



Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program Report to the United States Congress Fiscal Year 2019



Honduran children drinking a nutritious beverage from locally procured commodities. Photo by CRS



Local and Regional Procurement serving as a compliment to the McGovern-Dole Project in Honduras. Photo by CRS

Overview

The U.S. Congress established the USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program (LRP) (7 U.S.C. 1726c) through the Agricultural Act of 2014. The 2014 Farm Bill Section 3206 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, as amended by the Agricultural Act of 2014, provides that the Secretary of Agriculture will provide grants to, or enter into cooperative agreements with, eligible organizations to implement field-based projects that consist of local or regional procurements of eligible commodities in developing countries to provide development assistance and respond to food crises and disasters. The intended outcomes of USDA LRP include enhancing trade capacity of food-insecure developing countries and addressing the cause of chronic food insecurity. The 2014 Farm Bill provides USDA the authority to administer the program and authorizes annual appropriations of up to \$80 million through fiscal year (FY) 2018. The 2018 Farm Bill maintained the same level of appropriations from 2019 to 2023. The 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act directed \$15 million of FY 2019 McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern Dole) program funds to be used to conduct the LRP program. In FY 2019, 4,897 MT of commodities valued at \$5,111,183 were procured and delivered to schools through the LRP program.

Objectives

Congress' objective for USDA's LRP program, as expressed in report language accompanying the 2014 Farm Bill, is "to complement existing food aid programs, especially the McGovern-Dole program, and to fill in nutritional gaps for targeted populations or food availability gaps generated by unexpected emergencies."

USDA LRP builds capacity of farmers, producers, and cooperatives to meet quality standards and product specifications to ensure food safety and nutritional content within each project and with its beneficiaries. To address market sensitivities around local and regional purchases, USDA LRP works with its recipients to improve the reliability and utility of market intelligence in areas where the USDA LRP Program is implemented and seeks to ensure that USDA LRP minimizes potential adverse impacts and maximizes potential benefits.

Fiscal Year 2019 Solicitation

On March 26, 2019, the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FY 2019 proposals and received a total of six applications. The NOFO requested the following information: types and volumes of commodities produced; input supply; producer organizations; levels of aggregation, processing, and distribution; end market use; and governance and enabling environment. This approach warranted that the funding would be used to support farmers, producers, and cooperatives to ensure that the commodities to the end users—school children—would continue to build sustainability for school feeding.

FAS selected three proposals to fund for LRP projects, in Burkina Faso, Cambodia, and Nicaragua, to complement existing USDA McGovern-Dole programs. These three new projects intend to reach 105,639 participants over the course of their work.

Fiscal Year 2019 New Projects

Project I: Burkina Faso

In FY 2019, USDA awarded \$4.8 million to Catholic Relief Services-United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (CRS) to implement a four-year LRP project in Burkina Faso. CRS plans to target four communes in Namentenga Province. Using LRP funds, CRS will procure vitamin A-fortified cottonseed oil through a local competitive tender and millet, rice, and cowpeas through a restricted tender process to local unions and farmers associations to complement the current USDA-donated commodities under the McGovern-Dole school feeding program in Burkina Faso. The LRP project will reach 47,670 children aged 6-16 (22,450 girls and 25,265 boys) in 191 elementary schools with 616 community members, including school cooks and local Comité de Gestion des Ecoles (COGES) members; and 82 transporters and 215 warehouse managers.

Project II: Cambodia

In FY2019, USDA awarded \$4.7 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) to implement a four-year LRP project in Cambodia. The project will reach an estimated 46,900 school children in 157 schools in five districts across three provinces. WFP will provide cash-based transfers for each school to procure animal protein, fresh vegetables, and iodized salt to complement the daily breakfast that is served to school age children. This daily breakfast will complement the FY 2019 McGovern-Dole program that includes USDA fortified rice and USDA vegetable oil. In addition, WFP will work with stakeholders of school feeding in Cambodia to strengthen their capacity on procurement mechanisms, provide technical assistance to producers and suppliers to strengthen

their market engagement, and work at the national level to institutionalize these capacities and systems for local procurement of school feeding to ensure suitability within Cambodia.

Project III: Nicaragua

In FY 2019, USDA awarded \$5.5 million to Project Concern International (PCI) to implement a three-year LRP project in Nicaragua. PCI plans to target two municipalities where McGovern-Dole is currently active in the Department of Jinotega to benefit 10,609 school-age children in approximately 60 schools. The LRP project will increase the capacity of schools and their communities to manage and administer local food procurement for school feeding programs; strengthen market linkages between schools and communities and local food suppliers to facilitate the ongoing supply of agricultural commodities for school meals; and improve agricultural cooperatives' and smallholder farmers' technical expertise to supply target schools with safe and nutritious foods for school feeding programs. Using LRP funds, PCI will procure nutritionally-dense commodities to supplement the current USDA-donated commodities of corn-soy blend, rice and vegetable oil under the McGovern-Dole school feeding program. These locally purchased commodities will include a mix of dry beans, vegetables (carrots, tomatoes, potatoes and cabbage), and animal-based proteins (eggs and milk products) to enhance daily school meals at targeted schools over the project's duration. PCI will partner with parent-teacher associations associated with targeted schools and community leaders supporting feeding programs and improved education.

Ongoing LRP Project Work in FY 2019

LRP projects measure and report on their results in compliance with the Food Assistance Division's monitoring and evaluation system¹. Each project reports on the standard indicators that are relevant to the project's planned work, including standard indicators that are part of the interagency Feed the Future initiative. In FY 2019, aggregate results from active LRP projects show that these projects reached a total of 179,938 participants, including school children, their families, and farmers and producers. 152,417 of these participants are considered social assistance beneficiaries who participate in the productive safety net that the provision of food offers. In FY 2019, LRP projects together also leveraged \$95,892 in new USG and private sector commitments to support food security and nutrition. Finally, the reported value of annual sales of farms and firms participating in LRP projects in FY 2019 was \$777,326. These aggregate results of ongoing LRP projects reflect steps towards improved food security in the households and communities LRP serves.

¹ You can find the M&E Policy at https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2019-06/fad_mande_policy_feb_2019.pdf and the Indicator Handbook at https://www.fas.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2019-06/fad_indicator_handbook_feb_2019_0.pdf which are the two main public documents representing IFAD's M&E system.

Guatemala: *Promoted Links Between the Parent Associations and Local Food Producers*



Farming Families in Huehuetenango supply schools with fresh produce for school feeding.
Photo by PCI

In FY 2018, USDA awarded PCI \$4 million to implement a three-year LRP project in Guatemala. During FY 2019, the project delivered 32.89 MT of fresh food (fruits, vegetables and eggs) to 51 schools benefitting over 10,600 students. PCI is implementing the Nuestra Cosecha project in Huehuetenango (municipalities of Santa Eulalia and Santa Cruz Barillas), Quiché (municipalities of Nebaj and Chajul) and Totonicapán (municipality of Momostenango). The project is being implemented in 51 of the 910 schools participating in McGovern-Dole school feeding programs in the highlands of Guatemala. Through the project, PCI and its partners have Promoted Links Between the Parent Associations

and Local Food Producers, to support local farmers and schools. The project has worked to provide price information obtained from the price monitoring that is regularly conducted in local markets, so that both parties will have reference data on which to base their negotiating. In addition, PCI has also worked on increasing the capacity of government institutions.

Currently, the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN), and Ministry of Health (MOH) actively participate in trainings, meetings and round table discussions on school feeding. Through the LRP program, parent associations have received training on quantifying food received, providing records of acceptance or rejection of the food deliveries, carrying out quality controls by using the corresponding technical specifications, participating in meetings for menu selection, and the selection of fresh food suppliers. PCI has also focused on cost-effectiveness and begun strengthening local producers in the definition and adoption of food quality standards. The program has implemented good farming practices that guarantee the quality and safety of the foods offered by the providers and has verified producers' compliance by means of technical food guides that illustrate the criteria for their acceptance or rejection to avoid putting students' health at risk.

