



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD FOR PROGRESS JAMAICA SPICES (JaSPICE)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

GRANT FUNDING

RFA Number:	J2069-RFA- FEBRUARY 2024
RFA Release Date:	February 13 , 2024
Performance Period:	March 2024 – February 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline:	March 12 , 2024
Question and Answer Session:	Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 10:00 am (Virtually)
RFA Point of Contact	Nardia Pessoa-White, npessoa@acdivoca-jm.org

I. BACKGROUND

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), has awarded ACDI/VOCA with a federal award to support the implementation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food for Progress Jamaica Spices Project focused on achieving the following objectives:

- To increase the productivity of high-quality Jamaican ginger, turmeric, and pimento by strengthening the capacity of farmers, producer organizations (POs), processors and other private sector entities, while improving the food security and climate resiliency of farmers.
- To improve and expand the trade of ginger, turmeric, and pimento products by increasing their quality to meet international standards and connecting farmers and POs with Jamaican and international buyers.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food for Progress Jamaica Spices Project will support Jamaica’s goal of revitalizing the spice sector. The project will support 7,500 agricultural sector actors (including women and youth) to increase Jamaica’s yields of turmeric, ginger, and pimento on 2,250 hectares by 50 percent, resulting in \$20.7 million in sales and \$14.5 million in annual export sales. To achieve this, ACDI/VOCA will incorporate market systems strengthening strategies alongside climate-resilient and nature-positive production practices to increase the productivity, trade, and environmental resilience of spice crops. These activities will be completed over a 5-year island-wide, in partnership with new and existing



registered farmer-based organizations, community groups, local businesses, non-governmental organizations, local and national Government of Jamaica agencies and departments.

Global spice demand for use in food, seasonings, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and nutraceuticals continues to grow. With their distinctive flavours and characteristics, Jamaican spices have been historically recognized as premium products. However, falling production volumes and rising prices are leading US spice buyers to source ginger, turmeric, and pimento from other countries at considerable cost savings. The sectors' challenges, left unresolved over the years, include a lack of access to clean planting material, low production volumes, a fragmented farmer base, lack of market and climate information and linkages, and poor access to finance. These challenges have led to progressively decreasing production volumes, low productivity, and significantly high levels of unmet demand—for local and export produce and value-added products.

To achieve the objectives above ACDI/VOCA is releasing this grant call to address the resources needed to implement activities such as improving access to clean planting material, low production volumes, a fragmented farmer base, lack of market, climate information, and linkages, and conduct research trials. Gender Youth and Social Inclusion (GYSI) considerations are to be included in all proposals.

II. GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT/CALL

Under the project's grants program, ACDI/VOCA is now accepting Grant Applications from eligible organizations island-wide for project activities to be implemented within a **12-month period**. **This will be funded through a Grant mechanism, determined by pre-ward assessment of your organization.** The project activities outlined in the application should have the specific objective of supporting the following:

1. **Component 1 - Increased Access to Quality Planting Material supporting:**

Activity 1: Inputs: Expand nurseries and clean planting material supply with opportunities to build on and scale up current initiatives to increase the number of capable nurseries available in at least one (1) segment of the three (3) value chains of ginger, turmeric and pimento.

Activity 2: Capacity Building: R&D for disease resistance and climate-smart technologies:

The project will employ Research and Development as an instrument to address constraints/challenges and take advantage of opportunities along the three-spice value chain. Local research focused institutions are being encouraged to design research and development proposals that respond to these constraints/challenges. Stakeholders are to refer to the Spice Sector Priority Research Agenda and the Jamaica Research Guide attached to facilitate the research application process. There are five thematic areas for research for which submissions are being sought.

2. **Component 2 - Increased and sustainable production plus farmer resiliency, supporting: Activity 4:** Capacity Building: Producer groups/cooperatives.



