

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

Announcement Type: New.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.600.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2008 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants and award funds in October 2007. The Cooperator Program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 14, 2007. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Policy Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20024, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: ppsadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/fmdprogram.asp>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The Cooperator Program is authorized by title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. Cooperator Program regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1484.

Purpose: The Cooperator Program is designed to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the Cooperator Program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. All agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

The FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and the USDA's Food and Agricultural Policy (FAP). In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation,

expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, the FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. The FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA and FAP.

II. Award Information

Under the Cooperator Program, the FAS enters into agreements with nonprofit U.S. trade organizations which have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and gives priority to those organizations which are nationwide in membership and scope. Cooperators may receive assistance only for the promotion of generic activities that do not involve promotions targeted directly to consumers. The program generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants.* To participate in the Cooperator Program an applicant must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization.

2. *Cost Sharing.* To participate in the Cooperator Program, an applicant must agree to contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The Cooperator Program is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. The contribution must be stated in dollars and be at least 50 percent of the value of resources provided by CCC for activities conducted under the project agreement.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the agreed cost share contributions specified therein, is considered by the FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on design and execution of activities. The Cooperator Program regulations, in sections 1484.50 and 1484.51, provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

3. *Other.* Applications 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 participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* Organizations that are interested in applying for Cooperator Program funds are encouraged to submit their requests using the Unified Export Strategy (DES) format. The UES allows interested entities to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all the FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that they face, identify activities, which would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants are not required, however, to use the UES format. Organizations can submit applications in the UES format by two methods. The first allows an applicant to submit information directly to the FAS through the UES application Internet Web site. The FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. Applicants also have the option of submitting electronic versions (along with two paper copies) of their applications to the FAS on compact disc.

Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the FAS Program Policy Staff on (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including a Help file containing step-by-step instructions for its use, may be found at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>.

Applicants who choose to submit applications on compact disc can obtain an application format by contacting the Program Policy Staff on (202) 720-4327.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission.* To be considered for the Cooperator Program, an applicant must submit to the FAS information required by the Cooperator Program regulations in section 1484.20. In addition, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's issuance of a final policy (68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003)) regarding the need to identify entities that are receiving government awards, all applicants must submit a

Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. An applicant may request a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711.

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

The FAS administers various other agricultural export assistance programs, including the Market Access Program (MAP), Cochran Fellowships, the Emerging Markets Program, the Quality Samples Program, Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, and several Export Credit Guarantee programs. Any organization that is not interested in applying for the Cooperator Program but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned should contact the Program Policy Staff on (202) 720-4327.

3. *Submission Dates and Times.* All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 14, 2007. All Cooperator Program applicants, regardless of the method of submitting an application, also must submit by the application deadline, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR section 1484.20(a)(14). Applications or certifications received after this date will not be considered.

4. *Funding Restrictions.* Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, and there are limits on other categories of expenses. CCC will not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to approval. Full details are available in the Cooperator Program regulations in sections 1484.54 and 1484.55.

5. *Other Submission Requirements and Considerations.* All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 14, 2007. Signed certification statements also must be received by that time at one of the addresses listed below.

All applications on compact disc (with two accompanying paper copies and a signed certification statement) and any other form of application must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, May 14, 2007, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Program Policy Staff, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, 1250 Maryland Ave., SW., Washington, DC 2024.

U.S. Postal Delivery: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural

Service, Program Policy Staff, Stop 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Criteria and Review Process.*

Following is a description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available Cooperator Program funds.

(1) *Phase I—Sufficiency Review and FAS Divisional Review*

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by the FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications. These requirements appear at sections 1484.14 and 1484.20 of the Cooperator Program regulations. Applications that meet the requirements then will be further evaluated by the proper Commodity Branch in FAS' Market Development and Grants Management Division. The Commodity Branch will review each application against the criteria listed in sections 1484.21 and 1484.22 of the Cooperator Program regulations. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals and to recommend an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these criteria.

(2) *Phase 2—Competitive Review*

Meritorious applications then will be passed on to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Office of Trade Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants. Applications will compete for funds on the basis of the following allocation criteria (the number in parentheses represents a percentage weight factor):

(a) Contribution Level (40)

* The applicant's 6-year average share (2003-2008) of all contributions (contributions may include cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of foreign market development activities) compared to

* The applicant's 6-year average share (2003-2008) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures.

