

- A description of the organization's prior export promotion experience; and
- A description of the organization's experience in implementing an appropriate trade/technical assistance component;

(b) *Market information, including:*

- An assessment of the market;
- A long-term strategy in the market; and
- U.S. export value/volume and market share (historic and goals) for 1999–2004;

(c) *Project information, including:*

- A brief project title;
- Amount of funding requested;
- A brief description of the specific market development trade constraint or opportunity to be addressed by the project, performance measures for the years 2003–2005 which will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project, a benchmark performance measure for 2002, the viability of long term sales to this market, the goals of the project, and the expected benefits to the represented industry;
- 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 their end-use benefit, and details of the trade/technical servicing component (including who will provide and who will fund this component);
- A sample description (*i.e.*, commodity, quantity, quality, type, and grade), including a justification for selecting a sample with such characteristics (this justification should explain in detail why the project could not be effective with a smaller sample);
- An itemized list of all estimated costs associated with the project for which reimbursement will be sought; and
- The importer's role in the project regarding handling and processing the commodity sample;

(d) Information indicating all funding sources and amounts to be contributed by each entity that will supplement implementation of the proposed project. This may include the organization that submitted the proposal, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, CCC, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Contributed resources may include cash or goods and services.

Review Process

Proposals will be evaluated by the applicable FAS commodity division. The divisions will review each proposal against the factors described below. The purpose of this review is to identify

meritorious proposals, recommend an appropriate funding level for each proposal based upon these factors, and submit the proposals and funding recommendations to the Deputy Administrator, Commodity and Marketing Programs.

FAS will use the following criteria in evaluating proposals:

- The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the proposal;
- The extent to which the proposal is targeted to a market in which the United States is generally competitive;
- The potential for expanding commercial sales in the proposed market;
- The nature of the specific market constraint or opportunity involved and how well it is addressed by the proposal;
- The extent to which the importer's contribution in terms of handling and processing enhances the potential outcome of the project;
- The amount of reimbursement requested and the organization's willingness to contribute resources, including cash and goods and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties; and
- How well the proposed technical assistance component assures that performance trials will effectively demonstrate the intended end-use benefit.

Highest priority for funding under this announcement will be given to meritorious proposals which target countries which meet either of the following criteria:

- Per capita income less than \$9,265 (the ceiling on upper middle income economies as determined by the World Bank [World Development Indicators 2001]); and population greater than 1 million. Proposals may address suitable regional groupings, for example, the islands of the Caribbean Basin; or
- U.S. market share of imports of the commodity identified in the proposal of 10 percent or less.

Agreements

Following approval of a proposal, CCC will enter into an agreement with the organization that submitted the proposal. Agreements will incorporate the details of each project as approved by FAS. Each agreement will identify terms and conditions pursuant to which CCC will reimburse certain costs of each project. Agreements will also outline the responsibilities of the participant, including, but not limited to, procurement (or arranging for

procurement) of the commodity sample at a fair market price, arranging for transportation of the commodity sample within the time limit specified in the agreement (organizations should endeavor to ship commodities within 6 months of effective date of agreement), compliance with cargo preference requirements (shipment on United States flag vessels, as required), compliance with the Fly America Act requirements (shipment on United States air carriers, as required), timely and effective implementation of technical assistance, and submission of a written evaluation report within 90 days of expiration of the agreement. Evaluation reports should address all performance measures which were presented in the proposal.

Closing Date for Proposals

All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 10, 2003. All paper copy proposals must be submitted in duplicate and received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 10, 2003, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, UPS, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932–S, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

U.S. Postal Delivery: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

Signed at Washington, DC, on January 8, 2003.

Kenneth J. Roberts,

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

[FR Doc. 03–1118 Filed 1–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign Agricultural Service

Announcement of the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Foreign Agricultural Service is inviting proposals for the fiscal year 2004 Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program.

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time on March 10, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932-S, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250, (202) 720-4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Introduction**

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces that applications are being accepted for participation in the fiscal year 2004 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program. The program is designed to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the Cooperator Program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein.

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

Authority

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

Eligible Applicants

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

Application Process

To be considered for the Cooperator Program, an applicant must submit to the FAS information required by the Cooperator Program regulations set forth in 7 CFR part 1484. Incomplete applications and applications which do not otherwise conform to this announcement will not be accepted for review.

The FAS administers various other agricultural export assistance programs, including the Market Access Program (MAP), Cochran Fellowships, the Emerging Markets Program, the Quality Samples Program, section 108 Foreign Currency Program, Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, and several

Export Credit Guarantee programs. Organizations which are interested in applying for Cooperator Program funds are encouraged to submit their requests using the Unified Export Strategy (UES) format. The UES allows interested entities to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all the FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade which they face, identify activities which would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants are not required, however, to use the UES format.