This call serves to mobilize increased production and productivity by farmers in response to meeting unmet demand in the local and international markets. This will include items such as clean and improved planting materials, Land preparation, irrigation and fertigation, crop care and production inputs, tools and equipment, post-harvesting material, (crates, harvesting bags) tools and equipment.

The Application to be submitted must address at least one (1) of the following initiatives listed in the Activities column below, which will sustain and enhance the ginger, turmeric and pimento value chains:

Components	Opportunities	Activities
1. Increased access to quality planting material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build on and scale up current initiatives to increase private sector nurseries. ● Expand research and development (R&D) to increase clean ginger, turmeric, and pimento planting materials. ● Support and build the government’s capacity for certification, extension, scale up, and market information and policy 	<p>Activity 1: Inputs: Expand nurseries and clean planting material supply.</p> <p>Activity 2: Capacity Building: R&D for disease resistance and climate-smart technologies</p> <p>Activity 3: Capacity Building: Government institutions</p>
2. Increased and sustainable production plus farmer resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobilize more farmers (focusing on women and youth) to produce ginger, turmeric, and pimento. ● Organize and build the capacity of farmer groups to create more economies of scale. ● Provide extension support for diversified farming systems to mitigate market and climate risks. ● Increase hectares planted using new climate-smart technologies and environmentally sustainable farming systems 	<p>Activity 4: Capacity Building: Producer groups/cooperatives</p> <p>Activity 5: Training: Improved agricultural production techniques</p>

See below in details the areas for which the grant call will be awarded:

Activity 1: Access to clean and improved spice planting material

- 1.1. Infrastructural upgrade and equipping of spice nurseries.
 - 1.1.1. Drip irrigation system.
 - 1.1.2. Fertigation system with timers
 - 1.1.3. Supporting structures for placing holding plants (Tables, bins etc.)
 - 1.1.4. Tools and equipment (pH meters, knapsack sprayers, EC meter etc.)
- 1.2. Input to support access to clean planting material.
 - 1.2.1. Tissue culture plantlets



- 1.2.2. Seed rhizomes
 - 1.2.3. Production of plantlets using Single Bud Technology (SBT)
 - 1.2.4. Pimento seedlings
 - 1.2.5. Crop care materials for SBT plantlets and nursery production.
2. **Activity 2:** Call for Research and Development activities: Stakeholders are to refer to the Spice Sector Priority Research Agenda and the Jamaica Research Guide attached to facilitate the research application process. There are five thematic areas with priority research for which submissions are being sought in the short (2 years) and medium (<5 years) term for the three spices. They are as follows,
- 2.1. Germplasm & Genetic Research
 - 2.2. Improved propagation of spices planting material
 - 2.3. Climate Resilience, Agronomy and Crop Production
 - 2.4. Integrated/Area-wide/Plant Health Research
 - 2.5. Marketing, Trade and Financing
3. **Activity 4:** Call to address the sustainable production of turmeric, ginger and pimento for the upcoming 2024 planting season.
- 3.1. Land Preparation and crop care.
 - 3.2. Input supplies.
 - 3.3. Post Harvesting – Equipment to preserve the shelf life of spice products.

The total value of the funds being requested from ACDI/VOCA in the submitted Application must not exceed **\$40,000.00 USD**. Any future grant awards will be made based on availability of funds. Only ONE (1) award will be considered per entity.

III. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for consideration for funding under the project Grants program, the applicant must initially meet all the following requirements:



