

Food for Progress

- 1) Are we required to only work in the identified regions on the Côte d'Ivoire side (Man, Danone and Dimbroko), or do we have the flexibility to include other cocoa growing areas?

Applicants have the flexibility to include other cocoa growing areas and are encouraged to provide clear justification for target alternate areas.

- 2) How is USDA defining "value addition" in the context of the Côte d'Ivoire project?

Many raw commodities have intrinsic value in their original state. Processing can increase the value of the commodity giving it 'added value' (e.g., processing raw cacao beans into fermented beans). The applicant must identify and describe the value-adding activities such as processing, research, marketing, etc.

- 3) Is the primary driver for this project a desire to support the Liberia economy after its Ebola crisis, or the undertaking of a broader cocoa project in West Africa?

The primary driver for this project is to strengthen the cacao sector in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

- 4) Would USDA support an income diversification strategy that involves other attractive value chains for cocoa farmers, and/or addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation for cocoa farmers?

USDA supports all agricultural activities that will strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of cacao farmers.

- 5) Pertaining to the cross-border trade component, is USDA's intention to promote formal trade of Liberian cocoa through Côte d'Ivoire's better established distribution systems, or is the intention to strengthen the Liberian distribution systems for direct export?

USDA is interested in promoting increased agricultural trade comprising both regional and international trade.

- 6) Please clarify if there is a preferred format for submission of past performance references (PPR).

Yes. A Word-editable template for the PPR has been posted below the solicitation on the FAIS homepage (<http://apps.fas.usda.gov/faiss/public>). It includes 17 standard questions.

- 8) Please explain the large range of \$20 – 30 million of grant awards: Is USDA looking for the least expensive proposal or the one that presents the best value to the government irrespective of the cost?

USDA evaluates proposals based on the guidelines presented in the solicitation guidance. Both the impact of the proposed project and the cost-effectiveness of the use of proceeds from sales of commodities will be evaluated. The suggested range is proffered as typical life of project costs for a five year program; however, USDA will evaluate proposals outside of this range.

- 9) Does the proposal for Burkina Faso have to address both Strategic Objective 1 and 2?

All applications are required to describe their impact along both strategic objectives (SO). If a proposed project is not intervening in both SO's, the applicant should explain the reasons for omitting either element.

- 10) With respect to the Burkina Faso country guidance, please define food processing; would both cleaning and transformation to a new product be included in the definition?

Food processing is the practice used to transform raw plant and animal materials into products for consumers or further processing. Minimal forms of processing include washing, peeling, slicing, and removing inedible parts where foods are not substantially changed from their raw, unprocessed form and retain most of their nutritional properties.

- 11) With respect to the Burkina Faso country guidance, please confirm that "quality" refers to the quality of the sesame seed produced at the farm level.

As part of the applicant's description of the value chain within the strategic analysis, 'quality' may be defined as necessary to demonstrate the weaknesses along the value chain where the greatest gains can be made.

- 12) – Are you expecting applicants to submit separate bids for separate value chains (e.g., dairy, horticulture, wheat) or can applicants roll all targeted value chains into one application?

We expect only one single proposal submission per applicant. The proposal may include several different value chains/sectors of intervention.

- 13) What commodities are available?

Applicants are expected to select a commodity for monetization based on evaluation of commodities appropriate in the target market. All commodities must be monetized.

- 14) Are we committed to one commodity for all five years of the program or can they vary by year?

It is up to the applicant to decide which commodity(ies) they wish to select.