



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Foreign Agricultural Service

## **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

### **Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program**

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## **1. Basic Information**

### **1.1 Executive Summary**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, announces this funding opportunity to support the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program (Cooperator Program) by issuing new awards. This opportunity is available to nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organizations and is intended to create, expand, and maintain long-term export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products.

### **1.2 Federal Agency Name**

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS)

### **1.3 Funding Opportunity Title**

2026 Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

### **1.4 Announcement Type**

New Announcement

### **1.5 Funding Opportunity Number**

USDA-FAS-FMD-2026

### **1.6 Assistance Listing Number**

10.600 Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

### **1.7 Funding Details**

Total Available Federal Funding: Anticipated to be no less than \$34,500,000. The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 provided no less than \$34.5 million per year for the Cooperator Program through FY 2025. This NOFO is being released prior to Congress appropriating funding for the Cooperator Program for FY 2026. If Congress authorizes an amount of funding for the Cooperator Program other than \$34.5 million, USDA/FAS reserves the right to allow applicants to amend their original applications. Awards may be granted up to the maximum available program amount.

Anticipated Number of Awards: 20 awards.

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make additional awards under this opportunity if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made, consistent with agency policy and guidance. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

### **1.8 Key Dates**

Deadline for Question Submission: May 30, 2025

Application Submission Deadline: June 6, 2025 at 5:00 pm, Eastern Time

### **1.9 Agency Contact Information**

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Curt Alt

Email Address: [curt.alt@usda.gov](mailto:curt.alt@usda.gov)

Phone Number: (202) 690-4784

Hours of Operation: M–F, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)

## **2. Eligibility**

### **2.1 Eligible Applicants**

Applicants must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization that promotes the exports of one or more U.S. agricultural commodities and does not have a business interest in or receive remuneration from specific sales of agricultural commodities.

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. More information about SAM.gov registration can be found in Section 9, Other Information.

### **2.2 Substantial Compliance**

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described above. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

To be deemed eligible, applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section 4, Application Contents and Format, of this solicitation.

### **2.3 Evidence of Eligibility**

Applicants are responsible for including documentation, if necessary, establishing that they meet the stated eligibility requirements, when it is not immediately obvious. Applicants should not presume that USDA/FAS is sufficiently familiar with their organization, and USDA/FAS will not make assumptions as to the nature of an applicant's organization.

### **2.4 Funding Restrictions**

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by applicable regulations, including [7 CFR 1484](#), 2 CFR Part 200, and 2 CFR Part 400. Awards issued pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Capital expenses, such as the purchase of equipment, not entirely attributable to this award, must be pro-rated.

For example, agreement funds and other support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from acting as an agent of the

applicant in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Also, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

Indirect costs are not allowed under this program.

## **2.5 Multiple Applications**

An individual applicant may not submit more than one application in response to this NOFO and may not be offered more than one award.

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

Cost share is required for this program and must be at least 50 percent of the value of resources provided by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) for activities conducted under the project agreement. Cost share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions.

## **3. Program Description**

Under the Cooperator Program, USDA/FAS enters into agreements with Cooperators to share the costs of maintaining and developing foreign markets for United States agricultural commodities and products. Financial assistance under the Cooperator Program is made available on a competitive basis, and USDA/FAS endeavors to enter into agreements with eligible Cooperators to cover as broad an array of agricultural commodities as possible. All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

### **3.1 Authorizing Statutes and Regulations**

Agricultural Export Trade Expansion Act of 1978, as amended, 7 USC § 5623.

Cooperator Program regulations are available at [7 CFR 1484](#).

### **3.2 Type of Assistance Instrument**

USDA/FAS anticipates that Grant Agreements 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 progress under the project.

### **3.3 Program Specific Unallowable Costs**

Unallowable costs under the Cooperator Program are detailed in [7 CFR 1484.53](#).

## **4. Application Contents and Format**

### **4.1 Complete Application Package**

A complete application package must include:

- A marketing plan that provides the information outlined in this notice.
- Proof of 501(c) status documentation to support nonprofit eligibility, if applicable and not already on file with USDA/FAS.

