FY 2026 Food for Progress Notice of Funding Opportunity
Questions and Answers

June 17 – June 19, 2026

98. **Q**: **The Thailand country guidance encourages coordination, where relevant, with university and state-level collaborators. May U.S. state government agencies participate as collaborators in areas such as: Wisconsin agricultural industry engagement; market development; government-to-government and institutional coordination; technical exchanges; agricultural trade strategy; connections to Wisconsin cooperatives, suppliers, laboratories, and exporters; and development of sustained commercial relationships between Wisconsin and Thailand?**

    A: Please refer to Section 2.1, Eligible Applicants, in the NOFO.

99. **Q**: **If a U.S. state government agency accepts defined responsibilities but does not receive FFPr funds, may those responsibilities be described in the application narrative or in a memorandum of cooperation?**

    A: All entities identified as partners or subrecipients should be clearly identified in the application. Please refer to Section 2.4, Funding Restrictions, in the NOFO.

100. **Q**: **If a U.S. state government agency provides personnel time, technical assistance, travel, training resources, or other in-kind support, may these contributions be included as voluntary committed cost share?**

    A: Please refer to Section 2.6, Cost Share/Match Requirement, in the NOFO for information on cost share. Additional guidelines pertaining to Cost Share can be found at 2 CFR 200.306 and 7 CFR 1499. USDA cannot evaluate the allowability of specific cost share proposals until an application is received.

101. **Q**: **If a U.S. state government agency receives FFPr resources, would it require a UEI, project-specific commitment letter, SAM.gov registration, or other federal registration documentation?**

    A: Per Section 4.2d, Organizational Capacity and Staffing, of the NOFO, each applicant is required to be registered in SAM.gov and provide a valid UEI. Applicants should review the requirements of Section 2, Eligibility, of the NOFO.

102. **Q**: **Section 4.1 requires consecutive page numbering in footers. Since attachments are uploaded separately to FAIS, should page numbering restart for each section or continue consecutively across all sections?**

A: USDA's preference is for consecutive page numbers for separate sections but applicants may choose to restart for each section or continue consecutively across all.

103. **Q**: **Amendment 1 (Mod 0001) replaced the "Evaluation Plan" and "narrative theory of change" with a "Monitoring and Evaluation Brief" in the NOFO body and Table A. However, the FAIS submission instructions and Appendix A checklist still reference an "Evaluation Plan" file type. Should the M&E Brief be uploaded under the existing "Evaluation Plan" attachment slot, or will a separate slot be created?**

A: Yes, the M&E brief should be uploaded under the existing "Evaluation Plan" file type in FAIS.

104. **Q**: **With the theory of change and Evaluation Plan removed, does the 10-page M&E limit still apply? Do the sub-limits (Results Framework 2 pages, Performance Indicators 5 pages, M&E Brief 3 pages) represent the full allocation?**

A: Yes. Please review Section 4b, Required Content and Forms, which includes the page limits for each section.

105. **Q**: **For the minimum 3% M&E investment, the denominator is described as total operating budget minus cost share, while the numerator excludes M&E staff salaries and travel. Can USDA confirm this asymmetry is intentional?**

A: USDA confirms that for the minimum 3% M&E allocation, the denominator is the total operating budget minus cost share, and this does not include staff salaries and staff travel.

106. **Q**: **Since FFPr operating budgets are funded substantially by monetization proceeds, can USDA confirm that monetization proceeds are included in "total operating budget" for the purposes of the 3% M&E calculation base?**

A: Yes, monetization proceeds are included in "total operating budget" for the purposes of the 3% M&E budget allocation.

107. **Q**: **The NOFO requires naming third-party monetization agents and views third-party sale assistance favorably. If a monetization agent is named at application, must that**

agent's services still be competitively procured post-award, or does naming them in the proposal satisfy procurement requirements?

A: Applicants should refer to 2 CFR 200.318 when making this determination.

108. **Q**: **Does a third-party monetization agent or freight forwarder named in the application need to submit a subrecipient commitment letter, or are these entities treated as contractors/vendors that do not require commitment letters at the application stage?**

    A: Please refer to 7 CFR 1499.2 for subrecipient definitions.