- a. **Application Submission** - Completed Application Form with `supporting documentation`.
 - For research applicants, a detailed research proposal must be submitted.
 - In addition, the research applicant must state the spice crop and thematic area being focused on in the Research Priority Agenda
- b. **Applicant Status** - Be a public or private, for-profit, or not-for-profit (including farmer groups and PMOs) entity legally operating/registered in Jamaica.
- c. **Type of Projects & Activities** - Clearly show alignment with project goals, objectives and activities.
- d. **Applicant Contribution Commitment** - Must demonstrate the group's or private entity's commitment and capacity to contribute (cash share and/or leverage) a minimum of 30% of the total cost of the proposed activity.
- e. **Applicant Capacity** - Applicant must demonstrate evidence of the organization's capacity to manage the activity/activities outlined in the Application.
- f. **Market Viability and Sustainability** – Applicant must clearly demonstrate that the project design will compliment or enhance an existing market-based solution or demonstrate that the project design will lead to a sustainable, market-based solution that the applicant intends to continue beyond the 12-month project period and/or benefits the spice sector market actors into the future.
- g. **Request Support for an Eligible Activity** - Applicants must also ensure that Application submissions reflect legitimate use of funds.

Ineligible Organizations:

- a) Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates
- b) Organizations promoting anti-democratic policies or illegal activities.
- c) If an organization or its key personnel appear on any of the following lists:
 - Active exclusion in System for Award Management: <http://www.sam.gov>
 - U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC): <http://sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov/>
 - United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions committee established under UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999):
<https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/sites/www.un.org.sc.suborg/files/consolidated.pdf>

IV. GRANT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Interested entities are invited to complete the Application attached in its entirety, that includes the information below.

Applicant Information

- Who is submitting the concept, address, responsible officers/persons with contact details?
- Who makes up your team that will implement the activities?

Project Information



- What is the title of the proposed project?
- What is the identified need/problem/issue to be addressed, targeted area of focus and overall objectives of the project?
- What is the opportunity that the project will focus on to address the identified need/problem/issue?
- What is the project's duration and expected start and end time?
- Who will you be working with? (Partners, collaborators, and their contribution, do you have prior contact and experience working with them? etc.)
- How many persons will be impacted directly/indirectly by the project?
- How wide will the impact of your activity be (community/parish/national/regional/global level)?
- What are the current and expected property arrangements (property tenureship status -own or lease?)

Scope to be funded by ACDI/VOCA

- What good(s) and/or service(s) are needed from ACDI/VOCA/Jamaica Spices Project?
- Which Jamaica Spices Project Jamaica component(s) and activity(ies) your proposal aligned with?

Risk Management

- What are the expected risks/challenges in implementing your activities and corresponding strategies to reduce or eliminate them?

Diversity, Equity, Gender Youth and Social Inclusion (GYSI)

- What opportunities are there for the project to advance inclusion within the spice sector? (provide an analysis of the current GYSI situation and briefly highlight any disparities, challenges, or opportunities that your project aims to address)
- What interventions will be designed and implemented to address the specific barriers faced by women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups to access new or improved technologies, practices, materials, or resources required for improving their turmeric, ginger, or pimento production?
- For example: how will you tailor training programs to align with young people's interests, how will you ensure training activities are accessible for women, or how will you address GYSI issues in research and development activities.
- Ensure objectives explicitly aim to address inequalities and promote inclusion.
- What is the expected composition of target persons for the project in terms of gender (males/females), youth (age groups 15-29 and 30+), minority and vulnerable groups?



Funding

- What is the total estimated amount of funding that the entity requires from ACDI/VOCA/Jamaica Spices Project to implement the proposed activity?
- What is the entity’s total estimated cost share contribution?

Results and Sustainability

- What are the major milestones of the project?
- How will the success of the proposed project be measured?
- How will the initiative be sustained? What is the applicant's strategy to continue the initiative after Jamaica Spice Project resources end?

