

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Commodity Credit Corporation and Foreign Agricultural Service**

#### **Quality Samples Program**

##### **Summary**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Programs, announces this funding opportunity to support the Quality Samples Program by issuing new awards. This opportunity is available to U.S. entities to provide funding for projects that provide commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities.

##### **A. Program Description**

**Issued By:** Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

**Assistance Listing Number:** 10.605

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** 2025 Quality Samples Program

**Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA–FAS–QSP–2025

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

**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.

##### **B. Federal Award Information**

*Available Funding for this Announcement:* The QSP will provide up to \$2.5 million in FY 2025 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 2025 is provided.

*Total Available Federal Funding:* \$2,500,000.

*Anticipated Number of Awards:* 12–22 awards.

**Projected Period of Performance:** Awards will be granted for a period of performance of one year. In rare situations, FAS will entertain requests to extend the agreement. Extension requests must be made at least 10 business 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. The maximum amount of time that an award may be extended is five years. (Please see *H. Additional Information*).

**Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s):** 10/01/2024

**Projected Period of Performance End Date(s):** 09/30/2025

**Type of Assistance Instrument:** USDA/FAS anticipates that grants will be funded pursuant to this funding opportunity. In this type of agreement, the recipient is expected to implement the project autonomously with little programmatic involvement from USDA/FAS. However, USDA/FAS maintains an oversight role, and the recipient must ensure that USDA/FAS is kept apprised of project activities and progress.

### **C. Eligibility Information**

**Eligible Applicants:** Any United States private or government entity, excluding FAS Posts, with a demonstrated role and interest in exporting U.S. agricultural commodities may apply to the program. Government organizations may consist of Federal, State, or local agencies. Private organizations can 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 U.S. Government System for Award Management ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) before the application submission deadline of the announcement. Applicants with inactive, expired, pending, or excluded listings will be deemed ineligible. Exceptions, waivers, or extensions will not be considered. Please contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, if you have questions about this requirement. Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be considered ineligible.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

*Eligible Commodities:* All agricultural commodities produced entirely in the U.S., except tobacco, are eligible for the program. Products derived from an eligible commodity are also eligible for the program, as long as the products are also produced entirely in the U.S.

*Eligible Markets:* Applications may target any foreign market not otherwise restricted by U.S. law, regulation, or sanctions.

*Eligible Activities:* To be eligible for consideration, QSP applications must adhere to the following criteria:

- Projects must benefit the entire U.S. commodity industry and not a specific company or brand;
- Projects must 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 to meet anticipated demand;
- 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 may 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 must 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
- 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.

*Limits on Applications:* QSP funding may only be used for generic activities. For–profit entities may not use QSP 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. Applications 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. Applicants may submit more than one application, and the number of projects per participant will not be limited.

*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 demonstration seminars will be limited to \$15,000 of QSP reimbursement per project.

### **Cost Share/Match Requirement**

There is no cost share requirement for the QSP. 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 applications are approved for funding.

### **Other Submission Requirements and Information**

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 application 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. The UES system is accessible at

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

Organizations that do not have UES access may request access from FAS by following this 3–step process:

- 1) Navigate to the UES at: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/ues/WebApp/> and, when prompted, use the “Customer” option to create an account at [Login.gov](https://login.gov).
- 2) Return to the [UES](#) and create a new account in the system.
- 3) Submit a [UES User Access Request Form](#) to the Program Operations Division (POD) UES team via email at [uesadmin@usda.gov](mailto:uesadmin@usda.gov), who will verify the information and activate your UES account.

### **Substantial Compliance**

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 30 calendar days of the application deadline of the ineligibility determination.

Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section D of this solicitation or they will be rejected. In the event a page limit is expressed in Section D with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.

### **D. Application and Submission Information**

This announcement contains all information necessary to apply to this funding opportunity.

