Award Management (SAM) registration eligible to apply?

A: FAS welcomes new entities to apply that have not applied to the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program before. All Applicants must have an active SAM.gov registration by the closing date of the announcement.

8. Q: How long does it take to receive a confirmation on SAM and on the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number?

A: It may take four weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration before your registration is active in SAM. If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, and then to register immediately in SAM at www.sam.gov. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in the NOFO in Part C Section 2 Eligibility Criteria, and Part D Section 4, Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).

9. Q: The Notice of Funding Opportunity states that award recipients must hire external evaluators to conduct evaluations. Page 31 refers to the baseline as both a “study” and an “evaluation.” Are award recipients permitted to conduct the baseline study internally or must a third party must conduct it?

A: Award recipients are permitted to conduct a baseline study or evaluation internally; it is not required that a third party conduct it. No specific difference is implied by the words study or evaluation. Midterm and final evaluations are required to be conducted externally and cannot be conducted internally. Recipients may also hire a third party to conduct a baseline study or evaluation externally.

10. Q: May award recipients internally conduct the preliminary and subsequent annual market studies?

A: Award recipients are permitted to conduct the annual market studies internally or to be conducted by a third party. However, while it is not required, FAS recommends that the first annual preliminary market study be conducted by a third party. Subsequent annual market studies may also be conducted by a third party or by the implementing organization's own technical staff.

11. Q: Result MGD 2.6 is not in the current MGD Indicator Handbook (no suggested activities or indicators). Is this result currently in use? Does this indicator overlap / have a relationship with MGD 2.2?

A: Yes, all of the results in the McGovern-Dole results framework are “in use”. This is one of several results that do not have corresponding standard indicators directly associated with them. If a proposed project addresses a result that does not have a standard indicator linked to it, the applicant should propose one or more custom indicators to measure that result. In terms of result 2.2, “Increased knowledge of safe food prep and storage practices”, and result 2.6, “Increased access to requisite food prep and storage tools and equipment”, both results reflect the topic of safe food preparation and storage, but 2.2 focuses on peoples’ knowledge and 2.6 focuses on access to equipment. It would be possible to achieve one result without the other. Ideally, both knowledge of safe practices and access to proper equipment are present in a school.

12. Q: Are Interim Results 1.3.1 and 1.3.1.1 linked or standalone? Is there any hierarchical relationship between these two results? Please clarify the activities to be covered under these results.

A: As displayed in the result framework graphic, result 1.3.1.1 “Increased Access to Food (School Feeding)” can contribute to result 1.3.1, “Increased Economic and Cultural Incentives (or Decreased Disincentives)”. They are linked in the sense that 1.3.1.1 should contribute to 1.3.1. However, please note that every result in the results framework is in its own box and therefore “stands alone” in that one or more activities may directly lead to it, and one or more indicators should help measure that result if a project is contributing to it. In the proposal stage, Applicants are responsible for proposing activities that lead to each result their project aims to achieve and therefore FAS does not prescribe what activities need to be listed under any result during the proposal stage.

14. Q: Are LRP indicators for use in the McGovern-Dole proposal for local and regional procurement components?

A: Yes. As stated in the “b. Performance Indicators” section of the NOFO, “Applicants are encouraged to review and use the USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) Program standard indicators where relevant to their projects, and also to propose custom indicators for local and regional procurement as needed.” Please see the NOFO for additional details on indicators for the LRP components of a proposed project.

15. Q: Would a literacy subrecipient’s Past Performance Reference be one of the three maximum PPRs or would this be in addition to the three PPRs?

A: A subrecipient’s Past Performance Review (PPR) is in addition to the Applicant’s one-to-three references. A PPR is required of a subrecipient if a proposed subrecipient will receive 30

percent or more of the proposed operating budget. These must be submitted by a reference to ppped@usda.gov by the closing date of the announcement. Receipt of this review will be confirmed.

16. Q: Where will the Public Meeting recording and PowerPoint be available?

A: The Public Meeting recording and PowerPoint are available on grants.gov alongside the NOFO, under the *Related Documents* tab.

17. Q: Can you briefly explain how FAS determines priority countries?

A: Each Fiscal Year, FAS follows an internal selection process to determine the list of McGovern-Dole priority countries in alignment with the McGovern-Dole authorizing legislation. McGovern-Dole priority countries are identified based on the following selection criteria, including per capita income, child nutrition indicators, literacy rates, prior McGovern-Dole programming, political stability, and FAS Post coverage. FAS also considers Administration priorities, USDA priorities, USG-wide areas of focus, and any shift in a country or region's circumstances that creates expanded opportunities for creating or supporting a national school meals program. Each year, the final priority country list is included in the annual McGovern-Dole Notice of Funding Opportunity. Looking forward into future fiscal years, countries new to McGovern-Dole programming may be listed.

18. Q: Can additional priority countries be added in any given Fiscal Year?

A: It has not been FAS practice to add additional priority countries to the list of prioritized countries in the annual McGovern-Dole NOFO after publication.

