

South, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042.

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

Allocation of Funds

In general, all qualified proposals received before the application deadline will compete for EMP funding. The limited funds and the range of emerging markets worldwide in which the funds may be used preclude CCC from approving large budgets for individual projects. While there is no minimum or maximum amount set for EMP-funded projects, most are funded at a level of less than \$500,000 and for a duration of one year or less. Multi-year proposals may be considered in the context of a strategic detailed plan of implementation. Funding in such cases is normally provided one year at a time, with commitments beyond the first year subject to interim evaluations.

In general, priority consideration will be given to proposals that identify and seek to address specific problems or constraints in rural business systems or food and agribusiness systems in emerging markets through technical assistance activities to expand or maintain U.S. agricultural exports. Priority will also be given to those proposals that include the willingness of the applicant to commit its own funds, or those of the U.S. industry, to seek export opportunities in an emerging market. The percentage of private funding proposed for a project will, therefore, be a critical factor in determining which proposals are funded under the EMP. Proposals will also be judged on their ability to provide benefits to the organization receiving EMP funds and to the broader industry which that organization represents.

A performance report detailing the results of each project supported with EMP funds must be submitted to the Marketing Operations Staff at the address above. Because public funds are used to support EMP projects, these reports will be made available to the public. Complete final financial reports are to accompany performance reports.

Closing Date for Applications

The deadline for all applications to the EMP is 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 10, 2003. Announcements of funding decisions for the EMP are anticipated in early July 2003.

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

Kenneth J. Roberts,

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

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BILLING CODE 3410-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Announcement of the 2003/2004 Market Access Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation is inviting proposals for the 2003/2004 Market Access Program.

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, 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 20250-1042, (202) 720-4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that applications are being accepted for participation in the 2003/2004 Market Access Program (MAP). The MAP is designed to create, expand and maintain foreign markets for United States' agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the MAP will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. The MAP is administered by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Under the MAP, the CCC enters into agreements with eligible participants to share the costs of certain overseas marketing and promotion activities. MAP participants may receive assistance for either generic or brand promotion activities. The program generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

Authority

The MAP is authorized under section 203 of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. MAP regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1485.

Eligible Applicants

To participate in the MAP, an applicant must be: a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization, a nonprofit state regional trade group (*i.e.*, an association of State Departments of Agriculture), a U.S. agricultural cooperative, a State agency, or a small-sized U.S. commercial entity (other than a cooperative or producer association).

Application Process

To be considered for the MAP, an applicant must submit to the FAS information required by the MAP regulations set forth in 7 CFR part 1485. 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 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) Program, Cochran Fellowships, the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), the Quality Samples Program (QSP), the Section 108 Foreign Currency Program, the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program and several Export Credit Guarantee programs. Organizations which are interested in applying for MAP 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 Web 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

FAS Marketing Operations Staff at (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including step-by-step instructions for its use, may be found 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 at (202) 720-4327.

All MAP 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 1485.13(a)(2)(i)(G).

Any organization that is not interested in applying for the MAP 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 MAP 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 § 1485.12 and § 1485.13 of the MAP regulations. Applications which meet the requirements then will be further evaluated by the proper FAS Commodity Division. The Divisions will review each application against the criteria listed in § 1485.14 of the MAP 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) Applicant's Contribution Level (40)

- The applicant's 4-year average share (2000–2003) of all contributions (cash and goods and services provided by U.S. entities in support of overseas marketing and promotion activities) compared to
- The applicant's 4-year average share (2000–2003) of the funding level for all MAP participants.

(b) Past Performance (30)

- The 3-year average share (2000–2002) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to
- The applicant's 2-year average share (2001–2002) of the funding level for all MAP applicants plus, for those groups participating in the Cooperator program, the 2-year average share (2002–2003) of Cooperator marketing plan budgets, and the 2-year average share (2001–2002) of foreign overhead provided for co-location within a U.S. agricultural office;

(c) Projected Export Goals (15)

- The total dollar value of projected exports promoted by the applicant for 2003 compared to
- The applicant's requested funding level;

(d) Accuracy of Past Projections (15)

- Actual exports for 2001 as reported in the 2003 MAP application compared to
- Past projections of exports for 2001 as specified in the 2001 MAP application.

The Commodity Divisions' recommended funding levels for each applicant are converted to percentages of the total MAP funds available then multiplied by the total weight factor as described above 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, 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 in Washington, DC on January 8, 2003.

Kenneth J. Roberts,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Announcement of the Quality Samples Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Commodity Credit Corporation is inviting proposals for the Quality Samples Program.

DATES: All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, 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 20250–1042, (202) 720–4327.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that proposals may be submitted for participation in the Quality Samples Program (QSP). The QSP is designed to encourage the development and expansion of export markets for U.S. agricultural commodities by assisting U.S. entities in providing commodity samples to potential foreign importers to promote a better understanding and appreciation for the high quality of U.S. agricultural commodities. All proposals will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria