

Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA

§ 1487.5

FAS—Foreign Agricultural Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

Participant—An entity which has entered into a TASC agreement with the CCC.

Specialty crop—all cultivated plants, or the products thereof, produced in the United States, except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco.

TASC—Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops.

United States—the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

[67 FR 57327, Sept. 10, 2002, as amended at 68 FR 42564, July 18, 2003]

§ 1487.2 What is the TASC program?

Under the TASC program, CCC, an agency and instrumentality of the United States within the Department of Agriculture, provides funds to eligible organizations, on a grant basis, to implement activities that are intended to address a sanitary, phytosanitary, or related technical barrier that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops that are currently available on a commercial basis. The TASC program is intended to benefit the represented industry rather than a specific company or brand. This program is administered by FAS.

§ 1487.3 What activities are eligible?

(a) *General*. In order to be eligible for funding under the TASC program, activities must address sanitary, phytosanitary, or technical barriers to export of specialty crops. Examples of expenses that CCC may agree to cover under the TASC program include, but are not limited to: initial pre-clearance programs, export protocol and work plan support, seminars and workshops, study tours, field surveys, development of pest lists, pest and disease research, database development, reasonable logistical and administrative support, and travel and per diem expenses.

(b) *Location of activities*. Eligible projects may take place in the United States or abroad.

§ 1487.4 Are there any limits on the scope of proposals?

(a) *Funding cap*. TASC proposals which request more than \$250,000 of

CCC funding in a given year will not be considered.

(b) *Length of activities*. TASC proposals to fund activities that exceed three years will not be considered.

(c) *Target countries*. Proposals may target all export markets, including single countries or reasonable regional groupings of countries.

(d) *Multiple proposals*. Applicants may submit multiple proposals, but no TASC participant may have more than three approved projects underway at any given time.

§ 1487.5 What is the process for submitting proposals?

(a) *General*. Periodically the CCC will inform the public of the process by which interested eligible organizations may submit proposals for TASC program funding. This announcement will, among other things, include information on any deadlines for submitting proposals and the address of the office to which the proposals should be sent. The CCC also may announce the availability of a Quick Response Fund within the TASC program. Proposals submitted under any form of quick response process may be submitted at any time during the year but must meet the basic requirements of the program and any specific requirements of that particular process. Organizations interested in participating in the TASC program may submit their proposals electronically or in paper copy. Although no specific format is required, a sample format for proposals is available from the address provided in this rule.

(b) *Contents of proposals*. TASC proposals must contain complete information about the proposed projects, including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Organizational information, including:

(i) Organization's name, address, Chief Executive Officer (or designee), and Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN);

(ii) Type of organization;

(iii) Name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the primary contact person;

(iv) A description of the organization and its membership; and

§ 1487.6

7 CFR Ch. XIV (1-1-08 Edition)

(v) A description of the organization's experience in technical assistance projects, including activities involved and project results.

(2) Project information, including:

- (i) A brief project title;
- (ii) The amount of funding requested and a justification for why federal funding is needed;
- (iii) Beginning and ending dates for the proposed project;
- (iv) A market assessment, including a brief description of the specific export barrier to be addressed by the project;
- (v) The goals of the project, and the expected benefits to the represented industry;
- (vi) A description of the activities planned to address the export barrier;
- (vii) An itemized list of all estimated costs associated with the project for which reimbursement will be sought; and
- (viii) Information indicating all financial and in-kind support to the proposed project, and the resources to be contributed by each entity that will contribute to the project's implementation. This may include the organization that submitted the proposal, private industry entities, host governments, foreign third parties, CCC, FAS, or other Federal agencies. Support may include cash, goods, and services. Although highly encouraged, financial support from the participant is not required.

(3) Export information, including:

- (i) Performance measures for three years, beginning with the year that the project would begin, which will be used to measure the effectiveness of the project;
- (ii) A benchmark performance measure for the year prior to the year that the project would begin; and
- (iii) The viability of long-term sales to this market.

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§ 1487.6 What are the criteria for evaluating proposals?

(a) *Evaluation criteria.* FAS will use the following criteria in evaluating proposals:

- (1) The nature of the specific export barrier and the extent to which the

proposal is likely to successfully remove, resolve, or mitigate that barrier;

(2) The potential trade impact of the proposed project on market retention, market access, and market expansion, including the potential for expanding commercial sales in the targeted market;

(3) The completeness and viability of the proposal;

(4) The ability of the organization to provide an experienced staff with the requisite technical and trade experience to execute the proposal;

(5) The extent to which the proposal is targeted to a market in which the United States is generally competitive;

(6) The cost of the project and the amount of other resources dedicated to the project, including cash and goods and services of the U.S. industry and foreign third parties;

(7) The degree to which time is essential to addressing specific export barriers;

(8) In cases where the CCC receives multiple proposals from different applicants which address essentially the same barrier, the nature of the applicant organization will be taken into consideration, with a greater weight given to those organizations with the broadest base of producer representation.

(b) *Evaluation process.* FAS will review proposals for eligibility and will evaluate each proposal against the factors described in paragraph (a) of this section. 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 may, when appropriate to the subject matter of the proposal, request the assistance of other U.S. government experts in evaluating the merits of a proposal.

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§ 1487.7 How are agreements formalized?

Following the approval of a proposal, the CCC will enter into a written agreement with the organization that submitted the proposal. This program