**U.S. Department of State**
**Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs**
**U.S. Embassy Tunis**
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600

# Creating Greater Economic Wealth through the Handicraft Value Chain in Tunisia

**Opportunity Number:** *NEAAC-EMBASSYTUNIS-16-001*

## Key Information:

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| **Announcement Type** | **New** |
| **Date Opened** | **April 21, 2017** |
| **Questions & Intent to Apply Due (Section VI.I)** | **May 3, 2017** |
| **Application Deadline** | **June 1, 2017** |
| **Expected Date of Notification (Section VI.A)** | **August 1, 2017** |
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# Funding Opportunity Synopsis:

## Project Synopsis:

The United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit, is seeking proposals for a cooperative agreement from qualified U.S. and Non-U.S. organizations to implement a program entitled "Creating Greater Economic Wealth through the Handicraft Value Chain in Tunisia". Eligibility for this award is not restricted. See Section III of this NOFO for eligibility requirements.

Handicraft production is one of the most dynamic sectors of the Tunisian economy, draws on long-standing cultural traditions, and is practiced throughout the country. Tunisian handicraft production is supported by the Government of Tunisia and holds potential for further job creation by supporting an increase in handicraft exports. It currently represents 4% of GDP and employs 11% of the entire workforce and 85% of Tunisian craftspeople are women. According to the National Office of Handicraft, there are about 400,000 artisans in Tunisia. However, only 150,000 artisans and 1800 companies are registered and only 625 of these companies are exporting their products. The Embassy aims to create employment opportunities by providing technical expertise to Tunisian artisans to enable them to fine tune their products to meet the international standards, and by partnering with the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Office of Handicraft to facilitate the participation of artisans in international markets and to increase the export of their products.

### Eligible Countries and Territories:

In this announcement, we seek to support projects in Tunisia. **Please note: Applications that focus on activities in countries and territories other than those discussed will not be considered.**

**All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application.**

## Background Information about U.S. Embassy Tunis:

The United States Embassy in Tunisia remains a committed partner to Tunisia by working with its government, private sector, and civil society as they lay the foundation for the country's future. Since 2011, The United States has supported Tunisia's democratic transition with economic, security, and governance assistance totaling more than $865 million. U.S. support focuses on strengthening the Tunisian business climate to support the growth of enterprises, jobs, and bilateral trade; bolstering security capacity to mitigate internal and external threats, and fostering inclusive governance and human rights protections.

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## I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The program aims to create employment opportunities by supporting an increase in Tunisian handicraft exports. The project must provide technical expertise to Tunisian artisans to enable them to fine tune their products to meet the international standards. Applicants should partner with the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Office of Handicraft to facilitate the participation of artisans in international markets and to increase the export of their products. Special focus should be given to women artisans from underserved areas, including rural areas and the interior regions of Tunisia. This NOFO is aligned with the U.S. 2017 Assistance Priorities for Tunisia as well as the 2015-2017 Integrated Country Strategy goal of spurring sustainable economic growth through increasing private investment and bilateral trade.

In order to support the democratic consolidation in Tunisia, the United States government has designed a number of successful programs spurring sustainable economic growth, championing good governance, and countering terrorism and violent extremism in the country. The recipient shall coordinate with other USG partners in the economic growth sector. A list of the projects will be provided before the start of the program.

Tunisia remains heavily dependent on the international community for continued financial and technical assistance. The World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Union (EU) all support sectorial approaches to reform. The recipient is expected to coordinate with the international donor community in supporting Tunisia in the handicraft sector.

### Funding Opportunity Objectives:

Responsive applicants must address the strengthening, development, or expansion of new or existing handicraft-related value chains in Tunisia. Every effort should be made to ensure that all activities/trainings must focus on gender parity in the curriculum and technical assistance will be taken into consideration in the review process.