**Application Submission Deadline:** FAS will track the time and date of receipt of all applications. The initial application submission deadline is 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Friday, June 14, 2024. All applications received by the application submission deadline will be considered for funding in the initial allocation tranche. Applications will continue to be accepted after the initial

application submission deadline and will be considered for funding in the order received on the following dates as long as funding remains available: Tranche II deadline – December 31, 2024; Tranche III deadline – March 31, 2025; Tranche IV deadline – June 30, 2025. No applications will be accepted after June 30, 2025.

### **Content and Form of Application Submission**

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

- (1) A QSP project application that includes the information contained in this notice;
- (2) Standard Form 424, “Application for Federal Assistance” (SF-424). Please email the completed SF-424 to [PODAdmin@usda.gov](mailto:PODAdmin@usda.gov) with the subject: “2025 QSP SF-424”; and
- (3) A completed SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) form if the entity applying to this announcement is required to disclose their lobbying activities under 31 USC 1352.

QSP applications must contain the following information:

1. Organizational information, including:
  - i. Organization’s name, address, Chief Executive Officer (or designee), Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN);
  - ii. A Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov;
  - iii. Type of organization;
  - iv. Name, telephone number, fax number, and email 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 2020 through 2031.
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. Detailed cost calculations and justifications for each budget line item must be provided in the application, and all line items



should be described in sufficient detail to enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project; and

viii. The importer's role in the project regarding handling and processing the commodity sample.

4. Projects must include performance measures for quantifying progress and demonstrating results. All QSP projects 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. In addition to the required standard performance measures, applications may contain custom measures. Any custom performance 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 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 application, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third

parties, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Contributed resources may include cash, goods, or services.

If FAS determines that an applicant made a good faith effort to submit the required application information by the application deadline but identifies that a clarification on the submission is needed, FAS will notify the applicant and request that the applicant provide the clarification within 15 business days. FAS will not review applications until they are complete, which could delay application processing. FAS will not consider any applications that remain incomplete after the 15 business days.

### **Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

As part of the application evaluation process outlined in Section E, FAS will consider an applicant's past performance under the FAS market development programs and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from USDA/FAS files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If an applicant has not previously participated in an FAS market development program, they may submit a list of no more than five federally-funded (preferably USDA or USDA/FAS) assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your organization performed within the last three years and describe:

- i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements;
- ii) your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements, including whether you adequately and timely reported on your progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain

why not) and whether you submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and

iii) your organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of your proposed project, and your staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources (or the ability to obtain them) to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

#### **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant is required to:

- i) Have an active registration in SAM before submitting its application;
- ii) Have assented to the federal assistance certifications in the SAM platform;
- iii) Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in its application; and
- iv) 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 a Federal awarding agency.

#### **SAM.gov Registration Instructions**

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will

create an account using [login.gov](https://login.gov)<sup>1</sup> to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining a UEI and requires assertions, representations, certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) on SAM.gov for details on this process.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active.

SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues, or to chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

Applicants must maintain an active SAM.gov registration at all times during which they have active Federal awards or an application under consideration by FAS. FAS will not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM.gov 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.

## **Intergovernmental Review**

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<sup>1</sup> Login.gov is a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit [http://login.gov/help](https://login.gov/help).

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs, may be applicable to awards resulting from this announcement. USDA implemented the Executive Order in 2 CFR 415.5. USDA/FAS may require applicants selected for funding to provide a copy of their application to their State Point of Contact (SPOC) for review. These reviews are not required before submitting an application. Only applicants that USDA/FAS selects for funding under this announcement are subject to the Intergovernmental Review requirement. For more information about USDA's implementation for Intergovernmental Review, please visit [https://www.usda.gov/ocfo/federal-financial-assistance-policy/intergovernmental-review#:~:text=Executive%20Order%20\(EO\)%2012372%2C,of%20proposed%20Federal%20financial%20assistance.](https://www.usda.gov/ocfo/federal-financial-assistance-policy/intergovernmental-review#:~:text=Executive%20Order%20(EO)%2012372%2C,of%20proposed%20Federal%20financial%20assistance.)

