

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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

#### **Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program**

##### **Summary**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Programs, announces this funding opportunity to support the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program by issuing new awards. This opportunity is available to U.S. entities to provide funding for projects that seek to remove, resolve, or mitigate existing or potential sanitary, phytosanitary, or technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops.

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

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

**Assistance Listing Number:** 10.604

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Title:** 2025 Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program

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

**Authorizing Legislation:** The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program (TASC) is authorized by Section 203(e) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5623(e)), as amended.

**Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities:** The TASC program is designed to assist U.S. organizations by providing funding for projects that seek to remove, resolve, or mitigate existing or potential sanitary, phytosanitary, or technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops.

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

*Available Funding for this Announcement:* The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 provided \$9 million in funding for each of the fiscal years FY 2019 through FY 2023. Congress has not yet determined funding levels for FY 2025. This NOFO is being released prior to Congress appropriating funding for the TASC program for FY 2025. 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:* Anticipated to be \$9 million.

*Anticipated Number of Awards:* 15–20 awards. Funding per award under TASC is limited to a maximum of \$500,000 per year, subject to programmatic approval, review, and available funding.

**Projected Period of Performance:** Awards will generally be granted for a project period not exceeding five years. However, FAS will entertain requests to continue activities and extend an agreement’s activity completion date beyond five years. Any requests to extend an agreement’s activity completion date beyond five years must include a justification for why the extension is necessary and how the extension would effectively support the program’s purpose.

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

**Projected Period of Performance End Date(s):** 09/30/2030

**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:** To participate in the TASC program, an entity must be a U.S. organization, either government or private, with a demonstrated role or interest in exporting U.S. agricultural specialty crops. Government organizations consist of Federal, State, and local agencies. Private organizations may 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 eligible organizations, but are not eligible for direct funding assistance through the program.

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:* The TASC program is only open to U.S. specialty crops. For the purposes of the TASC program, specialty crops are defined as most cultivated plants, or the products thereof, produced in the U.S. except for wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco. Applications may cover more than one U.S. specialty crop.

*Eligible Markets:* Applications may target any foreign market, including single countries or reasonable regional groupings of countries.

*Eligible Activities:* To be found eligible for consideration, TASC applications must address the following criteria:

- Applications must identify and address an existing or potential sanitary, phytosanitary, or technical barrier that prohibits or threatens the export of commercially available U.S. specialty crops; and
- Applications must demonstrate that the proposed activities will benefit an entire industry rather than a specific company or brand;

*Limits on Applications:* Eligible organizations may request funding for up to five years in a single application. Multi-year funding may, at FAS' discretion, be provided one year at a time with commitments beyond the first year subject to interim evaluations and funding availability. Federal government entities are not eligible for multi-year funding. Applicants may submit more than one application, and applicants with previously approved TASC awards may apply for additional awards. However, the maximum number of active awards that a TASC Recipient can have underway at any given time is five.

*Funding Limits:* Applications that request more than \$500,000 in funding per year will not be considered. TASC funds awarded to Federal government agencies must be expended or otherwise obligated by close of business September 30, 2025.

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

There is no cost share requirement for the TASC program. 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**

Organizations interested in applying to TASC are encouraged to submit their application through the web-based Unified Export Strategy (UES) system. The UES system is accessible at

<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/>. 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. Although FAS highly recommends applying via the UES, applicants also have the option of submitting an electronic application in MS Word format to FAS via email to [podadmin@usda.gov](mailto:podadmin@usda.gov).

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 initial 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 TASC, an applicant must submit to FAS an application package consisting of:

- (1) A TASC 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 TASC 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.

TASC 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), and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI);

- (ii) Type of organization;
- (iii) Name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the primary contact person;
- (iv) A description of the organization and its membership;
- (v) A description of the organization's experience in technical assistance projects, including activities involved and project results; and
- (vi) Collaborating organizations.

(2) Project information, including:

- (i) A brief project title;
- (ii) Specialty crops addressed through the proposal;
- (iii) Target country(ies);
- (iv) The amount of funding requested and an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without Federal funding assistance and why the organization would be unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance;
- (v) Beginning and ending dates for the proposed project;
- (vi) A market assessment, including current conditions and a description of the specific export barrier to be addressed by the project;
- (vii) Anticipated trade impact of the project;
- (viii) The goals of the project, and the expected benefits to the represented industry;
- (ix) A description of the activities planned to address the export barrier;

(x) Applications must include the following standard performance measures for quantifying progress and demonstrating results:

**i For Research and Development Intervention projects:**

- 1 # of viable technologies developed or modified to address the trade barrier;
- 2 # of individuals who will learn about the technology advances achieved by the project;
- 3 # of improved technologies anticipated to be adopted by industry; and
- 4 # of reported changes in trade barrier intervention strategies within one month after the end of project;