Honduras: *Diversified and Nutritious School Meals*

In FY 2018, USDA awarded CRS \$2.4 million to implement a two-year LRP project in the department of Intibucá, Honduras. The project aims to improve the consumption of nutritious and diverse food in McGovern-Dole supported schools. Since August 2019, the project has delivered 100.25 MT of produce and 10.45MT of eggs to 314 schools, benefitting over 13,000 students. At



Students of the Héctor Orlando Cisneros Institute in Honduras receiving school meals including LRP vegetables and eggs. Photo Marlon Garcia. September 2019

Hector Orlando Cisneros Institute, located in the municipality of Magdalena in the department of Intibucá, Honduras, the project has delivered 978 kg of produce (carrots, pumpkin, squash, cabbage, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, radish, potatoes, green bananas, and lemons) and 1,708 medium size eggs benefitting 122 students (70 girls and 52 boys). The

school principal, Mrs. Delmy Xiomara Nolasco, observed, “when the basic ration was diversified, 100 percent of students ate the food and there is greater school attendance.” The LRP project is supported by the Parents’ Association, which helped with the transfer of food products from the receiving center to the schools and collaborated with the care and management of food.

Senegal: *Mung beans — Adding Protein to Villagers’ Diets*



A Farmers group is shown planting Mung beans in Senegal.
Photo by CPI

In FY 2018, USDA awarded Counterpart International (CPI) \$3.6 million to implement a three-year LRP project in Senegal. The LRP project is working in the Saint-Louis region supporting 270 schools that are both supported by the McGovern-Dole and LRP project. The project is linking 30,000 school age children with more nutritionally dense school meals by supporting local cowpea, millet, orange flesh sweet potato and mung bean production.

In FY 2019, the project not only provided technical assistance to schools and established cooperative procurement groups, but also reduced the incidence of hunger and increase nutrition by providing training on mung bean production. In FY 2019, the project procured 40.3 MT of millet and 16 MT of cow peas. The project is planning to target 15 schools, benefitting 3126 Students in FY 2020. Additionally, in FY 2019, 207 kg of mung beans have been produced by 10 school communities to benefit 2,329 students. The schools benefiting from the millet and cow peas are different than the schools benefiting from the mung beans.

Training on the mung bean consisted of learning about the mung bean value chain, including how to grow the plants, seed identification and quality, water relation to plant and soil, and efficient water use. During the training, community members learned of the many nutritional benefits of mung beans, including that the mung bean is filled with protein and micronutrients such as iron, which are commonly lacking in the starch-based diets. Mung bean seeds were distributed to families to encourage them to plant at home. They were also distributed to schools to seed school gardens or community plots. To date, 12 communities have received training on mung bean production. Since the training in July/August, communities have started to harvest their mung beans and are including them in school canteens that are being served under this project.

Benin: *Supporting Local Engagement for School Meals Provision*

In FY 2017, USDA awarded CRS \$1.96 million to implement a two-year LRP project in Benin. In FY 2019, USDA granted the project a three-month no-cost extension to finish construction activities and add six weeks of school feeding. Focused in the Department of Borgou, CRS has been supplying locally procured maize, parboiled rice, cowpea and shea butter to create a nutrient-dense meal to 80 schools. To date, the project has procured locally produced commodities including: 111.52 MT of parboiled rice, 43.02 MT of cowpeas, 14.88 MT of shea butter, and 161.42 MT of maize. Plans are in place to procure an additional 35.614 MT of commodities in the first month of the FY 2020 school year.



Photo: Lady Sabi Mero, by Ismail MAMA, CRS July 2019

In FY 2019, to build the capacity of local farmers, the project provided training on best practices for production techniques, soil preparation, risk mitigation against disease, and pest management. To ensure the sustainability of activities beyond the project’s end date, the project trained producer associations in public procurement policies in Benin, best practices in contract farming, and how to register their association in Benin. These trainings led to 10 producer associations becoming registered through the Departmental Administration of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery, known as the DDAEP, and six currently going through the process.

In FY 2020, CRS will finish school construction and complete handover of the structures to communities and schools, in line with Benin local law. These 2020 plans are funded by the LRP agreement, which includes construction and rehabilitation of storage rooms and kitchens as one of the activities listed in the agreement. In addition, CRS will distribute the remaining commodities to schools and continue to meet with relevant stakeholders to advocate for the handover of the LRP schools to the Benin government.

Kenya: Ensuring National Ownership of School Meals Programs



Schools in Baringo, Turkana, and West Pokot are introducing locally grown foods into the lunch menu to increase diversity and nutrition as well as promote agriculture and local trade. Photo by WFP/ William Orlake

In FY 2017, USDA awarded \$1 million to the WFP to implement a two-year LRP project in Kenya. The project is supporting the Government of Kenya’s effort to expand, in a sustainable manner, the government’s own national Home-Grown School Feeding Program (HGSMF) into the arid lands. In FY 2019, WFP contracted local farmers to produce the drought-resistant crops of sorghum and cowpeas for use in the school meals program. The project procured 138 MT of sorghum valued at

\$51,100 and 79 mts of cow peas valued at \$59,000 from farmer organizations in 2019. Procurement of food from the local farmers has stimulated local food production, increased the farmers’ incomes, and created additional jobs in the community.

“On top of introducing new items on the menu, we are training the teachers and cooks on hygienic ways of handling food in order to improve safety,” said Judy Ndungu, Program Associate at WFP. “In the school kitchen, we have a fireplace, the utensils we use to cook, and the place where we

serve the food from,” said Nicholas Kandagor, Public Health Officer-Turkana South. “It is important that we maintain cleanliness, both in the kitchen and at a personal level in order to avoid contaminating the food.” Through these trainings, WFP is teaching appropriate food storage, safe food preparation and handling skills to all actors. Although WFP formally handed over the financing and implementation school meals program to the Government of Kenya in July 2018, it continues to give technical support to the Ministry of Education. Through these trainings, WFP is teaching appropriate food storage, safe food preparation, and handling skills to all actors at the school level so that they can subsequently develop healthy behaviors in the community.

With LRP funding, WFP has helped the government assess the local agricultural sectors in the three counties of Baringo, Turkana, and West Pokot by identifying and mapping the locally produced, drought-tolerant, sorghum and cowpeas. WFP has also benefited local farmers through training on food production, post-harvest handling techniques, and marketing and sales. To sustain the benefits of McGovern-Dole in improving nutrition in school-aged children,



Sorghum and cowpeas — locally grown drought tolerant crops. Photo by WFP/ William Orlale

the LRP project continues to integrate health and nutrition education in the national school curriculum and has developed menus that use culturally acceptable, nutrient-rich food. The curriculum includes a set of HGSMF dietary guidelines for government officials, school administrators, and school meals procurement committees.

The safe food handling and preparation (water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition promotion) program for schools is funded by McGovern Dole, Canada and Unilever. The menu and recipe development for sorghum and cowpeas for inclusion in school meals was funded by the USDA LRP Project. Training was facilitated by WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation (MOALFI) at national, county and sub county levels.

Tanzania: *Improving Agriculture Production*

In October 2017, USDA awarded Project Concern International (PCI) \$2 million to implement a two-year LRP project called *Chakula Chetu*, which means “Our Food” in Swahili. The Chakula Chetu program was designed with a meal phase over plan for a gradual transition away from donor-funded commodity procurement toward a locally led and sustainable school feeding program.

