

agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of Cooperator Program funding and cost-share contribution requirements.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* Interested parties should review the Cooperator Program regulations which are available at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs.fnd.html>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting MOS at (202) 720-4327.

3. *Reporting.* The FAS requires various reports and evaluations from Cooperators. Reporting requirements are detailed in the Cooperator Program regulations in sections 1484.53, 1484.70, and 1484.72.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For additional information and assistance, contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932 South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: mosadmin@fas.usda.gov.

Signed in Washington, DC on January 19, 2004.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

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

[FR Doc. 04-1455 Filed 1-22-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability; Inviting Applications for the Market Access Program

Announcement Type: New.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.601.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2004 Market Access Program (MAP). The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants and award funds in June 2004. The MAP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 15, 2004. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932-South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: mosadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/mapprog.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

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.

Purpose: 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. All agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

The FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Result 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.

II. Award Information

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.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *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).

2. *Cost Sharing.* To participate in the MAP, an applicant must agree to contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The MAP is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. In the case of generic promotion, the contribution must be stated in dollars and be at least 10 percent of the value of resources provided by CCC for such generic promotion. In the case of brand promotion, the contribution must be stated in dollars and be at least 50 percent of the total cost of such brand promotion.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the agreed cost share contributions specified therein, is considered by the FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on design and execution of activities. The MAP regulations, in section 1485.13(c), provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

3. *Other.* Applications should include a justification for funding assistance from the program—an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package.* Organizations that are interested in applying for MAP funds are encouraged to submit their requests using the 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 Unified Export Strategy (UES) application Internet website. 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 on (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including a Help file containing 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 on (202) 720-4327.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission. To be considered for the MAP, an applicant must submit to the FAS information required by the MAP regulations in section 1485.13. In addition, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's issuance of a final policy (68 FR 38402) regarding the need to identify entities that are receiving government awards, all applicants must submit a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. An applicant may request a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711. 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, the Quality Samples Program, the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program and several Export Credit Guarantee programs. 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.

3. Submission Dates and Times. All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 15, 2004. All MAP applicants, regardless of the method of submitting an application, also must submit by the application deadline, via hand delivery or U.S. mail, an original signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR 1485.13(a)(2)(i)(G). Applications or certifications received after this date will not be considered.

4. Funding Restrictions. Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, and there are limits on other categories of expenses. CCC will not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to approval. Full details are available in the MAP regulations in section 1485.16.

5. Other Submission Requirements and Considerations. All Internet-based applications must be properly submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 15, 2004. 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 form of application must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, March 15, 2004, 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.

V. Application Review Information

1. Criteria and Review Process.

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 sections 1485.12 and 1485.13 of the MAP regulations. Applications that 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 section 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 (2001-2004) 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 (2001-2004) of the funding level for all MAP participants.

(b) Past Performance (30)

- The 3-year average share (2001-2003) of the value of exports promoted by the applicant compared to
- The applicant's 2-year average share (2002-2003) of the funding level for all MAP applicants plus, for those groups participating in the Cooperator program, the 2-year average share (2003-2004) of Cooperator marketing plan budgets, and the 2-year average share (2002-2003) 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 2004 compared to
- The applicant's requested funding level;

(d) Accuracy of Past Projections (15)

- Actual exports for 2002 as reported in the 2004 MAP application compared to
- Past projections of exports for 2002 as specified in the 2002 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.

2. Anticipated Announcement Date.

Announcements of funding decisions

for the MAP are anticipated during June 2004.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices.* The FAS will notify all applicants in writing of the final disposition of its application. The FAS will send an approval letter and project agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of MAP funding and cost-share contribution requirements.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* Interested parties should review the MAP regulations which are available at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/mapprog.html>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting MOS at (202) 720-4327.

3. *Reporting.* The FAS requires various reports and evaluations from MAP participants. Reporting requirements are detailed in the MAP regulations in section 1485.20(b) and (c).

VII. Agency Contact(s)

For additional information and assistance, contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932 South, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: mosadmin@fas.usda.gov.

Signed at Washington, DC on January 19, 2004.

A. Ellen Terpstra,

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

[FR Doc. 04-1451 Filed 1-22-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability; Inviting Applications for the Quality Samples Program

Announcement Type: New.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.605.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces the availability of \$2.5 million in funding for the 2004 Quality Samples Program (QSP). The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications and award funds in June 2004. The QSP is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). This

notice supercedes any prior notices concerning the QSP.

DATES: All proposals must be received by 5 p.m. eastern standard time, March 15, 2004. Applications received after this date will be considered only if funds are still available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Marketing Operations Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4932-S, STOP 1042, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-1042, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: mosadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/QSP.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The QSP is authorized under section 5(f) of the CCC Charter Act, 15 U.S.C. 714c(f).

Purpose: 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.

QSP participants will be responsible for procuring (or arranging for the procurement of) commodity samples, exporting the samples, and providing the technical assistance necessary to facilitate successful use of the samples by importers. Participants that are funded under this announcement may seek reimbursement for the sample purchase price and the costs of transporting the samples domestically to the port of export and then to the foreign port, or point, of entry. Transportation costs from the foreign port, or point, of entry to the final destination will not be eligible for reimbursement. CCC will not reimburse the costs incidental to purchasing and transporting samples, for example, inspection or documentation fees. Although providing technical assistance is required for all projects, CCC will not reimburse the costs of providing technical assistance. A QSP participant will be reimbursed after CCC reviews its reimbursement claim and determines that the claim is complete.

General Scope of QSP Projects: QSP projects are the activities undertaken by a QSP participant to provide an appropriate sample of a U.S. agricultural commodity to a foreign importer, or a

group of foreign importers, in a given market. The purpose of the project is to provide information to an appropriate target audience regarding the attributes, characteristics, and proper use of the U.S. commodity. A QSP project addresses a single market/commodity combination.

As a general matter, QSP projects should conform to the following guidelines:

- Projects should benefit the represented U.S. industry and not a specific company or brand;
- Projects should develop a new market for a U.S. product, promote a new U.S. product, or promote a new use for a U.S. product, rather than promote the substitution of one established U.S. product for another;
- Sample commodities provided under a QSP project must be in sufficient supply and available on a commercial basis;
- The QSP project must either subject the commodity sample to further processing or substantial transformation in the importing country, or the sample must be used in technical seminars designed to demonstrate to an appropriate target audience the proper preparation or use of the sample in the creation of an end product;
- Samples provided in a QSP project shall not be directly used as part of a retail promotion or supplied directly to consumers. However, the end product, that is, the product resulting from further processing, substantial transformation, or a technical seminar, may be provided to end-use consumers to demonstrate to importers consumer preference for that end product; and,
- Samples shall be in quantities less than a typical commercial sale and limited to the amount sufficient to achieve the project goal (e.g., not more than a full commercial mill run in the destination country). QSP projects shall target foreign importers and target audiences who:
 - Have not previously purchased the U.S. commodity which will be transported under the QSP;
 - Are unfamiliar with the variety, quality attribute, or end-use characteristic of the U.S. commodity which will be transported under the QSP;
 - Have been unsuccessful in previous attempts to import, process, and market the U.S. commodity which will be transported under the QSP (e.g., because of improper specification, blending, or formulation; or sanitary or phytosanitary issues);
 - Are interested in testing or demonstrating the benefits of the U.S.