In addition, responsive applicants <u>will address one or more of the three identified objectives</u> of this Announcement:

1) Increased handicraft exports through improving artisans' knowledge of foreign market requirements and developing their skills in areas like marketing, communication, customs, taxation, etc.;

2) Improved capacity of relevant support institutions to assist artisans in areas such as market opportunity, market access, certifications, and the creation of local value chains to create competitive artisanal products; and

3) Development of new financial products or services, or enhanced availability of existing financial products and services, through work with traditional and/or non-traditional lenders and artisan groups.

The following activities and costs are **<u>NOT ALLOWED</u>** under this announcement:

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- Social welfare projects;
- Paying to complete activities begun with other funds;
- Activities that appear partisan or that support individual or party electoral campaigns;
- Academic or analytical research (if not necessary as part of a larger project);
- One-time events, such as stand-alone conferences and one-off round tables;
- Medical and psychological research and clinical studies;
- Projects of a commercial or profit-making nature;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, or festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g., receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

**Applications that include any of these activities or costs above will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

## <u>SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT</u>

The United States Embassy anticipates having substantial involvement throughout the implementation of this Cooperative Agreement. This substantial involvement will be through the GO, except to the extent that the GO delegates authority to the GOR in writing.

The specific areas of Embassy Tunis' substantial involvement will include:

a. Approval of the recipient's annual implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans;

b. Participation in the selection committee of artisans

c. Final approval of the selected artisans by the Grants Officer

d. Approval of any public materials.

## II. AWARD INFORMATION

**Funding Mechanism Type:** **Cooperative Agreement**

**Estimated Number of Awards:** **2-3**

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** **$1,280,000**

**Estimated Award Ceiling:** **$1,280,000**

**Estimated Award Floor:** **$250,000**

**Cost-Sharing or Matching:** **Encouraged; not required**

**Length of Project Period:** **Two Years**

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately $1,280,000 in Bilateral Economic Support Funds for approximately one to three cooperative agreements will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for a 2-year period depending on the activities proposed. The anticipated start date for this program is on or about **November 30, 2017**. NEA/ Embassy Tunis reserves the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

This request for full applications **does not** constitute an award or commitment on the part of the U.S. government to make any awards, **nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application.**

***Non-Competing Continuation***

Continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; grantee's progress in meeting grant requirements, including timely submission of required reports and compliance with all terms and conditions of the award; timely submission of a request for additional funding; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State.

## III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applications will be screened by NEA/Embassy Tunis to determine whether they meet all of the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

**NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

**Nothing can be added to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

## A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include U.S. or foreign non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations; private institutions of higher education, public or state institutions of higher education; public international organizations; and small businesses with function and regional experience in areas like regulatory policies and reform, economic governance, organization strengthening, and entrepreneurship] in the MENA region. **NEA/Embassy Tunis strongly encourages applications from civil society organizations headquartered in the Middle East and North Africa region.** International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition**.

Applicants must have established financial management, monitoring and evaluation processes, internal control systems, and policies and procedures that comply with established U.S. Government standards, laws, and regulations. The successful applicant(s) may be subject to a responsibility determination assessment (Pre-award Survey) by the Grant Officer (GO).

The recipient must be a responsible entity. The GO may determine a pre-award survey is required to conduct an examination that will determine whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

NEA/Embassy Tunis is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/Embassy Tunis welcomes applications irrespective of an applicants' race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We encourage applications from organizations working with underserved communities, including women, people with disabilities, and youth.

## B. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### *B.1 Prime Applicant*

Applicants must have the organizational capacity to implement program components in Tunisia. Applicants must also have experience in conducting risk assessments and monitoring and evaluating programs and sub-recipients in order to document and assess the short- and long-term outcomes of proposed projects. Extensive partnerships with Tunisia-based organizations are necessary to ensure that all program activities can be implemented quickly. Additionally, applicants should:

- Demonstrate expertise in NEA/Embassy Tunis' strategic focus areas of civic engagement and a strong understanding of needs in the region. Experience implementing projects similar to those addressed in this NOFO.
- Demonstrate experience working in the MENA region and expertise in developing and implementing political and social reform projects.

- Demonstrate capacity to operate an assistance management program of multiple and diverse activities across the MENA region.
- Demonstrate experience managing and monitoring a significant number of sub-recipients and/or direct assistance projects. Applications must clearly outline this experience, including total volume (total dollar amount, number of partners, and number of projects), size and length of sub-awards managed, and geographic and thematic focus. If the applicant has provided capacity-building support to sub-grantees, please indicate the type of support. A sample sub-grant risk assessment and monitoring plan, and sub-award policy/manual, must be provided as part of the proposal.
- Demonstrate in the program and budget narratives how the assistance mechanism will be managed, monitored and evaluated to ensure compliance with the project objectives and Federal regulations. (The successful applicant will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of all sub-recipients, and/or other direct assistance to ensure completion of activities, programmatic efficacy, institutional strengthening, and financial propriety.)
- Demonstrate the ability to accomplish the required activities with minimal full-time staffing and without establishing a dedicated local office in the MENA region.
- Demonstrate the ability to involve local partners.

### *B.2 Local Partners*

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit projects that include partnerships with local organizations that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. **In particular, Embassy Tunis strongly encourages applicants not based in the MENA region to partner with local organizations.** The inclusion of a partnership will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See Part V, Section A for more information).

A partnership is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations or individuals that defines substantive, collaborative roles for each of the partners in planning and implementing a project. If proposing partners, applicants should provide the following in their submission:

- Describe how the partner(s) will contribute to the objectives of the project;
- Detail how the partner(s) has been involved in the project design at the proposal stage;
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, project evaluation, and project sustainability relative to the lead applicant's;
- Provide a description of the organization (including a link to its website) as well as specific examples of its experience working in the proposed content area(s);
- Explain how the applicant organization will provide programmatic oversight and support to the partner(s); and,
- Provide a letter of intent or letter of agreement from the prospective partner(s) detailing how they will collaborate with the applicant organization on the proposed project.

In addition, applicants who propose working with sub-grant(s) must describe in both the program and budget narratives how the sub-grant(s) will be managed, monitored, and evaluated to ensure compliance with project objectives and Federal regulations.

To apply for NEA/Embassy Tunis (Federal) funding organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM).

### *B.3 UEI Number*

The UEI number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

**All applicants must have a UEI number.** To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp.
2. Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC), and annual revenue.

For technical difficulties in obtaining this number, please contact D&B at: govt@dnb.com.

### *B.4 System for Award Management (SAM)*

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

**Further, applicants must maintain an active account, with current information, while its application is under consideration for funding.** To keep an active SAM.gov account, applicants must renew it at least once each year. **If an organization's account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

To create a new account, please follow the steps below:

1. Go to http://www.sam.gov.
2. Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details.* Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.
3. Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM User Guide), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at: https://www.fsd.gov or contact them at: 001-334-206-7828.

## C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

### *C.1 Cost-Sharing or Matching*

There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/Embassy Tunis encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

Cost-sharing or matching is not an evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, recipients must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 - Cost Sharing and Matching.

# IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

## A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

**NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section A.1 below will not advance to the Technical Review stage.** Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

### *A.1 Required Documents*

**Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF424b):**
Applicants must complete all three forms online to be considered for funding. **Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF-424a is provided in Appendix 3.**

**Table of Contents:** There is a 1 page limit for this section of an application**.**

**Project Narrative**:
The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. The applicant must articulate in the narrative how its organizational capacity and experience demonstrates the institutional capability to plan, implement, and support complex programming and the range of activities in this NOFO. The applicant must make clear the delineation of roles, responsibilities, authority, and processes for decision making within the implementation team. It may be **no longer than 15 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

**Budget Narrative Submission**:
Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

There is **no page limit** for this section of an application. A sample template can be found in Appendix 3 and a fill-able template is available for download online with the announcement. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. More details on preparing the

Budget Narrative are provided in Appendix 3. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 3 before preparing their Narrative.**

**Results Monitoring Plan:**
A Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) describes the measures proposed by an applicant to capture and demonstrate progress toward achieving the objectives of the proposed project. There is a **5 page limit** for this section of an application. Please see the "Measurement of Results" section above for further guidance.
The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See Part V, Section A for more information). **More information about preparing this Plan can be found in Appendix 3. NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. RMPs should be attached as a separate document and has no page limit.

**Key Personnel:**
Professional bios for lead project personnel in applicant and partner organizations. Summary professional information may be included within the project narrative or as a separate document included in the optional documents of the application. Please refer to minimum qualifications below. May not exceed **2 pages each** for this section of an application.

The following positions have been designated as key personnel, and are essential to the work performed under this Award. Prior to replacing any of these individuals, the recipient shall notify both the Grant Officer and the Grant Officer Representative reasonably in advance and must submit written justification (including proposed substitutions) in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the impact on the program. No replacement shall be made by the recipient without the prior written consent of the Grant Officer:

Project Director (PD): The PD will be the principal point of contact in Tunisia for procedural and substantive matters. The recipient must delegate adequate authority to the PD to make all program implementation decisions and to speak for the recipient. The PD will be responsible for all reporting requirements to the U.S. Embassy and is expected to play a lead role interacting with the U.S. Embassy, other development partners and other public/private stakeholders, i.e. Government of Tunisia (GoT), Ministry of Tourism, NGOs, CSOs, etc.

Minimum qualifications:
The PD must be a senior level professional having at least a five-year proven track record of leadership, management, project implementation of similar activities and successfully delivering expected outcomes. The PD should have excellent interpersonal skills, strong writing skills, and a proven track record of collaboration with multiple public/private stakeholders. It is critical that the candidate understands policy-making and investment planning, is comfortable operating cross-culturally, and is experienced in a variety of less technologically advanced market environments. The candidate must hold an advanced degree in a relevant field, such as education, arts and sciences, humanities or other related

fields. S/he must have fluent English language skills. In addition to English, fluency in Arabic and French is preferred.

Program Manager (PM): The PM will be responsible for needs assessments, planning and development of activities and joint ventures with partners/technical institutes in the project. The PM will also be responsible for developing and implementing management processes and resource allocation that ensures cost-effective and efficient delivery.

Minimum qualifications:
The PM must have experience in handicraft and capacity building, especially in-service training, planning and development of training activities, joint ventures with partners, and tracking and management of the interventions. The PM must have an understanding of gender inclusiveness issues and challenges in such programs. The candidate must hold a degree in economics or a related field with at least 4 years of experience in similar activities. S/he must have fluent English language skills. In addition to English, fluency in Arabic and French l is mandatory.

**Theory of Change (or Program Logic):**
Diagram outlining how the different components of the program will connect to the project goal and to the proposed activities of the project. The theory of change (or program logic): 1) defines a program goal linked to country and regional strategies, 2) lists objectives necessary to reach the goal, 3) provides illustrative activities to accomplish each objective, and 4) provides strong justification for how the implementation of proposed activities and the achievement of proposed objectives will ultimately reach the stated goal. There is a **5 page limit** for this section of an application.

### *A.2 Optional Documents*

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a **15 page limit** for this section of the application. If applicable, the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement **is excluded** from the page numbering. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

- **Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent:** Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from their proposed partners.
- **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
- **Work Plans, Project Timeline, and/or Calendar of Activities:** A work plan is a detailed list of proposed activities, milestones, and approximate dates. Applicants may choose to include a work plan, project timeline, and/or calendar of proposed activities.
- **Pre-Submission Checklist** can be found in Appendix 6 and a fill-able template can be downloaded online with the announcement at www.grantsolutions.gov or

www.grants.gov. This Checklist ensures that an applicant has accurately documented the eligibility requirements and included all major components of the application.
- **Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:** Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget Narrative greater than the 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). There is **no page limit** for the NICRA.
- **Sustainability Plan:** The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in Appendix 3. Sustainability Plans should be attached as separate document and may not exceed **two pages**.

**NOTE: The Project Narrative and Results Monitoring Plan may not exceed 20 pages. Applications that exceed the allowable page limit will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

### *A.3 Application Formatting Requirements*

The required font is 12-point, Times New Roman. All application documents must be single spaced, with all margins (left, right, top, and bottom) of at least one inch each. Also, applicants should ensure all pages in the application package are numbered consecutively and meet the page limit requirements outlined in Section A.1 and A.2 above. **The Standard Forms 424 (SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b) are excluded from the page numbering.**

**It is strongly recommended that applicants submit grant applications using Microsoft Office.** If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted. In addition, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a Table of Contents with their submission.

Adhering to the standards outlined above will help to ensure the accurate submission of the document. Failure to comply with these requirements may affect the successful transmission and consideration of an application.

## B. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either via email at ForeignAssistanceTunis@state.gov or Grants.gov. This system requires that the applying organization have an account with the system and requires a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in Part III above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.** NEA/Embassy Tunis is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

### *B.1 via Email*

Applications submitted electronically via Email must be submitted electronically in two separate volumes: (a) technical and (b) budget applications. Email submissions must include the following in the subject line:

"Technical application under NOFO-NOFO Number, submitted by: [name of organization]."
"Budget application under NOFO-NOFO Number, submitted by: [name of organization]."

Technical Application Documents:
- Program Narrative
- Table of Contents
- Results Monitoring Plan
- Key Personnel
- Theory of Change
- + Optional documents

Budget Application Documents:
- SF424 Forms
- Budget Narrative
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- + Optional documents

For an application sent via multiple emails, please indicate in the subject line of the email whether the email relates to the technical or budget application, and the desired sequence of multiple emails (if more than one is sent) and of attachments (e.g. "No. 1 of 4", etc.). For example, if your budget application is being sent in two emails, the first email should have a subject line which says: "[organization name], Budget Application, Part 1 of 2".

Our preference is that the technical application and the budget application be submitted as single email attachments, e.g. that you consolidate the various parts of a technical application into a single document before sending them. If this is not possible, please provide instructions on how to collate the attachments. The U.S. Embassy will not be responsible for errors in compiling electronic applications if no instructions are provided or are unclear. All applications received by the submission deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the NOFO and the application format. No additions or modifications will be accepted after the submission deadline.

After you have sent your applications electronically, immediately check your own email to confirm that the attachments you intended to send were indeed sent. If you discover an error in your transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email or indicate in the file name if submitted via grants.gov that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

All applications received by the deadline stated above will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and compliance with the application format. Applicants are expected to review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may result in your application being determined as "non-responsive" and may forego further review.

The application must be signed by the organization's representative who will also serve as the primary point of contact for their submission, with the authority to negotiate and enter into an award with the Department of State. Please print or type their name on the Cover Page of the technical and budget applications. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

**The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/Embassy Tunis). Please allow sufficient time for entering the application into these systems. It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor its application to ensure that it is successfully received and validated.**

### *B.2 Grants.gov*

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to** www.grants.gov **and click on the "Register" link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

## C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 (GMT) on **June 1, 2017. There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/Embassy Tunis (ForeignAssistanceTunis@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline. Although NEA/Embassy Tunis will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

## D. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### *D.1 Representation by Organization Regarding a Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Criminal Conviction*

In accordance with section 7073 of Division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76) none of the funds made available by that Act may be used to enter into an assistance award with any organization that –

(1) Was "convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency has direct knowledge of the conviction, unless the agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government"; or

(2) Has any "unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a

timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless the Federal agency has considered, in accordance with its procedures, that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government."

For the purposes of Section 7073, it is the Department of State's policy that no award may be made to any organization covered by (1) or (2) above, unless the Procurement Executive has made a written determination that suspension or debarment is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

***D.2 Awards to Commercial Firms or For-Profit Organizations:***
The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

***D.3 Audit Requirements:***
Foreign organizations that expend $750,000 or more in a fiscal year in Department of State federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. (***Program-specific Audit*** means an audit of one Federal award program. ***Single Audit*** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf

For sub-non-Federal entities expending $750,000 or more in Department of State award funding during their fiscal year, Department of State standard audit provisions require that Prime non-Federal entities certify that audits of sub-non-Federal entities are performed annually and according to the standards described above. The cost of audits required under this policy may be charged either as an allowable direct cost to the award, OR included in the organizations established indirect costs in the award's detailed budget

## V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

## A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

**APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the application and to determine the likelihood of its success and impact. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive within the context of this program announcement.

*Results or Benefits (30 points)*

- The project objectives are specific and clearly explained and a theory of change is provided.
- The applicant describes realistic results, with a focus on long-term impacts, to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award as indicated in this announcement.
- The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out and who will be responsible for them.
- The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- The applicant is able to achieve realistic results to address the increase in exports, and/or realize market opportunities and create value chains for artisanal products, and/or develop new financial products or services.

*Approach/Project Design (50 points)*

- The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address the objectives outlined in the requested priority area.
- The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners. If partners are already identified, letters of intent are included.
- The applicant includes a feasible and detailed sustainability plan
- The applicant is aware of the environmental best practices and makes every effort to include them in their project plan
- The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- The applicant articulates potential challenges to project implementation and proposes mitigation plans.
- The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- The proposed project design is innovative and original, as well as feasible.

*Organizational Capacity (10 points)*

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in Tunisia.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in economic diversification and export promotion in Tunisia.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.

*Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)*

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in Tunisia and with participants from that area – a majority of staff speak French or Arabic professionally. The roles and qualifications of each key person, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer, are described in a biographical sketch.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in economic diversification and business promotion in Tunisia.

*Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)*

- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country and includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed based on reasonable estimates of ground transportation required.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.

## B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/Embassy Tunis is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding Economic Support Fund grants. Applications will be screened initially to determine whether applicants meet the requirements and priorities outlined in Part I; meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Part III; and submitted the required documents outlined in Part IV. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance to the Technical Review stage.

NEA/Embassy Tunis reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Technical Review stage. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to Technical Review.

All applications that proceed to Technical Review will be evaluated by U.S. government and non-governmental subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a 100-point scale. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented in Part V, Section A. Technical Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/Embassy Tunis' programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

## VI. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

### A. AWARD NOTICES

**Applicants who do not advance to the Technical Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement.** The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

**NEA/Embassy Tunis expects to notify applicants about the status of their application by August 1, 2017.** Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. **NEA/Embassy Tunis reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the NEA/Embassy Tunis office coordinating this competition.

### B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicates the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/Embassy Tunis Grants Officer.

Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

## C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The purpose of this notification is to enable NEA/Embassy Tunis to inform the relevant U.S. Embassy or post of the recipient's intent to travel. The recipient must notify the Grants Officer at least three (3) days prior to any travel. The Grants Officer reserves the right to advise against specific travel arrangements for security-related reasons.

## D. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

**Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity.** Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/Embassy Tunis when negotiating an award.

## E. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB-AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Part III, Section B.1. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

## F. SUB-AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of $25,000 or more to http://www.fsrs.gov. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

## I. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

**Sr. Foreign Assistance Specialist**
Wajih Hammami
HammamiW@state.gov

**Assistance Coordinator**
Stephanie Kotecki-Bonhomme
KoteckiSL@state.gov

**All questions must be submitted in writing to ForeignAssistanceTunis@state.gov by May 3, 2017 at 17:00:00 (GMT). NEA/Embassy Tunis will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.**

For questions regarding creating an account with or using Grants.gov to submit an application, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

**Grants.gov Contact Center**
(800) 518-4726
support@Grants.gov

## II. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.