In FY 2019, PCI provided daily school meals to 14,468 students and additional school staff including teachers, cooks and guards, in 16 primary schools. The school meals were prepared with commodities from the LRP project purchased from local food suppliers, and from voluntary contribution from the community, including farmer groups. Total community contribution (voluntary contribution) amounted to 40.6 MT in FY 2019.



Farmer group receiving maize seeds purchased with their own funds from a private seed company. Photo by PCI

percent of farmer group members to purchase 3.85 MT of seeds for their farms. Similarly, PCI supported all 16 schools to develop and nurture vegetable gardens to complement the supply of foods for school meals. A total of 1.8 MT of vegetables were produced and consumed in school meals.

The program also built the capacity of local stakeholders to eventually lead and manage the school feeding program. Forty one public-private partnerships were active through LRP interventions in Butiama District, including 34 farmer groups comprising 799 farmers (305 Males, 494 Females), three seed companies, one financial institution, and three food suppliers. As a result, communities contributed 39.7 MT of food commodities for school feeding, farmer groups sold 179.6 MT of food commodities through local market and project suppliers, and farmer group members accessed \$7,032 in financial loans, which enabled 65



School garden club showcasing their school garden. Photo by PCI

Chakula Chetu improves the effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement by improving the cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and utilization of nutritious and culturally acceptable food that meet quality standards. In FY 2019, the project was extended by one year in order to strengthen the successes achieved in the program. During this extension period (FY 2020), PCI will continue to reinforce sustainability strategies, such as building relationships and partnerships with local government (national, regional, and local levels) and other development partners.

Utilizing both *Chakula Chetu* and PCI's McGovern-Dole program as model school feeding programs, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) requested PCI to take lead in designing and developing Tanzania's first National School Feeding Guideline and Manual. This will be part of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan—a collaborative effort between Tanzania's Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) and the MoEST. PCI continues to collaborate closely with the Government of Tanzania's various ministries and other school feeding program implementing organizations to develop this important guide and manual that will be scaled across Tanzania.

Mozambique: Building Sustainability for School Meals



Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potatoes Improve Rural Community Life. Photo by WV.

In FY 2017, USDA awarded World Vision, Inc. (World Vision) \$2 million to implement a two-year LRP project, benefitting 43 schools and nearly 25,000 school-age children in the Nampula Province of Mozambique. World Vision has worked to incorporate orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) into the daily school meal. In addition to addressing poor farmer participation, the

production of OFSP was not common in the communities, so World Vision-Mozambique provided technical assistance to the members of the farmer groups on improved agricultural production techniques, disease and pest control and agribusiness. A total of 1,059 farmers were trained during the project period. The project also started awareness campaigns about the production of OFSP and their richness in nutrients, minerals and their importance to health. The awareness campaigns benefited 5,295 farmers. The project trained 251 volunteer cooks in the preparation of locally procured commodities. Ninety-two farmer group leaders were also trained in procurement and contracting. Following these trainings and sensitizations, the farmers decided to open a field of one-hectare for production of orange fleshed sweet potatoes, which received all needed technical assistance provided by USDA funded World Vision-Mozambique.



Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potatoes harvesting. Photo by WV.

Overall, the project locally procured 213.85 MT Beans, 194.65 MT of groundnuts, 159.70 MT of OFSP and 25.35 MT of salt, making available to the local market about \$416,000. During this project, the farmer groups harvested 159.70 metric tons of OFSP. The members earned \$45,800 from the sale of the produce to schools and local market. The produce was paid for with the grant funds. Prices were normally negotiated between the schools and the farmer groups based on prevailing market prices. World Vision used the grant funds to pay based on the quantities supplied to the schools and the agreed prices. The members of the farmers group are satisfied with the expected income and say that this is a profitable crop compared to others produced in the district, such as peanuts and beans; hence, the farmers continue producing orange flesh sweet potato after the project ended to meet local market demand. The

income generated from the activity allowed the farmer groups to build a group fund and contribute to their economic empowerment. With their improved cash income, some farmers have opened

small shops to meet the needs of community members for items not normally produced in the communities. Most of the farmer groups have obtained business registration certificates and opened bank accounts. They are now lobbying the banks to open branches closer to them to help facilitate their transactions.