The marketing plan required by this announcement must include the following information:

A. Participant Profile:

- 1) The name, address, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov for the applicant organization;
- 2) The name, telephone number, and email address of the applicant's primary contact person;
- 3) The name(s) of the person(s) responsible for managing the proposed program;
- 4) The type of organization (e.g., nonprofit trade association, agricultural cooperative, etc.);
- 5) The applicant's Federal tax identification number;
- 6) A description of the applicant organization, including its membership and membership criteria;
- 7) An executive summary of the applicant's overall market development strategy and how their proposed Cooperator Program activities fit into that overall strategy;
- 8) An explanation for why Federal funding assistance is needed and why the applicant is unlikely to carry out the proposed program without assistance;
- 9) A description of the applicant organization's mission;
- 10) A discussion of the applicant's efforts at developing collaborative cross-commodity partnerships;
- 11) A description of the applicant's prior export promotion experience, including the applicant's management and administrative capability and an explanation of the organization's strategic planning process and how it identifies priority target markets;
- 12) A discussion of any organizations affiliated with the applicant, including parent organizations, subsidiaries, and partnerships;

B. Industry Goal:

- 1) U.S. export goals and World Trade amounts for the commodities being promoted. Applicants should provide 5 years of historical data and 6 years of future target goals;

C. Promoted Commodity:

- 1) A name for each promoted U.S. agricultural commodity, the applicable commodity aggregate code (from the UES), and the percentage of U.S. origin content by weight, exclusive of added water;
- 2) A description of the domestic situation, outlook, and strengths and weaknesses for the promoted U.S. agricultural commodity;
- 3) A description of the world market situation, outlook, and competitive threats from other exporters for the exported U.S. agricultural commodity;
- 4) U.S. and world production and trade data for the promoted commodity;

D. Targeted Market:

- 1) For each targeted market, provide a market assessment and strategy that discusses the market situation, constraint(s)/opportunity(ies), and the strategy proposed to overcome constraints or take advantage of the opportunities;
- 2) A discussion of the past performance and results achieved from previous activities in the market, and the projected impact on U.S. exports of the proposed current program;

- 3) For each targeted market, provide 5 years of the volume, value, and U.S. market share of historical exports of the promoted U.S. agricultural commodity(s) to the targeted market;
  - 4) For each targeted market, provide 3 years of projected U.S. export data and U.S. market share for the promoted U.S. agricultural commodity(s) to the targeted market;
- E. Constraint:
- 1) A description of the constraint impeding U.S. exports or the opportunities present in the market and the proposed strategy;
  - 2) A description of the performance metrics/indicators against which future success in addressing the constraint will be measured. Every constraint must include at least one outcome performance measure;
- F. Activity:
- 1) A description of each proposed activity and the requested budget;
  - 2) A description of the expected results and the overall long term strategic goals to be advanced by the proposed activity for the ensuing 3–5 years;
  - 3) A description of any demonstration projects, if applicable;
- G. Admin Activity:
- 1) A justification for any new overseas offices, including a list of job titles, corresponding position descriptions, salary ranges, and any request for approval of salaries above the Foreign Service National (FSN) salary plan. To request approval of a salary above the FSN salary plan, the Cooperator shall include a detailed description of both the duties and responsibilities of the position, and of the qualifications and background of the individual concerned. The Cooperator shall also justify, based on a verifiable local salary survey or other documented local salary information, why the highest FSN salary level is inappropriate;
- H. Worldwide Personnel:
- 1) If applicable, provide an accounting of the number of U.S. citizens employed overseas by the applicant, the number of those U.S. citizens whose salaries will be paid in whole or in part with FMD funds, and the total dollar amount of overseas U.S. citizen salaries and allowances that will be paid with FMD funds;
- I. Contingent Liability:
- 1) If applicable, provide an accounting of all contingent obligations that would be due if overseas offices supported by program funds were to close on the last day of the marketing year;
- J. Promised Contribution:
- 1) Value, in U.S. dollars, of proposed contributions from the applicant or the applicant's proposed contribution stated as a percentage of the total dollar amount of CCC resources requested;
  - 2) Value, in U.S. dollars, of proposed contributions from other sources;

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

If your organization has not previously participated in a USDA/FAS market development program, you may submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that your

organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably USDA or USDA/FAS agreements) and describe:

- (i) whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and
- (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 the 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.

In evaluating applicants under these factors in Section 6, USDA/FAS will consider the information provided by the applicant 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 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.

#### **4.3 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.

#### **4.4 Proprietary Information**

Applicants should generally refrain from including the details of proprietary information in applications. In cases where, in the applicant's judgement, the inclusion of proprietary information is essential to application review and scoring, the applicant should clearly indicate information it wishes to designate as proprietary.