### **Funding Restrictions**

*Ineligible Activities:* 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. No other expenses will be reimbursed through the program, including the transportation costs from the first foreign port or point of entry to the final destination. 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. 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. Although providing technical assistance is required for all projects, the costs of providing such technical assistance are not reimbursable under the program. Financial assistance will only be made available on a reimbursement basis; cash advances are not allowed

under the QSP. FAS will also not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to the approval of an application.

In general, QSP 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. 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, QSP program funds may not be used for expenses, fines, settlements, judgements, or payments to legal suits, challenges, or disputes filed against the U.S. Government or any other government entity.

**E. Application Review Information**

FAS will review all applications for eligibility and completeness. FAS will, subject to the availability of funds, approve those applications that it considers to best meet the objectives outlined in this announcement. When appropriate to the subject matter of the application, FAS may also request the assistance of other U.S. Government experts in evaluating applications.

**Conflict of Interest**

The applicant's Conflict of Interest (COI) Point of Contact as defined in the USDA/FAS Conflict of Interest Policy, must notify the USDA/FAS contact identified in Section G of this solicitation of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for USDA/FAS financial assistance awards within 10 calendar days of becoming aware of the conflict of interest. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include, but are not limited to, situations in which an USDA/FAS employee reviewed and commented on or drafted all or part of an applicant's

application prior to submission. Note that USDA/FAS does not generally consider receiving information from an USDA/FAS employee limited to whether the applicant or the applicant's proposed project is eligible to compete for funding to confer an unfair competitive advantage. In addition, assistance agreements made under this solicitation will include a term and condition notifying recipients of their COI disclosure obligations and responsibilities under the award, including the need to have systems in place to address, resolve, and disclose COIs to USDA/FAS.

### **Integrity in Performance**

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by [31 USC 3321](#) and [41 USC 2313](#) to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal awards; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$250,000, the federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (currently FAPIIS).

- An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM.gov 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.gov.

- The Federal awarding agency 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 CFR 200.206](#).

## **Review and Selection Process**

The purpose of the application evaluation is to recommend an appropriate funding level for each application and submit the funding recommendations to the appropriate officials for decision making. The agency will convene a review panel, which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers, to review the eligible applications against the evaluation criteria described below. The reviewers will ensure that the applicant is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's marketing plan and assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified below. The review panel will prepare a recommendation list and present it to the selecting official, who is not a member of the panel.

The selecting official may select applications out of rank order in consideration of strategic program priorities, such as geographical distribution, incorporation of minority-serving institutions, or congressional directive. Selection determinations are final and cannot be appealed.

Throughout the evaluation process, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:



- i) past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section D of the solicitation,
- ii) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section D of the solicitation, including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes under those agreements and if such progress was not being made whether the applicant adequately reported why not,
- iii) organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and
- iv) staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under items (i) and (ii) of this criterion, USDA/FAS will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If you do not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and you will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items (i) and (ii) above); a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points. If you do not provide any response for these items, you may receive a score of 0 for these factors.

FAS conducts the following process in reviewing applications and allocating available QSP program 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. The agency will notify applicants determined to be ineligible. An applicant that feels such a determination is made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim, by email to the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, within 3 business days of notification. Applications that meet the requirements and are found to be responsive to this announcement will move on to the Phase 2 Agency review.

*Agency Review (Phase 2):* Eligible applications will be evaluated by the appropriate Commodity Branch in FAS’ Cooperator Programs Division. The Commodity Branches will review each eligible application and will score and recommend approval for each application using the following criteria, with each criterion weighted equally at 10 points each. Applications must achieve a minimum score of 70 to be recommended for approval. FAS will provide feedback on applications that score less than 70 in case the applicant wishes to revise their application and resubmit it for reconsideration.

- 1) Whether or not appropriate trade data for the years 2020–2031 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 project;

- 5) The extent to which the application 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 application;
- 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 may, when appropriate, solicit and consider feedback from overseas Posts and other U.S. government subject area experts when conducting the reviews for applications.