Organizations can submit applications in the UES format by two methods. The first allows an applicant to submit information directly to the FAS through the UES application Internet site. The FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet, as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. Applicants also have the option of submitting electronic versions (along with two paper copies) of their applications to the FAS on diskette.

Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the Marketing Operations Staff on (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including step-by-step instructions for its use, is located at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>.

Applicants who choose to submit applications on diskette can obtain an application format by contacting the Marketing Operations Staff on (202) 720-4327.

All Cooperator Program applicants, whether applying via the Internet or diskette, also must submit by March 10, 2003, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR section 1484.20(a)(14).

Any organization which is not interested in applying for the Cooperator Program, but would like to request assistance through one of the other programs mentioned, should contact the Marketing Operations Staff on (202) 720-4327.

Review Process and Allocation Criteria

The FAS allocates funds in a manner which effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and the USDA's Food and Agricultural Policy (FAP). In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, the FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. The FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA and FAP.

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

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

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

(2) Phase 2—Competitive Review

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

(a) Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1999–2004) of all contributions (contributions may include cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of foreign market development activities) compared to
- The applicant's 6-year average share (1999–2004) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures.

(b) Past Export Performance (20)

The 6-year average share (1998–2003) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1998–2003) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures plus a 6-year average share (1997–2002) of MAP expenditures and a 6-year average share (1997–2002) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(c) Past Demand Expansion Performance (20)

- The 6-year average share (1998–2003) of the total value of world trade of the commodities promoted by the applicant compared to

- The applicant's 6-year average share (1998–2003) of all Cooperator marketing plan expenditures plus a 6-year average share (1997–2002) of MAP expenditures and a 6-year average share (1997–2002) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural trade office.

(d) Future Demand Expansion Goals (10)

- The projected total dollar value of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2009 compared to

- The applicant's requested funding level.

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

- The actual dollar value share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2002 compared to

- The applicant's past projected share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2002, as specified in the 1999 Cooperator Program application.

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

Closing Date for Applications

All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 10, 2003. Signed certification statements also must be received by that time at one of the addresses listed below.

All applications on diskette (with two accompanying paper copies and a signed certification statement) and any other applications must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 10, 2003, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc.): U.S. Department of

Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932–S, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

U.S. Postal Delivery: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042.

Signed in Washington, DC on January 8, 2003.

Kenneth J. Roberts,

Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.

[FR Doc. 03–1117 Filed 1–16–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–10–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Foreign Agricultural Service****Section 108 Foreign Currency Program**

AGENCY: Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Foreign Agricultural Service invites proposals from interested parties to use Tunisian dinars acquired by the United States for activities to expand markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and for technical assistance activities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932–S, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250–1042, (202) 720–4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Introduction**

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) will make available Tunisian dinars to provide assistance in market development and agricultural technical assistance activities. These foreign currencies were acquired by USDA pursuant to agreements made under Title I of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, (Pub. L. 480).

Title I, Pub. L. 480 authorizes the U.S. government to finance the sale and exportation of agricultural commodities to foreign governments on concessional terms. Between 1986 and 1991, the U.S. entered into various Title I, Pub. L. 480 agreements with foreign governments, on terms which allowed repayment to the United States in local currencies. Pub. L. 480 authorizes the U.S. government to use these foreign currencies to implement market

development and agricultural technical assistance activities.

This announcement supersedes all previous announcements regarding this program. On January 8, 2002, FAS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 862–864) inviting proposals to use currencies of the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, and Tunisia for market development projects and technical assistance activities. The currencies of the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka, which were available under the previous announcements, are no longer available.

FAS must disburse local currencies to program participants, usually through the disbursing officer in the U.S. embassy in the country of origin. That is, FAS may not convert the local currency to any other currency prior to disbursement. It is the responsibility of the recipient to arrange for receiving and using the foreign currencies made available, or converting the funds to other currencies. Applicants should note that Tunisian currency may not be readily convertible.

Proposal Process

This notice is complemented by concurrent notices announcing five other foreign market development programs administered by FAS, including the Market Access Program (MAP), the Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program, the Emerging Markets Program, the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, and the Quality Samples Program. The MAP and Cooperator Program notices detail a Unified Export Strategy (UES) application process which provides a means for interested applicants to submit a consolidated and strategically coordinated single proposal that incorporates funding requests for any or all of these programs. Some applicants to the section 108 foreign currency program, particularly those who are applying for funding under more than one program, may wish to use the UES application process. The Internet-based UES application, including step-by-step instructions for its use, is located at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>. Other applicants, particularly those who are applying for funding only under the section 108 foreign currency program, should follow the application procedures contained in this notice. Interested applicants that are unsure of how to apply are urged to contact the Marketing Operations Staff at the address or phone number above.

FAS recommends that proposals to participate in the section 108 foreign