

## General Questions on the Solicitation

**(1) Are countries that are not listed on the priority list for 2015, awarded grants?**

In the Food for Progress Program, when a proposal makes a solid case for *continuing* a project in a country which is not listed as a priority in the 2015 solicitation announcement, it will be given equal weight alongside priority countries. Such a proposal must cite successes hitherto and qualify the need for additional funding to consolidate gains or achieve lasting sustainability impacts. In the McGovern-Dole Program, priority countries are explicitly listed for continuation and extension of existing programs, so it is unlikely that a country which is not listed as a priority country in 2015 will be awarded a grant.

**(2) Could you specify the level of detail required in the ‘Key Personnel’ section of proposals?**

All key personnel must be identified including Country Director, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Party, managers, technical experts, and subsidiary staff. We understand that staff turnover or staffing requirements can make this a moving target. If the personnel are not explicitly identified, they will need to be made known to us during the negotiation phase, within 30 days of signing the agreement.

## Commodities

**(3) Is third country monetization allowed?**

USDA FAS has determined priority countries for the 2015 solicitation at least partially on the basis of in-country commodity monetization feasibility and need. The commodity monetization process is one mechanism through which USDA FAS aims to increase the availability of food in the beneficiary country. Third country monetization both deviates from this purpose and adds potential logistical complications, neither of which the program is seeking to accomplish. USDA FAS therefore expects partners to propose in-country commodity monetization, with a sound market analysis demonstrating that the beneficiary country’s agricultural production base will have no negative impacts caused by the injection of U.S. commodities.

**(4) Are there commodity preferences that partners should be aware of?**

There are no explicit commodity preferences that USDA FAS expects partners to be aware of. USDA FAS emphasizes the need for partners to propose in-country commodity monetization, with a sound market analysis demonstrating that the beneficiary country’s agricultural production base will have no negative impacts caused by the injection of the selected U.S. commodity or commodities.

**(5) Will partners seeking to implement the McGovern-Dole Program in Rwanda be able to use Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) Authority in the 2014 Farm Bill?**

The LRP authorities are not available to be used in the 2015 McGovern-Dole Program solicitation. LRP resources per the terms of the 2014 Farm Bill are still in the process of being negotiated. The intention of the commodity specifications in the 2015 solicitation for Rwanda is for partners to seek commodities

which complement rather than supplant the commodities being made available for school-feeding from within Rwanda itself. Partners must look for synergies with the school-feeding programs of the Government of Rwanda or other in-country partners when proposing U.S. commodities for their programs.

**(6) In the case of Rwanda where synergies with locally-procured school-feeding commodities are sought, can USDA funding be used to transport local commodities or food products?**

The authorities in the legislation preclude the use of funding to transport local commodities. The McGovern-Dole Program funds are intended to be used to move U.S. commodities. USDA FAS understands that this can be a challenging situation particular to Rwanda. Use of take-home rations may be one way to work under these constraints.

**(7) In Rwanda, can RUSF (Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food) be used to complement locally-procured commodities?**

The Government of Rwanda (GOR) made it known to us through our agricultural attaché that it specifically seeks oil and animal protein commodities through this U.S. school-feeding intervention. There are some indications that commodity priorities and requests may have shifted. If we hear from our attaché that GOR will accept an expanded list of commodities—perhaps including RUSF—we will publish a revision to the solicitation and keep you informed.

## McGovern-Dole Program

**(8) While it is clear that the principal priority beneficiaries of the McGovern-Dole Program are primary school-aged children with an emphasis on girls, is the program able to accommodate children in (1) secondary schools and (2) pre-primary/early childhood schools?**

The focus of the McGovern-Dole Program remains on primary school-aged children rather than secondary school-aged children. The Program has in the past accommodated younger children at the kindergarten and pre-school level. We expect that interventions at the pre-school and kindergarten settings will continue to be supported by the Program if the justification provided is sound and consistent with the Program's Results Framework.

**(9) The McGovern-Dole Program focus on achieving literacy results is welcomed.**

USDA FAS continues to emphasize that the time spent by children at school should not only decrease their hunger and increase their nutrition, but substantively improve their learning and literacy. USDA FAS and USAID have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate seamlessly on educational policies and programs. USDA FAS also wishes to highlight in the solicitation the cooperation that is sought with the Government of Mozambique's rigorous educational achievement requirements.

## Food for Progress Program

- (10) The solicitation specifies a preference for high-value agricultural commodity value chains in the Dominican Republic. Is USDA expecting partners to pick one particular crop under ‘horticulture and vegetables’ or one particular meat sector?**

The intent of the solicitation’s language on value chains is to focus interventions on assisting Dominican producers to access international markets and comply with quality standards required by international retail chains in the high value sectors of horticulture and vegetables and meat. Rather than picking one crop or one type of meat product, partners are encouraged to focus on improving distribution systems, processing systems, inspection and packaging systems, business enabling environments, and sanitation processes to meet domestic and export market standards. Such interventions are key to supporting increased production, sales, and exports of one or multiple crops/meats.

- (11) On the basis of six to eight ‘expected awards’, is it safe to assume that at least one or two project(s) per country will be awarded under the 2015 Food for Progress solicitation process?**

The number of ‘expected awards’ is calculated on a historical basis and that listing does not accurately reflect the funding and programmatic scenario in 2015. USDA FAS will likely fund as few as five projects, based on several factors such as (1) our responsiveness to partners’ feedback requesting 5-year duration awards so that projects may be implemented more effectively and project sustainability goals are better achieved (2) project proposals being made by country governments, which, if approved, reduces the pool of funding available to other partners and (3) budgetary resource limitations given the increased cost of longer project timeframes. There is no pre-determined equal division among sectors and countries for the 2015 awards. It is quite possible that one country will end up with more than one funded project. In deciding which projects are funded, priority and weight is given to the caliber of the proposal.

- (12) What is the rationale for changing program time frames from three to five years?**

A large number of partners have told USDA FAS both informally and formally (e.g. at the public discussion forum held in May 2014) that a five year time frame is more suitable given FAS programs’ results-oriented management requirements for mid-term and final evaluations. A full five year duration better enables the project to achieve sustainability goals. USDA FAS has received positive feedback on this program development.

- (13) Could you clarify the expected level of funding for a Food for Progress award? (Two ranges, \$10–\$15 million and \$20–30 million are listed)**

Proposals intended to continue existing projects for a three-year duration should expect an award in the lower range (\$10–\$15 million) while proposals for new projects with a five-year duration should expect an award in the higher range (\$20–\$30 million).

**(14) Is there a limit on CCC funds for administration?**

CCC funds are capped at around \$15 million each fiscal year, which means that on a per-project basis, estimated administration costs should come in at roughly \$1–\$2 million dollars. There is no pre-set ceiling.

**(15) Will USDA FAS extend the proposal deadline an additional two weeks beyond December 30?**

Extending the deadline creates new challenges given the lead time required for proposal review and administrative process. USDA FAS faces a hard deadline of September 30, 2015 to allocate funds within the fiscal year. We will give an extension some thought. **UPDATED NOVEMBER 25, 2014:** *The new deadline for application materials to be submitted into FAIS is January 15, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. EDT.*

**(16) Are local compensation plans used in Food for Progress projects?**

Thus far they have not been used. Each post publishes its own local compensation plan and USDA will need to look further into how they may be used within USDA projects.