**ii For Travel Intervention projects:**

- 1 # of government officials or industry representatives hosted; and
- 2 % of government officials or industry representatives with a better understanding of U.S. or foreign market regulatory systems and export/import procedures and requirements as a result of the project;

**iii For Information Exchange projects:**

- 1 # of technical trainings or meetings conducted;
- 2 # of trainees or attendees that participated; and
- 3 % of trainees or attendees who have a better understanding of the SPS/TBT intervention strategy;

(xi) Applications may also include custom performance measures for quantifying progress and demonstrating results. The proposed custom performance measures must meet the following criteria:

- i Aligned: the indicator must clearly measure the relevant result.
- ii Clear: the indicator must be precise and unambiguous about what is being measured and how. There must be no doubt on how to measure or interpret the indicator.
- iii Quantifiable: the indicator must sufficiently capture all the elements of a result.
- iv Include an identified methodology: it must be clear that the data used to inform the indicator can be obtained in a timely and efficient manner and will be of high quality. The full set of indicators selected to monitor project performance must be sufficient to inform project management and oversight.

(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) Information indicating all financial and in-kind support to the proposed project, and the resources to be contributed by each entity that will contribute to the project's implementation. This may include the entity that submitted the application, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, CCC, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Support may include cash, goods, and services. Although highly encouraged, financial support from the applicant is not required.

(3) Export information, including:

- (i) Performance measures for each year the project is active beginning with the year that the project would begin, which will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project;
- (ii) A benchmark performance measure for the year prior to the year that the project would begin; and
- (iii) The viability of long-term sales to this market.

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](http://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

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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>.

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**

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:* TASC funding can only be used for generic activities. For-profit entities cannot use program 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. TASC funds cannot be used to support normal operating costs of individual organizations, including government organizations, nor as a source to recover pre-award costs or prior expenses from previous or ongoing projects. Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the TASC program, including the costs of market research, advertising, or other promotional expenses, and there are limits on other categories of expenses.

FAS will also not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to approval of an application. For further information on ineligible expenditures, please refer to 2 C.F.R. parts 200 and 400 and the TASC program regulations, found at 7 CFR 1487.

In general, TASC funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400, the program regulations at 7 CFR 1487, 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, TASC 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 TASC 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):* A TASC review committee comprised of representatives from FAS Program Areas will review each eligible application and will score and recommend approval for each application using the following criteria, with the numbers in parenthesis indicating the weights attached to each criterion:

- (1) The nature of the specific export barrier or potential export barrier and the extent to which the project is likely to successfully remove, resolve, or mitigate that barrier (12.5 points);
- (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 points);

- (3) The completeness and viability of the application. Among other things, this will include the cost of the project and the amount of other resources dedicated to the project, including cash, goods, and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties (15 points);
- (4) The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the project (15 points);
- (5) The extent to which the project is targeted to a market in which the United States is generally competitive (17.5 points);
- (6) The degree to which time is essential to addressing specific export barriers (5 points);
- (7) The nature of the applicant organization, with a greater weight given to those organizations with the broadest base of producer representation (12.5 points); and
- (8) The effectiveness of the performance measures and potential of the performance measures to measure project results (10 points).

The TASC review committee may also solicit and consider feedback on the applications from appropriate overseas Posts in their review and in determining approval recommendations for each applicant. FAS may, when appropriate, request the assistance of other U.S. government subject area experts in evaluating applications.

*Development of Funding Recommendations (Phase 3):* In this phase of the review, a combined average score for each of the applications will be calculated from the individual scores provided by the TASC review committee members. The applications will be ranked highest to lowest by combined score, and the available funding will be allocated to the applications in order until all applications are funded or until the available funding is exhausted. Applications that

receive an average score of less than 70 points will not be considered for funding. In addition to the scores, comments received from the reviewers will be considered when developing the funding recommendations.

*Final Review and Allocation Decision Making (Phase 4):* 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**

TASC Recipients must provide interim and final performance and financial reports as specified by the terms and conditions of their award. All reports must be submitted through the UES and must cover the program performance and financial status for each approved project.

Each report, whether interim or final, must evaluate the progress of the TASC project using the performance measures presented in the approved application, as set forth in the written program agreement, and provide an accounting of all project expenditures by cost category and actual contributions made to the project by the Recipient and all other participating entities.

Unusual deviations from activity budget amounts or lagging progress on performance measures should be noted and explained.

### **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*. Extensions to this program are allowed. Recipients may request a no-cost extension to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period 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) *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.

(3) *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.

(4) *Program Income.* [7 CFR 1487.14](#) of the TASC regulations defines program income as gross income earned by the Recipient that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance. Program income generated from an activity, the expenditures for which have been wholly or partially reimbursed with TASC funds, shall be used by the Recipient in furtherance of its approved activities in the program period during which the TASC funds are available for obligation by the Recipient, or must be returned to CCC.

(5) *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.