*Final Review and Allocation Decision Making (Phase 3):* A summary of all applications and the recommended funding levels for each will be provided to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Global Programs for the purpose of finalizing the funding recommendations. Once finalized, the recommendations will be presented to the FAS Administrator for final deliberation, determination, and approval. FAS leadership (including the Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrator, and Administrator) may elect to review and adjust the funding recommendations based on factors including, but not limited to: agency priorities, priority markets, program impact, the record of performance of the organization in managing past market development funds, and the organization's likelihood of success.

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### **Notice of Award**

FAS will approve those applications that it determines best satisfy the criteria and factors specified in this announcement. Successful applicants will be notified of the status of their application/award by email. This notification is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional. Funding for successful applications will be provided through specific agreements. FAS will send an agreement and an approval letter to each successful applicant.

The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the details of each project, when the project is approved to begin and end, responsibilities of the Recipient, levels of funding, and reporting requirements.

### **Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the applicable General Administrative Terms and Conditions, which can be found at [https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions/default.asp](https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp). The applicant is presumed to have read, understood, and accepted these terms when accepting a USDA/FAS award. Applicants with questions about the applicable terms should contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact.

The applicable Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL. Before accepting an award, the applicant should carefully read the award package (agreement and approval letter) for instructions on administering the award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients 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.

### **Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting**

Applicants must ensure that they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements established at [2 CFR 170](#), unless they qualify for an exception from the requirements, should they be selected for funding.

### **Mandatory Disclosures**

As required by [2 CFR 200.113](#), non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.339](#) including suspension and debarment.

### **Reporting**

A written evaluation report (Final Report) covering the program performance and financial status for each approved project must be submitted via the UES within 120 days of the expiration or termination of each participant's QSP agreement. Final reports should address all performance measures that were presented in the application, plus the required standard performance measures. The reports must also provide an accounting of all project expenditures by cost category and any contributions made to the project by the Recipient and all other participating entities. Unusual deviations from activity budget amounts or failure to meet performance measures should be noted and explained. Interim progress reports may be submitted but are not required. All reports must be submitted in the UES.

## **Monitoring**

USDA/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 appropriate. During site visits, USDA/FAS will review recipients' files related to the program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit USDA/FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review assistance agreement–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 the program.

## **Closeout**

Within 120 days after the agreement completion date, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, FAS will confirm that the Recipient 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 Recipient of the award closeout procedures. The notice will indicate that the period of performance has closed, note that any remaining funds will be de-obligated, and address any additional closeout requirements.

## **G. Awarding Agency Contact Information**

### **Contact and Resource Information**

For additional information and assistance regarding this announcement, please contact the following during regular working hours 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Eastern Time: Curt Alt, Senior Director, Program Operations Division, Global Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture *by phone*: (202) 690–4784, or *by email* at [Curt.Alt@usda.gov](mailto:Curt.Alt@usda.gov).

## **H. Additional Information**

(1) *Extensions.* Although QSP projects should be completed within the one year period of performance approved by FAS, extensions to this program are allowed in rare cases. Recipients may request a no-cost one-year extension to complete project activities. The request must be submitted via email using the Amendment Request Form at least 10 business days prior to the expiration of the period of performance and must include a justification for why the extension is necessary and how the extension would effectively support the program's purpose. Requests for extensions are subject to review and approval by FAS.

(2) *UES Submittal.* Except for the Amendment Request Form, which may be submitted via email, the QSP does not accept any documents submitted outside of the UES.

(3) *Preaward Costs.* The Recipient shall not request reimbursement, incur costs, or obligate funds for any purpose pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the start of the approved budget period/performance period.

(4) *Project Modifications.* All requests for project modifications, including budget revisions, activity changes, and new activities, must be reviewed and approved by FAS. Upon approval, FAS will issue an amendment to the agreement, which must be signed by FAS and the Recipient. The Recipient may not implement the proposed modifications until the amendment approving the changes is finalized.

(5) *Program Income.* Program income is not allowed in the QSP.

(6) *Electronic Signatures.* Consistent with the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN Act), USDA/FAS uses and accepts electronic signatures for application and award documents. USDA/FAS will neither solicit nor send physical copies of documents.