#### **4.5 Other Application Information**

Successful applicants must submit the following information after USDA/FAS notification of our intent to make a Federal award, but prior to a Federal award, if the applicant request for funding or the intended award amount is over \$100,000:

- [Grants.gov Lobbying Form](#)
- [Standard Form SF–LLL](#), Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable to the applicant

### **5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines**

#### **5.1 Address to Request Application Package**

This Notice of Funding Opportunity contains all information required to submit a complete application package.

## **5.2 Unique Entity ID and System for Award Management (SAM)**

Each applicant must:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- (ii) Provide a valid unique entity ID in its application; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal agency.

## **5.3 Submission Instructions**

Cooperator Program applications must be submitted to USDA/FAS through the web-based Unified Export Strategy (UES) system. The UES system is accessible at <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/>. Applications submitted outside of the UES will not be considered. Applicants needing help or access to the UES should email the UES team at [uesadmin@usda.gov](mailto:uesadmin@usda.gov) for assistance.

USDA-managed computer systems require applicants to have an identity-proofed account through the [login.gov](https://login.gov) platform, and in some cases may require at least two persons. Identity-proofing and subsequent registration with any USDA-managed computer system may take several days, and applicants who do not already have system access should begin the registration process immediately, even if they are unsure they will apply to this funding opportunity.

Applicants who require assistance with any USDA-managed computer system must reach out to the agency contact listed in Section 1, Agency Contact Information, prior to the application submission deadline date in Section 5.4, Submission Dates and Times. USDA/FAS strongly encourages applicants to reach out at least 5 business days in advance of the application submission deadline. USDA/FAS will make a reasonable effort to resolve the issue, and in rare cases may offer alternative avenues for application submission.

## **5.4 Submission Dates and Times**

Application Submission Deadline: June 6, 2025, at 5:00 pm EDT.

## **5.5 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).

## **6. Application Review Information**



## **6.1 Eligibility Threshold Review**

USDA/FAS will conduct an eligibility threshold review of all applications submitted to determine that:

- the applicant is eligible, as defined in Section 2, Eligibility; and
- the application was submitted by the application submission deadline date and time as specified in Section 5, Submission Requirements; and
- the applicant submitted a complete application, including all required forms and documents as defined in Section 5, Submission Requirements.

An application that does not include all documentation required by this notice of funding opportunity at the time of application will be deemed ineligible.

If an applicant is determined to be ineligible, USDA/FAS will notify the applicant prior to commencing with evaluation of applications, usually within 5 business days of the Application Submission Deadline. An applicant that feels such a determination was made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim, by email to the program officer(s) listed in Section 1, Agency Contact Information, within 3 business days of notification.

## **6.2 Review Criteria**

USDA/FAS will review all applications for eligibility and completeness. USDA/FAS will, subject to the availability of funds, approve those applications that it considers to best meet the objectives outlined in this announcement.

When determining funding recommendations, USDA/FAS will give priority to organizations that have the broadest producer representation and affiliated industry participation of the commodity being promoted. If USDA/FAS receives applications from multiple organizations representing the same commodity, USDA/FAS may require the organizations to work collaboratively under a joint coalition award, or may elect to only fund the organization with the broadest producer representation and affiliated industry participation of the commodity being promoted. USDA/FAS may require that new applicants approved for funding participate in the Cooperator Program through another Cooperator until such time as USDA/FAS determines that they can effectively administer and implement their own program.

USDA/FAS conducts the following process in reviewing applications and allocating available Cooperator Program funds:

*Eligibility Threshold Review (Phase 1):* In Phase 1, USDA/FAS conducts the Eligibility Threshold Review outlined in Section 6.1 of this notice. Applications determined to be ineligible will receive no further consideration and will not be considered for funding. Applications that are deemed eligible and complete will be passed on to USDA/FAS' Cooperator Programs Division (CoPD) for the Phase 2 review.

