Notices

Federal Register

Vol. 80, No. 66

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.604.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2016 Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from the private sector and from government agencies for fiscal year 2016 and to set out criteria for the award of funds in October 2015. The TASC program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: To be considered for funding, applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2015. Any applications received after this time will be considered only if funds are still available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service *by courier address:* Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720–4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720–9361, or *by email: podadmin@fas.usda.gov.* Information is also available on the FAS Web site at *http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/technical-assistance-specialty-crops-tasc.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The TASC program is authorized by section 3205 of Pubic Law 107–171. TASC regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1487.

Purpose: The TASC program is designed to assist U.S. organizations by providing funding for projects that address sanitary, phytosanitary, or technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops. U.S. specialty crops, for the purpose of the TASC program, are defined to include all cultivated plants, or the products thereof, produced in the United States, except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco.

Prior to the enactment of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Act) on February 7, 2014, the TASC program was not available to address technical barriers to trade except for those that were related to sanitary or phytosanitary issues. The Act amended the statute authorizing the TASC program to allow the program to be used to address technical barriers to trade regardless of whether the barriers are related to a sanitary or phytosanitary barrier. The TASC regulations have been amended to reflect the recent statutory change.

As a general matter, TASC program projects should be designed to address the following criteria:

- Projects should identify and address a sanitary, phytosanitary, or other technical barrier that prohibits or threatens the export of U.S. specialty crops;
- Projects should demonstrably benefit the represented industry rather than a specific company or brand;
- Projects must address barriers to exports of commercially-available U.S. specialty crops for which barrier removal would predominantly benefit U.S. exports; and
- Projects should include 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.

Examples of expenses that CCC may agree to reimburse under the TASC program include, but are not limited to: initial pre-clearance programs, export protocol and work plan support, seminars and workshops, study tours, field surveys, development of pest lists, pest and disease research, reasonable logistical and administrative support, and travel and per diem expenses.

B. Award Information

In general, and subject to the availability of funding, all qualified proposals received before the specified application deadline will compete for funding. The limited funds and the range of barriers affecting the exports of U.S. specialty crops worldwide preclude CCC from approving large budgets for individual projects. Proposals requesting more than $500,000 in any given year will not be considered. Additionally, private entities may submit multi-year proposals that may be considered in the context of a detailed strategic implementation plan. The maximum duration of an activity is 5 years. Funding in such cases may, at FAS' discretion, be provided one year at a time with commitments beyond the first year subject to interim evaluations and funding availability. In order to validate funding eligibility, proposals must specify previous years of TASC funding for each proposed activity/title/market/constraint combination. Government entities are not eligible for multi-year funding.

Applicants may submit multiple proposals, and applicants with previously approved TASC proposals may apply for additional funding. The number of approved projects that a TASC participant can have underway at any given time is five. Please see 7 CFR part 1487 for additional restrictions.

FAS will consider providing either grant funds as direct assistance to U.S. organizations or technical assistance on behalf of U.S. organizations, provided that the organization submits timely and qualified proposals. FAS will review all proposals against the evaluation criteria contained in the program regulations.

Funding for successful proposals will be provided through specific agreements. These agreements will incorporate the proposal as approved by FAS. FAS must approve in advance any subsequent changes to the project. FAS or another Federal agency may be involved in the implementation of approved projects.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Any U.S. organization, private or government, with a demonstrated role or interest in exporting U.S. agricultural commodities may apply to the program. Government organizations consist of Federal, State,

and local agencies. Private organizations include non-profit trade associations, universities, agricultural cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and private companies.

Foreign organizations, whether government or private, may participate as third parties in activities carried out by U.S. organizations, but are not eligible for funding assistance from the program.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: FAS considers the applicant's willingness to contribute resources, including cash, goods, and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties, when determining which proposals are approved for funding.

3. 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.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Application through the Unified Export Strategy (UES): Organizations are strongly encouraged to submit their applications to FAS through the UES application Internet Web site. Using the UES application process reduces paperwork and expedites FAS's processing and review cycle. Applicants planning to use the UES Internet-based system must contact FAS/Program Operations Division to obtain site access information, including a user ID and password. The UES Internet-based application may be found at the following URL address: *https://www.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/.*

Although FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet-based UES application, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle, applicants also have the option of submitting an electronic version to FAS at *podadmin@fas.usda.gov.*

2. Content and Form of Application Submission: All TASC proposals must contain complete information about the proposed projects as described in § 1487.5(b) of the TASC program regulations.

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

(i) Provide a valid DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to CCC;

(ii) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application or plan; and

(iii) Continue to 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 CCC.

Similarly, in accordance with 2 CFR part 170, each entity that applies to the TASC program and does not qualify for an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b) must ensure it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the applicable reporting requirements of 2 CFR part 170 should it receive TASC funding.

Incomplete applications and applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement will not be accepted for review.

3. Submission Dates and Times: TASC proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis during the fiscal year as long as TASC funding is available as set forth below:

- Proposals received by, but not later than, 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2015, will be considered for funding with other proposals received by that date;
- Proposals not approved for funding during the 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, June 8, 2015, will be considered in the order received for funding only if funding remains available.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a proposal may be submitted for expedited consideration under the TASC Quick Response process if, in addition to meeting all requirements of the TASC program, a proposal clearly identifies a time-sensitive activity. In these cases, a proposal may be submitted at any time for an expedited evaluation. Such a proposal must include a specific request for expedited evaluation.

FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all proposals.

