

Promotion of Agricultural Products on the Internal Market

Applications for funding to promote agricultural products on the Internal Market – now open

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) invites applications from trade or inter-trade organisations for up to 50 per cent of EU funding for the marketing and promotion of agricultural products.

The marketing activities will be designed to increase levels of information and sales of certain agricultural products of EU origin within EU countries.

Eligible products include:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Processed fruit and vegetables
- Fibre flax
- Live plants and products of ornamental horticulture
- Olive oil and table olives
- Seed oils
- Milk and milk products
- Fresh, chilled or frozen meat, produced in accordance with a Community or a national quality scheme.
- Marking of eggs for human consumption
- Honey and beekeeping products
- Wines with a protected designation of origin or a protected geographical indication, wines with an indication of the wine grape variety
- Graphic symbol for the outermost regions as laid down in agricultural legislation
- Protected designation/s of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication/s (PGI) or traditional speciality/ies guaranteed (TSG) in accordance with Council Regulations (EC) No 509/2006 or (EC) No 510/2006 and products registered under these schemes
- Organic farming in accordance with Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 and products registered according to that Regulation
- Poultry meat

Subject to approval, the Commission will finance up to 50 per cent of the total cost of the programme. The proposing organisation must fund at least 20 per cent. The balance may be financed by the proposing organisation or via industry levy.

Applicants must use the European Commission's standard application form, which can be obtained from the RPA website at rpa.gsi.gov.uk. Submit them to Rural Payments Agency, Promotions Schemes, Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 7YH.

Applications for funding must have been received by RPA by 30th November 2011.

Full details are available from Steve Wood or Michelle Lowrey on 0191 226 5656, at the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), or Email: promotions@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.

Specification for proposals

Presentation of Programmes

Programme means a coherent set of operations of a scope that is sufficient to contribute towards improving information about, and sales of products concerned and shall include at least:

- a detailed description of the promotion/information measures planned;
- the anticipated results of the programme;
- a clear detailed estimate of the project cost of each measure included in the programme; and
- the time limits for implementation and the timetable for the various measures. Programmes consisting of a single measure are unlikely to be accepted by the Commission.

Programmes should be of sufficient duration and budget to ensure that an impact on awareness or attitudes towards the product in question can be achieved. The specific guidelines for eligible products are laid down in Annex II of the implementing regulation Commission Regulation (EC) No. 501/2008.

These guidelines set out the goals, the target groups, the main messages and the main channels of communication for each product.

Programme Content

- Shall provide information on the intrinsic characteristics – of the product concerned without reference to its specific origin. Health claims should be sent to RPA, who will seek advice from Department of Health (DH);
- Shall make no reference to brand names, trademarks or private companies;
- Must not duplicate similar measures already being implemented, but may, where applicable, supplement them; and
- Messages must be positive and take account of the specific nature of consumption on the different markets.

Selection of Implementing Body

For the purposes of implementing its programme, the proposing organisation must appoint an Implementing Body to run at least 50% (by value) of the programme. Subject to the conditions laid down in Article 13 (1) of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 501/2008, a proposing organisation may implement certain parts of the programme. The proposal should include full particulars of the tender process and the criteria used by the proposing organisation to select the Implementing Body. The Implementing Body selected must have the necessary financial and technical resources to ensure that the measures are implemented in the most effective manner.

Duration

The programme shall be implemented over a period of at least one year but not more than three years from the date on which the relevant contract takes effect. However programmes for the Marking of Eggs for Human Consumption, and Information and Promotion campaigns for Poultrymeat, will be for either 1 or 2 years. Multi-annual programmes are preferable. Funding is not given for part years.

Selection Criteria

Programmes are subject to an initial evaluation/selection process carried out by RPA and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Programmes will be adjudicated by reference to:

- Compliance with the Regulations;
- Value for money;
- Consistency between the strategies proposed and the objectives set;
- Quality of the proposed measures; and
- Likely impact and success in increasing demand for the products concerned.

Programmes selected under this derogation will be submitted to the European Commission by 15th February 2012 for final evaluation and approval. The Commission shall decide which programmes to co-finance no later than 30th June 2012.

VAT

All programme costs must be included net of VAT.

Contracts and the Provision of Securities

Successful applicants will be required to conclude a contract with RPA within 90 days of receiving approval from the Commission. They will also be required to complete a contract with the Implementing Body. Security equal to 15% of the maximum annual Community contribution must be lodged within the same timescale as the signing of the contract.

RPA will draft a contract with the applicant using as a template the Commission Model Contract for Promotion on the Internal Market, adapted to UK requirements.

Other Conditions

- Trade Organisation shall avail of every opportunity to obtain, rebates, reductions and undertake to credit all such income received to the programme account. In this regard, the trade organisation will seek to obtain the best possible rebates, reductions and commission in the tender document to prospective implementing agencies.
- A unique bank account must be opened and used exclusively for all financial transactions.

- Payments will be made in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No. 501/2008.
- Quarterly reports on the implementation of the contract must be submitted to RPA.
- An annual report must be submitted within four months of completion of annual measures.
- An internal evaluation report on results obtained must also be submitted.

Freedom of Information

The contractor acknowledges that, in order to be compliant with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, or any other applicable legislation governing access to information (the "FOI Legislation"), the competent national authority may be obliged to provide information, on request, to third parties that relates to this contract.

In the event that the competent national authority receives a request for information relating to the contract falling within the scope of the FOI Legislation, the competent national authority shall be entitled to disclose such information as necessary in order to ensure its compliance with the FOI Legislation. Where the competent national authority reasonably considers that information is exempt from disclosure, it shall use reasonable endeavors to consult the contractor, but the competent national authority's decision as to whether such information should be disclosed shall be final and binding.

Date for submissions

The latest date for receipt of proposals is 30th November 2011.

Contact the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) at the following address:

Rural Payments Agency
Promotions Schemes
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE4 7YH

Or by phone or mail:

Steve Wood – Team Leader or (0191) 226 5656
Michelle Lowrey – Team Member:

Email: promotions@rpa.gsi.gov.uk

Other useful contacts:

The scheme is governed by Council Regulation (EC) No. 3/2008 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 501/2008, both as amended.

These regulations are obtainable from the EU website via the following web link, www.ec.europa.eu/eur-lex/lex/en/index.htm. This website is also a useful source of information on all aspects of the EU's information and promotions regime.

In addition, there is a comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions on the RPA website, www.rpa.defra.gov.uk. Then follow the link: RPA schemes/Internal market information & promotions/FAQ's.