Rwanda: *Boosting Local Production to Enhance Sustainability*

In FY 2016, USDA awarded WFP \$2 million to implement a LRP project aimed at complementing the existing McGovern-Dole project in Rwanda with local procurement of maize meal and beans. In FY 2019, a total of 41,521 students benefited from meals made with locally procured commodities, and 6,640 farmers benefited from a wide range of value chain support services. LRP support activities, including training in post-harvest handling and storage (PHHS) to reduce spoilage and post-harvest loss, and good agricultural practices including soil preparation, have resulted in cooperatives' increased production and quality, and improved market access.



Farmer from Ingenzi cooperative in Nyamagabe, Rwanda showing the commodity bags used for the maize harvested under the UDA LRP program.
Photo by WFP.

As a direct result of the support from USDA to WFP, LRP-supported cooperatives were empowered to sell a total of 1,166 MT of maize and beans to formal markets, generating over \$322,000 in sales for their members over the lifespan of the LRP project. At the end of the project, 15 out of 16 cooperatives reported an increase in yields from a baseline of 1.5 MT/Ha to yields of up to 3.5 MT/Ha, with most respondents reporting yields of 2-3 MT/Ha. The production can therefore be estimated at between 796 and 1,195.5 MT for 15 cooperatives. This represents a yield increase of between 33 and 100 percent, which in combination with improvements to quality of produce, allowed cooperatives to enhance their market performance. On average, these cooperatives were able to earn between 13 and 18 percent price premiums by selling to established buyers as compared to local markets, generating much needed additional profit for members. The primary buyer the project linked the cooperatives to was Africa Improved Foods, the only producer of fortified blended foods (including Supercereal and Supercereal plus) on the African continent that meets international standards. WFP is also facilitating the signing of forward delivery contracts to establish long-term relationships between smallholder farmers and the private sector to maximize sustainability.

Laos: Complementing McGovern-Dole with Local Production



A Laotian farmer watering her garden to provide fresh vegetables to the school lunch program. Photo by WFP

In FY 2016, USDA awarded WFP \$1 million to implement an LRP project in the northern Nalae District of Luang Namtha Province. The project has provided agricultural support to 1,132 farmers and Laotian communities in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Interactions with these farmers during an evaluation conducted in 2019 revealed that the training sessions have resulted in an increase in the farmers' knowledge levels around agriculture. The project built the capacity of farmers to produce nutritious and diverse foods through trainings on basic nutrition, food processing, greenhouse construction, soil

improvement, and crop lifecycles. Thanks to the increased use of greenhouses and improved farming practices, farmers were able to sell 196 MT of produce in FY 2019. In order to ensure sustainability of the interventions beyond the end of the project, the project planted 9,070 fruit trees, expanded 54 greenhouses, and provided fish fingerlings to 208 households. A 2019 evaluation concluded that the program created and strengthened farmer groups, enabling them to focus on a diversified set of vegetables all-year round with the help of greenhouse techniques.

To promote schools as a sustainable market for the farmer groups, the project provided 47 schools with the equivalent of \$.10 per student per day through a cash-based transfer. The schools then purchased a variety of fresh vegetables, fish, and eggs to complement the U.S. rice, lentils, and vegetable oil provided under the McGovern-Dole project. Farmers groups provided 3-5 kgs of fresh vegetables to each school every day. A 2019 evaluation noted that discussions with school children indicated that on an average they consumed non-vegetarian meals three times per week. Improvement in the ability to concentrate in class and learning outcomes post LRP was reported by officials, teachers and parents. In July of 2019, the project officially handed over the activities in Nalae district to the Government of Laos. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the government assumed the responsibility of the school meals program implementation in Nalae district, including the cash-based transfer to the schools.