19. Q: The presentation indicated that USDA separates LRP and MGD reports. Will the implementing partner be required to report separately on these 2 programming areas for new awards in which the LRP is integrated into MGD?

A: The annual Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) report to Congress covers agreements under the stand-alone LRP Program, awarded prior to FY 2020. Whereas, the new local and regional procurement component of McGovern-Dole awards (comprising of up to ten percent of the McGovern-Dole total annual budget, beginning in FY 2020) will be covered in the annual McGovern-Dole Program report to Congress.

20. Q: Please can you confirm that you would like a narrative ToC only, and not an additional ToC graphic to complement the RF.

A: Yes, FAS confirms that we are not requiring an additional Theory of Change (ToC) graphic. We would like a narrative ToC, and a project-specific results framework (RF) graphic.

21. Q: Can FAS expand on expectations vis-a-vis cost sharing? Will cost sharing need to be reported on in financial reports and if so in what level of detail?

A: Cost share should be described in the proposal's budget and in the summary of costs table at the beginning of the Introduction and Strategic Analysis section. If an award is made, cost share will be reported semiannually in the same way as awarded federal funds.

22. Q: For future public meetings, could FAS provide closed captioning to improve accessibility for those with impaired hearing and non-native speakers?

A: Thank you for your suggestion. FAS will consider how to improve accessibility for future public meetings.

23. Where can we find the link for the country-specific meetings organized by USAID?

A: The country-specific information is included in the document entitled "USAID Portfolio Overview Sessions on Guatemala and Madagascar - For McGovern-Dole FY 2021" under the Related Documents tab.

24. Q: The NOFO provides some information on inclusion of volunteers in program designs. Please provide further clarification USDA's position on this - how acceptable is the use of them?

A: If volunteer/uncompensated support from the community is proposed in the project design, FAS encourages Applicants to carefully analyze the impact and sustainability of those contributions.

25. Q: Is there information available on past awards for non-priority countries?

A: Yes. You can find information about past awards from the last 10 years on the McGovern-Dole webpage: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgovern-dole-food-education-program>.

26. Q: Do the USDA standard indicators include some of the USAID standard indicators? If not, should the USAID ones be considered when developing the custom indicators?

A: Yes, the USDA standard indicators do already include some "USAID standard indicators" – specifically, several interagency Feed the Future indicators are amongst the McGovern-Dole standard indicators. For custom indicators, Applicants are welcome to consider USAID or other existing standard indicators from other agencies or initiatives; this is not a requirement.

27. Q: Question on Food Safety and Health - are there any issues in mentioning the use of produce from school gardens to complement rations (when available)?

A: If Applicants propose the use of produce from school gardens to complement rations, Applicants should describe how this is appropriate for the proposed project design. Applicants should discuss feasibility and context, and consider any food safety and health implications.

28. Q: Question: Can you confirm that no activity costs can be included in the LRP budget, including LRP specific activities?

A: Yes, that is correct, per the program’s legislative authority and regulations, capacity building costs, i.e. activities, may not contribute to the LRP component recommended 10 percent. Related costs such as procuring, storing, and transporting LRP commodities should be included in either the ITSH section or Commodity and Food Purchases section of the budget and then may contribute towards the LRP budget.

29. Q: Can someone from a non-eligible country be a partner on the project?

A: The McGovern-Dole Program targets low-income and lower middle-income countries. Partners, or subrecipients, do not need to be registered entities of the U.S. so long as they also follow Part C 1: Eligible Entities of the NOFO.

30. Q: Will there be country-specific USAID/public meetings organized for other countries, or only Madagascar and Guatemala?

A: At this time, FAS does not anticipate that USAID will be holding country-specific meetings for countries other than Madagascar and Guatemala. However, if that changes, FAS will post the information under the Related Documents tab of the McGovern-Dole NOFO on grants.gov.

31. Q: While the Evaluation Plan guidance appears to focus strongly on the external evaluation, could USDA confirm that this is also an appropriate place in the application to discuss the project monitoring approach?

A: Yes, the evaluation plan is also an appropriate place to discuss the Applicant’s approach to project monitoring. The guidance lists sections that should be included, “at a minimum”, in the evaluation plan, meaning the applicant may certainly include additional relevant sections as space allows, including a section on project monitoring.

32. Q: Do applicants need to use the Past Performance Review Template in Appendix G exactly as-is or if it is okay to make some minor non-material changes?

A: While FAS prefers the past performance review template remain the same, some non-material changes may be made. FAS reserves the right to contact references if needed information is not included. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include at least one review from a reference with knowledge of the Applicant’s performance from a past or active award outside of the McGovern-

Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, the Local and Regional Procurement Program, or the Food for Progress (FFPr) Program.

33. Q: What is the best way to locate a partner for a specific country project?

A: FAS will consider proposals from all eligible organizations, including current recipients and new organizations. A list of past awardees per fiscal year and by country is posted on the left side of the McGovern-Dole Program webpage: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgovern-dole-food-education-program>.