V. THE PROCESS

This RFA (REQUEST FOR APPLICATION) will consist of the following three phases:

- **Phase 1 – APPLICATION SUBMISSION**
 - APPLICATION SUBMISSION – Completed Application must be submitted electronically before the stated deadline with the accompanying budget and supporting documentation.
- **PHASE 2: APPLICATION SCREENING AND EVALUATION**
 - Evaluation – Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel of at least three (3) persons, and applicants that have attained at least an average score of 70% will be considered for funding. Successful applicants will be engaged with ACDI/VOCA/Jamaica Spice Project technical team in co-creation for the purpose of strategically to strategically align activities and budget for implementation. This process is also intended to help identify potential consortia and partnerships to support these new or existing solutions and activities.
- **PHASE 3: GRANT AWARD AND IMPLEMENTATION**
 - Award - After the evaluation phase, ACDI/VOCA/Jamaica Spice Project will award a grant agreement to the successful applicant.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria and considerations will be used to evaluate the Applications submitted under this RFA. The relevant review elements are captured below and are intended to help guide applicants in preparing their applications.

	Criteria	Points Allotted
1	Does the proposed grantee have the governance structure, financial systems and controls in place to adequately account for grant funds and	20



	to successfully implement the activity(ies) specified in the Application? (Proof of registration, executive management structure/board in place, evidence of banking statements, etc.)	
2	Does the proposed activity(ies) align with USDA Food for Progress Jamaica Spices components and activities and have a realistic well thought out implementation plan with clearly defined objectives, expected results, environmentally sound practices, gender and youth appropriateness and quantifiable targets?	20
3	Does the applicant have the technical competence and experience in implementing similar activities in Jamaica? (Experience of applicant in implementing similar activities in this area)?	15
4	Does the applicant present a proposal with measurable targets to support the achievement of the USDA Food for Progress Jamaica Spices goal and strategic objectives. (Shows how the planned work will lead to the intended results).	10
5	Is the proposed project's activities timelines and costs realistic and in accordance with the project implementation cycle?	10
6	Does the proposal have the potential to realize upgrades/efficiencies at the current value chain link and or higher value along the value chain?	10
7	Does the activity(ies) adequately address issues of gender, youth, and social inclusion?	10
8	Does the proposed project show evidence of sustainability after funding ends, any possible synergies/complementarities with other activities/projects/organizations /partnerships that could reinforce the long-term sustainability of the project?	5
		100 points

INFORMATION MEETING (Question and Answer Session)

An information meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 22, 2024 @ 10:00 am** virtually.

Microsoft Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 270 818 190 918

Passcode: xfzUpY

SUBMISSION

Application, including a detailed Excel Spreadsheet budget must be submitted electronically by **Tuesday March 12, 2024**, to: Email: npessoa@acdivoca-jm.org



Invoices and other cost estimates should support the budget submitted. Copies of group/ organizational registration documents, or other supporting documents to verify group status MUST be included.

DISCLAIMERS/GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- i. Condition Issuance of this call for application in no way constitutes a commitment by the **U.S. Department of Agriculture Food for Progress Jamaica Spices (JaSPICE) Project** to execute any agreement.
- ii. Award or Rejection All qualified applications will be evaluated, and awards made to those businesses or organizations whose capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the JaSPICE Activity. ACDI VOCA reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all applications if determined to be in its best interest. ACDI VOCA will provide written notification to all applicants that their application has or has not been selected for potential funding.
- iii. Cost of Application Preparation Any cost incurred by a business or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the applicant's sole responsibility; ACDI/VOCA will not reimburse any applicant for any pre-award costs incurred.
- iv. Form of Application Each application must be submitted using the application form provided as ATTACHMENT A to this CFA.
- v. Exceptions All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any applicant may be grounds for rejection of that application.
- vi. Applicant's Representative Each applicant shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the business or organization and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.
- vii. Proprietary Information. Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the applicant does not wish to disclose to anyone other than the personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by local or federal laws. Any proprietary information must be identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section. **U.S. Department of Agriculture Food for Progress Jamaica Spices (JaSPICE) Project** will fully respect the confidentiality of proprietary information of all organizations involved in the program.
- viii. Federal Certifications Entities receiving Federal funds will be required to execute any applicable federal certifications such as Certification Regarding Lobbying, Certification of Narcotics Offenses and Drug Trafficking, Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing, and Certification Regarding Trafficking in Persons.