(b) Past Export Performance (20)

* The 6-year average share (2002-2007) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to

* The applicant's 6-year average share (2002-2007) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures plus a 6-year average share (2001-2006) of MAP expenditures and a 6-year average share (2001-2006) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(c) Past Demand Expansion Performance (20)

* The 6-year average share (2002-2007) of the total value of world trade of the commodities promoted by the applicant compared to

* The applicant's 6-year average share (2002-2007) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures plus a 6-year average share (2001-2006) of MAP expenditures and a 6-year average share (2001-2006) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(d) Future Demand Expansion Goals (10)

* The projected total dollar value of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2013 compared to

* The applicant's requested funding level.

(e) Accuracy of Past Demand Expansion Projections (10)

* The actual dollar value share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2006 compared to

* The applicant's past projected share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2006, as specified in the 2003 Cooperator Program application.

The Commodity Branches' recommended funding levels for each applicant are converted to percentages of the total Cooperator Program funds available then multiplied by each weight factor to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

2. *Anticipated Announcement Date.* Announcements of funding decisions for the Cooperator Program are anticipated during October 2007.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices.* The FAS will notify each applicant in writing of the final disposition of its application. The FAS will send an approval letter and project agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of Cooperator Program funding and cost-share contribution requirements.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* Interested parties should review the Cooperator Program regulations which are available at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/fmdprogram.asp>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting PPS at (202) 720-4327.

3. *Reporting.* The FAS requires various reports and evaluations from Cooperators. Reporting requirements are detailed in the Cooperator Program regulations in sections 1484.53, 1484.70, and 1484.72.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For additional information and assistance, contact the Program Policy Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, Stop 1042, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20024, phone: (202) 720-4327; fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: ppsadmin@fas.usda.gov.

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

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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 the availability of funding for the 2008 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 participation in the FY 2008 TASC Program. The TASC Program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: See paragraph IV.3 below for a detailed description of relevant dates.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Policy Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, 1250 Maryland Avenue, Stop 1042, SW., Washington, DC 20024, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, email: ppsadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/tasc/tasc.asp>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The TASC Program is authorized by section 3205 of Pub. L.

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 related 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.

As a general matter, TASC Program projects should be designed to accomplish the following goals:

- Projects should address a sanitary, phytosanitary, or related technical barrier that prohibits or threatens the export of U.S. specialty crops;
- Projects should demonstrably benefit the represented industry and not a specific company or brand; and,
- Projects must address barriers to U.S. specialty crops that are currently available on a commercial basis and for which barrier removal would predominantly benefit U.S. exports.

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, database development, reasonable logistical and administrative support, and travel and per diem expenses.

II. Award Information

In general, all qualified proposals received before the specified application deadlines 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. In prior years, the amount of funding per proposal has ranged from \$13,000 to \$250,000, the maximum allowed.

Applicants may submit multiple proposals, and applicants with previously approved TASC proposals may apply for additional funding. However, no TASC participant may have more than three approved projects underway at any given time.

FAS will consider providing either grant funds as direct assistance to U.S. organizations or providing 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.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Any United States organization, private or government, 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:* Applicants are very strongly encouraged to provide matching funds or cost sharing support in this highly competitive program. Such support may be in the form of cash, goods, or in-kind services which are dedicated to the project by the organization that submitted the proposal, private industry entities, host governments, or foreign third parties.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Application through the UES:* Organizations are strongly encouraged to submit applications to FAS through the Unified Export Strategy (UES) application Internet website. Using the UES application process reduces paperwork and expedites FAS' processing and review cycle. Applicants planning to use the UES Internet-based system must contact FAS Program Policy Staff on (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information including a user ID and password. The UES Internet-based application, including a Help file containing step-by-step instructions for its use, may be found at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>.

2. *Application through electronic and hard copies:* Applicants also have the option of submitting electronic versions in the UES format (along with two paper copies) of their applications to FAS on diskette. Applicants who choose to submit applications on diskette can obtain an application format at the following URL address: