

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 contribute to 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, 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 \$9,360 (the ceiling on upper middle income economies as determined by the World

Bank [World Development Indicators 2000]); 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 shipment 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), 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 proposals must be submitted in triplicate and received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 12, 2001, at one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, 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: Marketing Operations Staff, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042.

Dated: January 31, 2001.

**Mattie R. Sharpless,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3410-10-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Foreign Agricultural Service

#### Section 108 Foreign Currency Program

**AGENCY:** Foreign Agricultural Service.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Foreign Agricultural Service invites proposals from interested parties to use certain foreign currencies acquired by the United States for activities to expand markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and for technical assistance activities. All proposal submitted under the UES must be received by 5 pm Eastern Standard Time, March 12, 2001.

**DATES:** All proposals submitted under the UES must be received by 5 pm Eastern Standard Time, March 12, 2001.

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

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Introduction

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) will use available currencies of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Tunisia, to provide assistance in the implementation of market development and agricultural technical assistance activities. This use of foreign currencies is commonly referred to as the "Section 108 foreign currency program." 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 July 8, 1998, FAS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 36872) inviting proposals to use Tunisian or Moroccan currencies for market development projects and technical assistance

activities. On October 1, 1998, FAS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 52677) inviting proposals to use currencies of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Jamaica, or Sri Lanka for market development projects and activities.

The currencies of Guatemala, Morocco, and Sri Lanka, which were available under the previous announcements, are no longer available. Consequently, FAS is now limiting new proposals to those which involve the use of currencies of Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, or Tunisia for market development projects or technical assistance activities.

FAS must disburse local currencies to program participants, 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. Activities funded with Section 108 currencies are not limited to the country where the currency originated. 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. At the time of this announcement, approximately 750,000,000 Costa Rica colones; 200,000,000 Dominican Republic pesos; 500,000,000 Jamaica dollars; and 12,000,000 Tunisia dinars are available.

### Proposal Process

This notice is complemented by concurrent notices announcing four 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, and the Quality Samples Program (QSP). 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 currency program contain, at a minimum, the following:

- (a) Organizational information, including:
  - Organization's name, address, Chief Executive Officer (or designee), and Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN);
  - Type of organization, *e.g.*, corporation, non-profit organization;
  - Name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the primary contact person;
  - If a trade organization, a description of the organization and its membership;
  - A description of the organization's prior export promotion experience; and
  - A description of the organization's experience in implementing a trade or technical assistance activity;
- (b) Market information, including:
  - An assessment of the targeted market;
  - A long-term strategy in the market; and
  - U.S. export value/volume and market share data and goals for 1998–2003;
- (c) Project information, including:
  - A brief project title;
  - Request for funding in one of the available foreign currencies;
  - A brief description of the specific market development trade constraint to be addressed by the project, performance measures for the years 2001–2003 which will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project, a benchmark performance measure for 2000, the viability of long term sales to this market, the goals of the project, and the expected benefits to the represented industry;
    - A method for evaluating and reporting results;
    - A description of the activities planned to address the constraint; and
    - An itemized list of all estimated costs associated with each project activity for which reimbursement will be sought;
  - (d) Information indicating all funding sources and amounts to be contributed by each entity that will contribute to implementation of the proposed project. This may include the organization that submitted the proposal, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, Commodity Credit Corporation, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Contributed resources may include cash, goods, and services;
  - (e) A completed Standard Form 424 (SF-424). This form is available on the

Internet via the Section 108 fact sheet at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/108/108fact.htm>, or by calling the contact listed above.

### Review Process and Allocation Criteria

FAS will provide financial assistance under this program on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. FAS will consider the following factors when evaluating proposals:

- The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade expertise to execute the proposal;
  - The funding request and the organization's willingness to contribute resources, including cash, goods and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties;
  - The conditions or constraints affecting the level of U.S. exports and market share for the agricultural commodities and products;
  - The degree to which the proposed project is likely to contribute to the creation, expansion, or maintenance of the targeted foreign market; and
  - The degree to which the organization's proposal is coordinated with other private or U.S. government-funded market development projects.
- Proposals will be evaluated by the applicable FAS commodity division. The divisions will recommend funding levels for each applicant based on a review of the applications against the factors described above. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals and to suggest an appropriate funding level for each application based upon these factors.

Meritorious proposals will then be reviewed by representatives of each FAS program area for the purpose of allocating available funds among the applicants. FAS will allocate funds according to the following criteria.

First priority consideration will be given to proposals which target the growth markets listed below. These developing markets account for a significant share of world imports of major farm commodities and much of the projected long-term growth in global import demand. As such, they are expected to be among the most supportive of USDA's primary export objective of increasing the U.S. share of world agricultural trade.

First priority growth markets for allocation of Section 108 funds: Brazil, countries in Central America and the Caribbean Basin, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia, and Turkey.

Second priority consideration will be given to proposals which target other markets where growth prospects for the relevant agricultural product are high. These proposals would serve to open new markets or bring about substantial growth in existing markets.

In all cases, preference is given to nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organizations that represent an entire industry or are nationwide in membership and scope.

*Note:* FAS generally reviews Section 108 proposals on a quarterly basis (in January, April, July, and October.) However, FAS may also consider proposals on an accelerated basis if an urgent marketing opportunity becomes available. FAS will evaluate such proposals according to the criteria specified in this notice. Details concerning the accelerated review can be obtained from the Section 108 fact sheet on the Internet at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/108/108fact.htm> or by calling the contact listed above.

#### Agreements

Following approval of a proposal, FAS will enter into an agreement with the organization that submitted the proposal. Agreements will incorporate the project details as approved by FAS and specify any other terms and conditions applicable to project funding. Agreements include the maximum amount of funds, in local currencies rather than U.S. dollars, which may be made available for a participant's approved activities. All agreements with non-profit organizations under this program are administered under 7 CFR 3019—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-profit Organizations.

#### Submission of Proposals

Proposals may be submitted on a continuous basis. However, all Internet-based Section 108 proposals (using the UES application) must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 12, 2001, because the UES entry website closes at that time. Signed certification statements must be delivered to one of the addresses listed below.

All proposals on diskette (with two accompanying paper copies and a signed certification statement) and any other proposals must be delivered to one of the following addresses:

Hand Delivery (including FedEx, DHL, etc.): U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural

Service, Marketing Operations Staff, Room 4932-S, 14th and Independence Ave., 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.

Dated: January 31, 2001.

**Mattie R. Sharpless,**

*Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service.*

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**BILLING CODE 3410-10-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Housing Service

#### Request for Proposals (RFP): Demonstration Program for Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Seafood Processor Worker Housing Grants

**AGENCY:** Rural Housing Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Housing Service (RHS) announces the availability of funds, the timeframe to submit proposals, and the guidelines for proposals for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processor worker housing grants in the States of Mississippi and Alaska. Public Law 106-387 (Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Act, 2001) authorizes RHS to establish a demonstration program to provide financial assistance (grants) for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processing workers in the States of Mississippi and Alaska. This RFP requests proposals from qualified private and public nonprofit agencies, cooperatives, state and local governments, and tribal organizations in Mississippi and Alaska to construct housing for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processing workers. Any one project may not receive grant funds of more than \$1.5 million from this program. At least one project in Alaska and one project in Mississippi will be funded under this program. Housing facilities constructed under this RFP are expected to increase the supply of housing for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processing workers in markets where adequate housing is not available.

**DATES:** The deadline for receipt of all applications in response to this RFP is 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on May 14, 2001. The application closing deadline is firm as to date and hour. RHS will not consider any application

that is received after the closing deadline. Applicants intending to mail applications must provide sufficient time to permit delivery on or before the closing deadline. Acceptance by a post office or private mailer does not constitute delivery. Facsimile (FAX), COD, and postage due applications will not be accepted.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications should be submitted to the USDA-Rural Housing Service; Attention: David Layfield, Senior Loan Specialist, USDA, Rural Housing Service, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, STOP 0781, Room 1239, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0781. RHS will date and time certify incoming applications to evidence timely receipt and, upon request, will provide the applicant with a written acknowledgement of receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information and an application package including all required forms, contact David Layfield, Senior Loan Specialist, USDA, Rural Housing Service, Multi-Family Housing Processing Division, Stop 0781, Room 1239, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0781, telephone (202) 720-1604. (This is not a toll-free number.)

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*, OMB must approve all "collections of information" by the Rural Housing Service. The Act defines "collection of information" as a requirement for "answers to \* \* \* identical reporting or recordkeeping requirements imposed on ten or more persons \* \* \*." (44 U.S.C. 3502(3)(A).) Because this RFP will receive less than 10 respondents, the Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply.

##### General Information

The agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processor worker housing grants authorized by Public Laws 106-387 and 106-554 are for the purpose of developing a housing demonstration program for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processor worker housing in markets in Mississippi and Alaska that have a demonstrated need for housing for such workers. Under Public Laws 106-387 and 106-554, RHS has the authority to award \$5,000,000 in grant funds for a housing demonstration program for agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood processor workers in Mississippi and Alaska.