*Divisional Review (Phase 2):* Each eligible application will be assigned a Primary Reviewer and an Auxiliary Reviewer. These two roles will be filled by two different CoPD marketing specialists. The Auxiliary Reviewer will only score one criterion, the "Activity Alignment with Program Goals," and will provide this supplemental input to the Primary Reviewer, who will

review, score, and provide a funding endorsement for the rest of the application, using the following criteria:

**Program Strategic Planning (total of 30 possible points)**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total Possible Points</b>
<b>Overall Quality and Clarity, and Program Description and Objectives</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the overall quality and clarity of their marketing plan and the extent to which they present a clear and convincing vision of the project reflective of the identified needs and targeted geographic area. Applicants will also be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed program identifies specific target markets, target audiences, and market share goals, and whether the program prioritizes markets with clear, differentiated, and appropriate marketing strategies.	5
<b>Collaborations and Partnerships</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which the long-term strategy includes input from a broad representation of industry and affiliated industries that meet regularly to update the strategic priorities, and any demonstrated partnerships or collaborations that enhance the program's potential success.	5
<b>Innovation and Originality</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they showcase uniqueness or innovation in the proposed approach.	5
<b>Significance and Impact</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate the importance of the program within the relevant market(s) or region(s), and the potential positive impact of the program on the target market(s) or region(s).	5
<b>Activity Alignment with Program Goals</b> <i>(Auxiliary Reviewer)</i>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the following: the extent to which the proposed plan aligns with the program goals stated in this NOFO, the plan's anticipated return on investment, the growth potential of target markets, the extent to which a reasonable implementation plan and well-developed plans to measure impact are presented, the expected trade impact of the plan, whether or not the plan includes quantifiable measures, the level of FAS post and program area support for the plan, whether the activities proposed are allowable within the guidelines of this NOFO announcement and program regulations, and whether the proposed activities are contrary to the obligations of the United States by treaty or international obligation.	10

**Program Management and Implementation (total of 20 possible points):**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total Possible Points</b>
<b>Qualifications and Expertise</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate that they possess: (1) the qualifications, experience, and expertise relevant to the program, (2) adequate resources and capabilities to carry out the program, (3) adequate and appropriate staffing/organizational capacity to implement the program, and (4) collaboration and communication within their industry.	5
<b>Methodology and Approach</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate a well-defined program methodology, an appropriate approach to achieve the stated objectives, and a clear timeline for program activities.	5
<b>Quality of Constraints/Opportunities and Performance Measures</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the percentage of constraint/opportunities that are appropriate, specific, actionable, and contain at least one outcome performance measure.	5
<b>Budget and Budget Justification</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which their proposed budget is reasonable for the proposed activities, and the extent to which they have provided a clear explanation of why Federal funding assistance is needed and why the applicant is unlikely to carry out the programs without assistance.	5

**Program Evaluation and Results Reporting (total of 50 possible points)**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total Possible Points</b>
<b>Reported Results Demonstrate Progress in Markets</b>	Applicants will be evaluated by assessing past reported results against a participant's performance measures and determining whether they demonstrate progress towards meeting established goals.	10
<b>Program Evaluation Requirements</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they have previously submitted evaluation plans that are appropriate and reasonable and address program evaluation requirements.	10
<b>Quality of Success Stories</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on quality of success stories submitted, and whether they demonstrate linkages between their strategies and target audience behavior change. Success stories should represent the scope of programming (products, markets, and strategies), and provide a linkage between the results reported and the trade situation in the market. More effective success stories can reflect the impact of multiple activities in	10

	the market in that year, and/or cumulative program accomplishments over time.	
<b>Past Performance and Feedback Used to Adjust Programming</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate that they have previously used the results from past performance, evaluation feedback, and Agency feedback to adjust their programming. Applicants should provide a clear plan for the implementation of recommendations and past examples where programming and/or strategic direction changed as a result of program results and evaluation.	10
<b>Demonstrates Linkages Between Programming Results and U.S. Exports</b>	Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate clear links between their programming and increased exports, maintaining exports, or minimizing losses over time.	10

After the Phase 2 Primary and Auxiliary reviewers score the application, the Primary Reviewer will provide a funding endorsement for the application. The Primary Reviewer's funding endorsement will be based on factors such as the application's score, the reviewer's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the application, the extent of the applicant's producer representation and affiliated industry participation for the commodity being promoted, the applicant's market development program history and experience, and feedback received from USDA/FAS program areas and Posts.

For returning applicants, the Primary Reviewer will note how much funding the applicant received in the prior year and then make a funding endorsement to either "Increase," "Maintain," or "Decrease" that level of funding. For new applicants, the Primary Reviewer will provide a simple funding endorsement of either "Fund" or "Do Not Fund" the application at up to the applicant's requested funding level.

