

Industry Engagement Framework: Collecting and Acting on Stakeholder Priorities

PURPOSE

To ensure hemp and agribusiness stakeholders have a clear channel to voice their needs, identify challenges, and co-create strategies for industry growth. This framework provides a multi-channel approach to engagement and feedback collection.

ENGAGEMENT COMPONENTS

1. Quarterly Digital Surveys

- Quick pulse checks (5 minutes, 6–8 questions).
- Tracks evolving business needs and priorities.

2. Bi-Annual Listening Sessions

- Small roundtables (6–10 participants).
- Open dialogue guided by key prompts.

3. Advisory/International Programming Council

- 10–12 diverse industry leaders.
- Quarterly “Top 3 Priorities” memos.

4. Anonymous Input Channel

- Always-open form for candid feedback.
- Promoted via website, newsletters, QR codes.

5. Live Interactive Polling at Events

- Quick priority identification in real time.
- Builds engagement during conferences and summits.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Transparency is key. Each quarter, a “**What We Heard**” Report (2–3 pages) will summarize:

- Key themes and trends.
- Top 3 industry priorities.
- Next steps or actions being taken.

TIMELINE (YEAR ONE)

- **Q1:** Launch baseline industry survey + 2 listening sessions.
- **Q2:** Form Advisory Council, open anonymous input channel.
- **Q3:** Publish first “What We Heard” report.
- **Q4:** Use live polling at events, conduct second survey, publish annual summary.

BENEFITS

- Creates a trusted space for candid feedback.
- Aligns industry advocacy with real business needs.
- Provides funders and policymakers with credible, aggregated insights.
- Strengthens the industry by uniting diverse voices.

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Industrial
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Grant Program Guidance: RAPP, MAP, EMP

PURPOSE: This memo provides formal guidance on the use of funds under the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP), Market Access Program (MAP), and Emerging Markets Program (EMP), administered by the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

1. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- International trade shows and expositions.
- Foreign market research and consumer studies.
- Promotional campaigns in international markets.
- Training or technical assistance for overseas partners.
- Trade servicing and technical exchanges abroad.

2. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Domestic activities (within the U.S.) are not eligible under RAPP, MAP, or EMP, except as noted in Section 3.

- U.S. advertising or consumer promotions.
- Market development campaigns aimed at U.S. consumers.
- Domestic trade events not directly linked to reverse trade missions.

3. EXCEPTION: REVERSE TRADE MISSIONS

The only allowable domestic activity under these programs is a sanctioned Reverse Trade Mission (RTM). RTMs bring qualified international buyers to the U.S. to:

- Visit U.S. suppliers.
- Observe production and processing practices.
- Build long-term trade relationships.

RTMs must be explicitly approved in advance by USDA FAS.

4. HIRING AND SUBCONTRACTS

- Only third-party service providers (e.g., consultants, marketing firms, event organizers) may be contracted with grant funds, and only if pre-approved in the activity plan.
- All subcontracts must follow USDA FAS procurement rules (competitive bidding, cost principles, documentation).
- Funds cannot be used to hire or subcontract with another domestic hemp membership organization. As the only USDA/FAS-

recognized hemp cooperator, subcontracting to competing organizations constitutes a conflict of interest and is not permitted.

5. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- All international travel must be pre-approved by USDA FAS.
- Travel requests must include purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.
- Travel must comply with Federal Travel Regulations (per diem, airfare).
- Non-approved travel is not reimbursable.

6. COMPLIANCE & OVERSIGHT

- Activities must comply with 7 CFR Part 1485 (MAP); 7 CFR Part 1489 (RAPP); 7 CFR Part 1486 (EMP); 41 CFR Subtitle F (Federal Travel Regulations); and USDA FAS program notices.
- Documentation is required for activity plan approvals, cost-share and financial tracking, and post-activity reporting.

KEY TAKEAWAY

RAPP, MAP, and EMP funds are global in scope. No domestic activity is permitted except sanctioned Reverse Trade Missions. All hiring and travel must be pre-approved, and contracting with domestic hemp membership organizations is strictly prohibited. Any specific upcoming activity questions/approvals must be addressed to NIHC at least 90 days prior to any activity planning.

CITATIONS

- 7 CFR Part 1485 – Market Access Program Regulations
- 7 CFR Part 1489 – Regional Agricultural Promotion Program
- 7 CFR Part 1486 – Emerging Market Program
- 41 CFR Subtitle F – Federal Travel Regulations
- USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Notices & Program Guidance
- USDA Standard Terms & Conditions for Agreements