109. **Q**: **Where does responsibility for cargo preference compliance sit between the Recipient and any subrecipient or contractor handling WBSCM sales orders and freight booking?**

    A: USDA will handle the freight tender and review bids to ensure that all bids meet the cargo preference compliance. It is then reviewed by the Department of Transportation.

110. **Q**: **The destination analysis requires up to five specific countries within a trade region. If monetization is planned in a single destination country, is a single-country analysis sufficient, or does USDA expect a comparative analysis across multiple candidate markets?**

    A: If the market of the single country can handle the entire monetization effort, one country suffices; however, the final determination of the monetization country depends on several factors. See the USDA Monetization Handbook: https://apps.fas.usda.gov/fais/webapp/files/USDA%20Monetization%20Handbook%202023.pdf.

111. **Q**: **For an organization electing the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate rather than a NICRA, is selecting the rate in the budget template sufficient, or is a supporting explanatory note required?**

    A: Please refer to the NOFO Section 4.2g 4) Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).

112. **Q**: **The Budget Summary is a one-page Excel template (Attachment C-3). Does the one-page limit apply to the PDF rendering of that file, and should it be submitted as a PDF consistent with the other attachments?**

A: Yes, the one-page limit applies to the budget summary. Applicants may choose to submit it as a PDF or in excel. However, it must not exceed the one-page limit.

113. **Q**: **Cost share earning up to 2 bonus points must equal 1% or more of total operating budget. Is matching cash or in-kind contribution from a subrecipient acceptable as cost share, or must it come from the prime applicant's resources?**

    A: Please refer to Question 100.

114. **Q**: **Will USDA accept Letters of Intent or Interest from project partners that are not subrecipients of the project but who have expressed interest in supporting project activities, particularly as it supports cost-effectiveness and sustainability for program activities?**

    A: See answer to Question 70 in the Questions and Answers document covering June 10-June 16th.

115. **Q**: **We note that Section 4.1.b (p.12) and Section 4.2.e (p.22) of the NOFO reference different SF–424 form links. Could USDA kindly clarify which version of the SF–424 is required for submission through FAIS?**

    A: Either SF-424 form will be accepted.

116. **Q**: **May Applicants include a Table of Contents as an attachment to the Cover Sheet, which will not count against the page limit?**

    A: Yes, an applicant may include a Table of Contents (TOC). A TOC will not count against the page limit.

117. **Q**: **On page 13, under 4.2 Content Guidance, Cost-efficiency and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse: USDA notes that "Applicants should ensure that a minimum of 70 percent of the operating budget is allocated directly to program activities." In Appendix B under the Country Guidance, the anticipated operating budget includes estimated monetization proceeds and CCC Admin values. As CCC funds are restricted to Administration spending only in Year 1, would USDA consider amending the language on page 13 to state that "Applicants should ensure that a minimum of 70 percent of the Monetization Proceeds is allocated directly to program activities"?**

    A: No, Applicants should consider the full operating budget value when calculating the 70 percent value. Any proposed cost share should be excluded from the calculated.

118. **Q**: **Who are the actual exporters? Does the export take place through related parties or agents of the U.S. exporters, and what role is expected to be played by USDA/FAS, or its representative, in the process?**

A: Please review Section 4.2f, Commodity Management, of the NOFO.

119. **Q**: **Page 12 of the NOFO, Section 4.2., states "Applicants should ensure that a minimum of 70% of the operating budget is allocated directly to program activities. The 70% minimum threshold cost ratio should include direct costs only and exclude indirect costs and cost share." Can USDA please clarify whether the requirement that "a minimum of 70% of the operating budget is allocated directly to program activities" is intended to distinguish between direct and indirect costs (i.e., federally negotiated and approved indirect rates, per 2 CFR 200.414 (b) Indirect costs)?**

A: No, the ratio applies to direct cost of the project operation budget, i.e., 70% or more should be allocated to program activities and 30% or less to support administrative cost.

120. **Q**: **In calculating the 70% allocation requirement directly to program activities, can USDA confirm if applicants can apply the federally negotiated and approved indirect costs on activities, as these costs support the effective implementation of these activities?**

A: No, the ratio does not include Indirect Cost Rate.

121. **Q**: **How will USDA adjust for the varying indirect rates among applicants in the scoring of the cost proposal?**

A: USDA does not apply different scores based on each applicant's indirect cost rate. Please see Section 6.2, Review Criteria, of the NOFO.