*CoPD Funding Recommendation (Phase 3):* The CoPD management team will review the Phase 2 results and develop the funding recommendations for each applicant. When developing funding recommendations, CoPD management will consider factors such as the application's score, past expenditure rates, ability to meet program requirements, results of recent compliance findings, and the applicant's market development program history and experience, if applicable. The development of the funding recommendations is an iterative process, and CoPD management may make adjustments to a particular application's funding recommendation at any step in the process after consideration of the factors outlined above. The following steps are used in the development of the funding recommendations:

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**Step 1** – CoPD management will rank the applications from highest to lowest (based on the application scores) and will make note of the reviewers' Phase 2 funding endorsements.

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**Step 2** – CoPD management will compare the overall availability of funds with the previous program year’s level to determine the overall change in year/year funding. This percentage change (whether positive, negative, or neutral) will establish the “Maintain” recommendation for the new program year and will be applied to the previous year’s funding levels for all returning Cooperators’ applications. Like all recommendations in Phase 3, these maintain levels will be established as specific dollar amounts and will form the initial recommendations for all applicants that received a “Maintain” funding endorsement in Phase 2. CoPD management will then review the “Maintain” recommendations for any necessary adjustments.

**Step 3** – CoPD management will discuss and assign a recommended percentage change from the prior year’s funding level for each application receiving a “Decrease” endorsement, starting from lowest to highest score. The decrease percentage will be applied on top of the starting point of the “Maintain” level determined in Step 1.

**Step 4** – In this step, CoPD management will consider the new applicants. For new applicants that receive a funding endorsement of “Fund,” CoPD management will review the applicant’s funding request and determine an appropriate funding level for the new entrant to begin in the program. CoPD management will then review each “Do Not Fund” endorsement and will consider whether the unsuccessful applicant should be rejected outright or should participate in the program through another Cooperator until such time as USDA/FAS determines that the applicant can effectively administer and implement their own program.

**Step 5** – Taking into consideration all funding made available in the previous steps, CoPD management will determine an appropriate percentage increase for each applicant with an “Increase” endorsement. Starting with the highest scored application, CoPD management will apply funding increases until all available funds are utilized. The increase is added to the starting point of the “Maintain” level determined in Step 1.

*Formula (Phase 4):* CoPD’s recommended funding levels for each applicant from Phase 3 are adjusted by the following criteria, with the number in parentheses representing the percentage weight of each factor, to determine adjusted funding recommendations for each applicant.

New entrants to the program do not participate in the formula until they have built up enough historical data (i.e., six years’ worth) to meet all of the formula criteria. Once they have participated in the program for six years, they will join the formula. In addition, certain Cooperators that represent commodities that overlap directly with other Cooperators and whose export numbers cannot, therefore, be easily parsed for the separate groups also do not participate in the formula. Any Cooperator that does not participate in the formula will be recommended at the unchanged funding level recommended by CoPD in Phase 3.

The Phase 4 formula consists of the following criteria:

Criterion	Description
<b>Applicant’s Contribution Level (40%)</b>	The applicant’s 6–year average share (2021–2026) of all contributions under the Cooperator program compared to the applicant’s 6–year average share (2021–2026) of the funding level for all Cooperator Program participants.

<b>Past U.S. Export Performance (20%)</b>	The 6-year average share (2020–2025) of the value of U.S. exports promoted by the applicant compared to the applicant's 6-year average share (2020–2025) of the funding level for all Cooperator participants plus, for those groups participating in the MAP program, the 6-year average share (2020–2025) of all MAP budgets.
<b>Past Demand Expansion Performance (20%)</b>	The 6-year average share (2020–2025) of the total value of world trade of the commodities promoted by the applicant compared to the applicant's 6-year average share (2020–2025) of all Cooperator program expenditures plus, for those groups participating in the MAP program, a 6-year average share (2020–2025) of all MAP expenditures.
<b>Future Demand Expansion Goals (10%)</b>	The total dollar value of projected world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2031 compared to the applicant's requested funding level.
<b>Accuracy of Past Demand Expansion Projections (10%)</b>	The actual dollar value share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2024 as reported in the 2026 Cooperator program application compared to the projection of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for 2024 as specified in the applicant's 2021 Cooperator program application.