4. Funding Restrictions: Although funded projects may take place in the United States or abroad, all eligible projects must specifically address sanitary, phytosanitary, or related technical barriers to the export of U.S. specialty crops.

Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, such as the costs of market research, advertising, or other promotional expenses, and will be set forth in the written program agreement between CCC and the participant. CCC will also not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or any expenditure made prior to approval of a proposal.

5. Other Submission Requirements: All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2015, in order to be considered for funding; late submissions received after the deadline will be considered only if funding remains available. All applications submitted by email must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2015, at *podadmin@fas.usda.gov* in order to receive the same consideration.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria: FAS follows the evaluation criteria set forth in § 1487.6 of the TASC regulations and in this Notice. Reviewers will evaluate according to the following criteria: (1) The nature of the specific export barrier and the extent to which the proposal is likely to successfully remove, resolve, or mitigate that barrier (12.5%);

(2) The potential trade impact of the proposed project on market retention, market access, and market expansion, including the potential for expanding commercial sales in the targeted market (12.5%);

(3) The completeness and viability of the proposal. Among other things, this can include the cost of the project and the amount of other resources dedicated to the project, including cash and goods and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties (15%) and the effectiveness and potential of the performance measures (10%);

(4) The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the proposal (15%);

(5) The extent to which the proposal is targeted to a market in which the United States is generally competitive (17.5%);

(6) The degree to which time is essential to addressing specific export barriers (5%); and

(7) The ability of the applicant to provide a broad base of producer representation (12.5%).

2. Review and Selection Process: FAS will review proposals for eligibility and will evaluate each proposal against the criteria referred to above. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals, recommend an appropriate funding level for each proposal based upon these factors, and submit the proposals and funding recommendations to the Deputy Administrator, Office of Trade Programs. FAS may, when appropriate, request the assistance of other U.S.

government subject area experts in evaluating the merits of a proposal.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: 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 levels of funding, timelines for implementation, and written evaluation requirements.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: The agreements will incorporate the details of each project as approved by FAS. Each agreement will identify terms and conditions pursuant to which CCC will reimburse certain costs of each project. Agreements will also outline the responsibilities of the participant. Interested parties should review the TASC program regulations found at 7 CFR part 1487 in addition to this announcement. TASC program regulations are available at the following URL address: *http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/technical-assistance-specialty-crops-tasc.* Hard copies may be obtained by contacting the Program Operations Division at (202) 720–4327.

3. Reporting: TASC participants will be required to submit regular interim reports and a final performance report, each of which evaluate the TASC project using the performance measures presented in the approved proposal, as set forth in the written program agreement.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

For additional information and assistance, contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Courier address: Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720–4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720–9361, or *by email: podadmin@fas.usda.gov.*

Signed at Washington, DC on the 1st of April, 2015.

Asif Chaudhry,

Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, and Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 2015–07934 Filed 4–6–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE CODE 3410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Emerging Markets Program

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2016 Emerging Markets Program (EMP). The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from the private sector and from government agencies for fiscal year 2016 and to set out criteria for the award of funds under the program in October 2015. The EMP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: To be considered for funding, applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, June 8, 2015. Any applications received after this time will be considered only if funds are still available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service *by courier address:* Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720–4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720–9361, or *by email: podadmin@fas.usda.gov.* Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at *http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/emerging-markets-program-emp.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Funding Opportunity Description

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.603.

Authority: The EMP is authorized by section 1542(d)(1) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (The Act), as amended. The EMP regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1486.

1. Purpose. The EMP assists U.S. entities in developing, maintaining, or expanding exports of U.S. agricultural commodities and products by funding activities that improve emerging markets' food and rural business systems, including reducing potential trade barriers in such markets. The EMP is intended primarily to support export market development efforts of the private sector, but EMP resources may also be used to assist public organizations.

All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration. Agricultural product(s) should be comprised of at least 50 percent U.S. origin content by weight, exclusive of added water, to be eligible for funding. Proposals that seek support for multiple commodities are also eligible. EMP funding may only be used to develop, maintain, or expand emerging markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products through generic activities. EMP funding may not be used to support the export of another country's products to the United States, or to promote the development of a foreign economy as a primary objective.

2. Appropriate Activities. All EMP projects must fall into at least one of the following four categories:

(a) Assistance to teams consisting primarily of U.S. individuals expert in assessing the food and rural business systems of other countries. This type of EMP project must include all three of the following:

- Conduct an assessment of the food and rural business system needs of an emerging market;
- Make recommendations on measures necessary to enhance the effectiveness of these systems; and
- Identify opportunities and projects to enhance the effectiveness of the emerging market's food and rural business systems.

To be eligible, such proposals must clearly demonstrate that experts are primarily agricultural consultants, farmers, other persons from the private sector, and government officials, and that they have expertise in assessing the food and rural business systems of other countries.

(b) Assistance to enable individuals from emerging markets to travel to the United States so that these individuals can, for the purpose of enhancing the food and rural business systems in their countries, become familiar with U.S. technology and agribusiness and rural enterprise operations by consulting with food and rural business system experts in the United States.

(c) Assistance to enable U.S. agricultural producers and other individuals knowledgeable in agricultural and agribusiness matters to travel to emerging markets to assist in transferring their knowledge and expertise to entities in emerging markets. Such travel must be to emerging markets. Travel to developed markets is not eligible under the program even if the traveler's targeted market is an emerging market.

(d) Technical assistance to implement the recommendations, projects, and/or opportunities identified under 2(a) above. Technical assistance that does not implement the recommendations, projects, and/or opportunities identified