122. **Q**: **Will USDA allow organizations to utilize their provisional rates if it has been formally submitted to the cognizant federal agency?**

A: Unless an applicant elects to use the de minimis rate, they should use the rate from their most recently approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). If the most recent NICRA rate is provisional, applicants may use that rate.

123. **Q**: **Is the request to describe geography and target beneficiaries in both the Strategic Analysis and the Plan of Operation sections intentional? If so, should the content be**

duplicated in each section, or should each section present distinct content related to geography and target beneficiaries?

A: Please review the requirements for the geographic area(s) and beneficiary group(s) outlined in Sections 4.2b, Strategic Analysis, and 4.2c, Plan of Operation, of the NOFO.

124. **Q**: **If government departments with security-related mandates play a role in custom clearances, has Leahy vetting been conducted for these units? Can implementors propose project activities involving these actors?**

A: Applicants may include security-related actors in Food for Progress proposal activities without Leahy vetting, as the Leahy Laws (22 U.S.C. § 2378d and 10 U.S.C. § 362) apply only to assistance funded by the Department of State or the Department of Defense.

125. **Q**: **Organizational Capacity and Staffing - Page 26 of the NOFO states that "USDA/FAS will evaluate Applicants on… how effectively they demonstrate that their organization and proposed staff, including subrecipients, have the relevant experience and expertise". Are Applicants expected to name and present the qualifications for additional proposed staff beyond the Chief of Party? If so, would USDA provide additional guidance to support applicants' understanding of technical requirements and evaluation criteria?**

A: No, Applicants are not expected to name and present additional proposed staff beyond the Chief of Party.

126. **Q**: **In Section 4.2 Content Guidance (pg. 12), USDA states that "applicants should ensure that a minimum of 70% of the operating budget is allocated directly to program activities. The 70% minimum threshold cost ratio should include direct costs only." Can USDA confirm that travel costs linked to implementation of program activities (e.g. deployment of short-term technical advisors) are included in the definition of direct costs in this context?**

A: Applicants should determine whether costs are direct program costs when ensuring the 70% minimum operating budget.

127. **Q**: **In Section 4.2 Content Guidance (pg. 12), USDA states that "applicants should ensure that a minimum of 70% of the operating budget is allocated directly to program activities. The 70% minimum threshold cost ratio should include direct costs only." Can USDA confirm that travel costs linked to implementation of program activities**

(e.g. deployment of short-term technical advisors) are included in the definition of direct costs in this context?

A: Applicants may include a geographic map or a list of active donors.

128. **Q**: **May applicants include unrecovered indirect costs (e.g. savings from voluntary discounts of approved indirect rates) in calculations of cost share?**

A: Applicants' unrecovered indirect costs are not allowable cost share. Please see Section 2.6, Cost Share/Match Requirement, of the NOFO.

129. **Q: Could USDA confirm that national government institutions and industry associations are not permitted to enter exclusive arrangements with a single applicant during the proposal development process, and instead may engage with multiple applicants under this NOFO?**

A: USDA has no authority to limit or prevent any arrangements that national government institutions or industry associations decide to make with applicants.

130. **Q**: **May different approved commodities be monetized in different ASEAN markets?**

A: Please refer to Section 4.2f 3) Monetization - Private Sector Participation in Sales of Commodity of the NOFO.

131. **Q**: **May one agent manage monetization transactions in several approved countries?**

A: Yes, a single agent may manage monetization transactions in multiple countries, provided they have the necessary approvals.

132. **Q**: **For products such as DDGS, soybean meal, or feed corn, must the application include confirmation that each commodity is currently eligible for import into Thailand or another proposed monetization country? Or may outstanding approvals be completed before the applicable shipment?**

A: See answer to Question 73 in the Questions and Answers document covering June 10-June 16th.

133. **Q**: **May an applicant propose larger later-year tranches or higher proceeds when market demand is developed or when market analysis demonstrates adequate**

absorption, acceptable cost recovery, compliance with import requirements, and no harmful commercial displacement?

A: See answer to Question 73 in the Questions and Answers document covering June 10-June 16th.

134. **Q**: **Must every potential monetization country be identified in the original application, or may the recipient later request approval to add or substitute a country within the same trade region?**

A: See answer to Question 73 in the Questions and Answers document covering June 10-June 16th.