*Final Review and Allocation Decision Making (Phase 5):* 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 Cooperator Program funding recommendations. Once finalized, the recommendations will be presented to the USDA/FAS Administrator for final deliberation, determination, and approval. USDA/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.

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

Under this criterion, 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 4 of the solicitation,
- (ii) history of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 4 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.

#### **6.4 Review and Selection Process**

The agency will convene a review panel to review the eligible applications against the evaluation criteria described above. USDA/FAS documents that reviewers, whatever their affiliation, are free from a conflict of interest that would affect their assessment of an applicant, whether positively or negatively.

The reviewers will ensure that the applicant can deliver the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative and assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified above. The review panel will make a recommendation list 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 or congressional directive. Selection determinations are final and cannot be appealed.

Prior to selection, the agency may contact the highest-ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a subaward, USDA/FAS may request to speak with all parties included in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination has taken place prior to making an award.

#### **6.5 Risk Review**

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 2 CFR 200.206, [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 award; (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 must review and consider any



information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov (41 USC 2313).

- An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.
- Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

## **7. Award Notices**

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application/award by email. Notification to successful applicants is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional until an award document has been signed by authorized officials of USDA/FAS and the recipient.

Award documents will be transmitted by email to the individuals or offices who submitted them, or to those persons or offices that USDA/FAS believes, to the best of its information, are proper. The applicant is recommended to ensure that the agency is provided with the correct point(s) of contact.

## **8. Post–Award Requirements and Administration**

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

All successful applicants are required to comply with the applicable General Terms and Conditions, which can be found at [https://fas.usda.gov/grants/general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions](https://fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions). 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 1, Agency Contact Information.

Before accepting an award, the applicant should carefully read all award documents 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.

### **8.2 Reporting**

#### **Financial Reporting**

Cooperators are required to submit all expense claims and a report detailing actual contributions no later than six months after the end of the program year. All expense claims and contribution reports must be submitted via the UES system.

#### **Performance Reporting**

Cooperators must submit an annual performance report that includes, for each performance indicator, a comparison of actual results against the baseline and the targets established for the period. When actual results deviate significantly from targeted goals, the Cooperator must provide an explanation in the report as to why the goal was not achieved. This report should be



submitted via the UES. Cooperators also must provide program success stories when appropriate or as required by USDA/FAS.

For awards in which the total lifetime value exceeds \$500,000, additional reporting may be required as described in [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).

#### 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](#), should they be selected for funding.

#### Closeout

Within six months after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, USDA/FAS will confirm that the Cooperator has supplied all the required reports and will review the reports for completeness and content. Once the required reports are approved, USDA/FAS will prepare a closeout letter that advises the Cooperator that the agreement's period of performance has ended, specify that any remaining funds will be de-obligated, provide any additional necessary guidance, and indicate that the award has been closed out. The Cooperator is responsible for returning any unused funds to CCC. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted.

### **8.3 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 required. During site visits, USDA/FAS will review recipients' files related to the program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, recipients must permit USDA/FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review assistance agreement-related records and to interview the organization's staff and other knowledgeable persons regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to agency requests for information relating to the program.

### **8.4 Conflict of Interest**

The Applicant's Conflict of Interest (COI) Point of Contact as defined in USDA/FAS Conflict of Interest Policy must notify the USDA/FAS contact identified in Section 1, Agency Contact Information, 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 a USDA/FAS employee reviewed and commented on or drafted all or part of an applicant's application. 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.

### **8.5 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.

## **9. Other Information**

### **9.1 Extensions**

Extensions to this program are not permitted.

### **9.2 No Awards**

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make no awards under this competition.

### **9.3 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](#)<sup>1</sup> to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes several steps and validations and is not complete until the registration is shown as Active. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) 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.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

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

### **9.4 Faith-Based Organizations**

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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>.

(i) Faith-based organizations may apply for an award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at, and subject to the protections and requirements of, 7 CFR part 16 and any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements, including 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq. USDA/FAS will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, motives, or affiliation, or lack thereof, or on the basis of conduct that would not be considered grounds to favor or disfavor a similarly situated secular organization.

(ii) A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the Government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom and conscience protections in Federal law. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

(iii) A faith-based organization may not use direct Federal financial assistance from USDA/FAS to support or engage in any explicitly religious activities except when consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment and any other applicable requirements. An organization receiving Federal financial assistance also may not, in providing services funded by USDA/FAS, or in their outreach activities related to such services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice.