U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600

Tunisia - Facilitating Agricultural Results, Modernization, and Educational Resources (FARMER)

Opportunity Number: SFOP0006019

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	**New**
Date Opened:	**7/1/2019**
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	**7/15/2019**
Application Deadline:	**8/9/2019**
Expected Date of Notification:	**10/15/2019**
Federal Agency Contact:	**John Daniels** **NEA-Grants@state.gov**

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support the development of the Tunisian agriculture sector by providing technical assistance to the Agence de la Vulgarisation et de la Formation Agricoles (AVFA) (Agricultural Training and Extension Agency) and modernizing vocational training centers around the country. This opportunity aims to advance U.S. foreign policy by increasing inclusive private sector employment through job creation in the agriculture sector.

NEA/AC and the Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit seek proposals that:

1. Increase the capacity of the AVFA to effectively administer and manage the 40 vocational training centers in Tunisia;
2. Improve the effectiveness of five vocational training centers through modernizing facilities and equipment, developing more efficient operating procedures, and revamping trainings.

A successful project will result in better-trained Tunisian farmers, leading to increased agriculture sector employment opportunities and improved agriculture production in Tunisia.

Applications will be accepted only from organizations that have previously operated in Tunisia or have personnel who have previously worked in Tunisia and can demonstrate the ability to work with the AVFA.

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 Tunisia will NOT be considered.

All applications must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section V below.

Background Information about NEA/AC:

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to groups and individuals striving to bring about positive change in the Middle East-North Africa region. The Assistance Coordination Office works in 20 countries and territories, partnering with governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), community leaders, activists, and private sector groups to advance their efforts. Competitively selected projects aim to foster participatory governance, economic reform, and educational advancement in response to local interest and needs.

Background Information about the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia:

The United States Embassy in Tunisia (Embassy Tunis) 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. U.S. support focuses on strengthening the Tunisian business climate to support the growth of enterprises, jobs, and bilateral trade; and fostering inclusive governance and human rights protections.

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APPENDICES *(Posted with NOFO)*

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support the development of the Tunisian agriculture sector.

Applications will be accepted only from organizations that have previously operated in Tunisia or have personnel who have previously worked in Tunisia and can demonstrate the ability to work with the AVFA.

This programming responds to the U.S. Government priority to increase inclusive private sector employment through job creation in the agriculture sector.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Government of Tunisia has identified agricultural vocational centers as valuable resources in the development of the private sector. Accounting for 16% of Tunisia's jobs, agriculture is a major source of employment particularly in the interior regions of the country where unemployment and poverty are most acute. However, vocational centers aimed at developing agriculture skills are not contributing to growth in Tunisia's agriculture due to their weak organizational structure, obsolete curricula and services that do not meet the needs of the private sector, and lack of operational procedures. The quality of infrastructure and training varies by center, but for the most part, they are all struggling to meet the demand for training due to outdated equipment, inadequate facilities, limited access to new technology, outdated curriculum, and human resourcing issues. These structural issues within the AVFA have resulted in fewer farmers being trained, leading to lower agricultural productivity throughout the country. Revamping and modernizing these centers to serve as hubs for training excellence will enable Tunisian farmers to become more efficient agricultural producers.

To revamp and modernize these centers, and transform them into hubs for training excellence, will enable Tunisian farmers to improve the performance of the agricultural production system. The Government of Tunisia has already invested in certified vocational training, through the AVFA and the establishment of 40 vocational training centers countrywide. The training centers aim to promote better access for young people to knowledge and skills they need to seize the rare employment opportunities in their own regions, for which there is a high demand. However, more work remains to be done. This NOFO seeks to improve the structure and ability of the AVFA to increase the efficiency and reach of these vocational training centers across Tunisia.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in:

1. Increased capacity of the AVFA to effectively administer and manage the 40 vocational training centers in Tunisia, leading to more persons trained and higher productivity of the agribusiness sector.
2. Improved effectiveness of five vocational training centers through modernized facilities and equipment, efficient operating procedures, and increased quality of training that will create a stronger farming and agribusiness production value chain, leading to economic growth for the individuals that depend on this industry for their livelihoods.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications in support of the development of the Tunisian agriculture sector. Successful applicants will work closely with the AVFA and identify five (5) vocational training centers to directly support.

This notice identifies two Priority Areas. Successful applicants will address both Priority Areas and all of the activities deemed required.

AVFA Capacity Building (Priority Area 1): In order to increase the productivity of the agriculture sector in Tunisia, the AVFA must increase its capacity to manage and coordinate the efforts of the 40 vocational training centers. Thus, the first priority areas seeks to provide technical assistance to the AVFA to bolster its organizational capacity. Successful applicants will develop additional activities, but those listed below are **required**:

a. Review of the AVFA's legal framework to allow for more independence in the management of the vocational training centers so they can respond to local needs
b. Development of an AVFA procedural manual
c. Review and revision of AVFA's organizational chart and structures
d. Conduct an assessment of the geographical distribution of the training centers and review each center's specialty according to regional specificity

Training Center Revamp (Priority Area 2): Concerns regarding the infrastructure and access to high-value trainings at the vocational centers must be addressed in order to support growth in the Tunisian agriculture industry. As such, the second priority area aims to modernize and assist five (5) targeted centers out of the existing 40 to improve the delivery of services to Tunisian farmers. **At least three (3) of the five (5) centers must be in Jendouba and Kasserine**. The selection of centers must take into consideration the potential for growth for each center's primary sector of specialty and rate of unemployment in the region where the center is located. While activities must focus on farmers altogether, a particular emphasis should be placed on young and female farmers. Successful applicants will develop additional activities, but those listed below are required:

a. Conduct an in-depth diagnostic examination of the key challenges and potential comparative advantages of each of the five (5) targeted vocational centers. Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit will provide the selected applicant a study of the 40 centers conducted in 2019. Based on the results of this study and the diagnostic examination, develop a separate implementation plan and budget for each targeted vocational center, for approval by the Grants Officer and the Grants Officer Representative. This Plan should be prepared in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the AVFA.
b. Review communication processes at the centers and develop updated tools, procedures, and methods to improve coordination amongst the different centers, especially for those within the same area or working on the same sector. Focus will be on the selected centers but other centers of the same specialty can benefit from this activity.
c. Develop new training curricula for each center based on regional production, needs, and potential for growth and support the implementation of updated trainings. This should be developed based on the needs identified by the farmers in the region.

d. Conduct capacity building trainings for the staff at the targeted centers, employing a train-the-trainer model, to ensure the centers can continue to operate effectively and remain staffed by well-trained professionals beyond the end of the project.
e. Procure equipment and new technology to improve the resources and facilities available to center staff to use for trainings

Project beneficiaries should include:

a. The AVFA, the Ministry of Agriculture, and other relevant Tunisian government entities.
b. Vocational training center staff and their trainees, including Tunisian farmers, particularly young and female farmers and those from marginalized populations.

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address gender considerations, ensuring that both men and women benefit from support where applicable, and that gender awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives.

Note: Applicants should read this NOFO in its entirety before writing their proposal, and should **refer to the full Evaluation Criteria provided in Section VII** while drafting all materials.

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** 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, festivals, etc.; and
- Entertainment costs (e.g. receptions, social activities, ceremonies, alcoholic beverages, guided tours).

NOTE: Applications that include any of these activities or costs above may be eliminated at the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will not advance to the Merit Review Panel.

Key Deliverables:
To clearly assess successful execution and completion of proposed projects, results should achieve the following:

- A needs assessment, capacity building plan, and strategic plan for the vocational centers targeted for intervention;
- Five training centers (three of which are in Jendouba and Kasserine) are modernized, staffed by well-trained professionals, and continue to operate after the grant is completed;

- Updated equipment and technology is procured for each of the five training centers
- Communication tools and procedures between the different vocational training centers are improved, especially those within the same area;
- Recommendations are made to revise the legal framework of AVFA to allow for more independence from the central government in the management of the vocational training centers;
- Training curricula is tailored for each of the selected centers according to the populations served, sectors of focus, and needs of the region;
- Plans are created to strengthen the value chains of the different agricultural products of Tunisian farmers served by each center, leading to increased productivity and profit in those chains;
- Trainees of AVFA (farmers) learn new techniques, develop higher-quality products for their markets, and improve their profitability;
- An increase in commercial sales by farmers trained through AVFA.
- An increase in the number of certified job seekers.
- AVFA trainees launch their own projects.
- AVFA trainees are able to receive approval for bank loans thanks to their trainings. Grantee should be able to partner with financial institutions to speed up loans requests.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

Applicants shall provide a logic model or a theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives including assumptions and limitations. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in Appendix II. Please see Section VII below for more information.

Successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Program and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) teams to update the monitoring plan submitted based on the proposed logic model/theory of change to measure qualitative and quantitative indicators as part of the award negotiations process. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting data against these indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design, and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

All projects funded as a result of this NOFO will be required to complete a mid-term report of the project at the midpoint of the performance period, and a final evaluation report at the end of that period, with technical support from the NEA/AC M&E team. Successful applicants will be contractually obligated to dedicate between 3 and 5 percent of their total project budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Selected applicants are required to have project information available for up to twelve months after the project closeout for the NEA/AC team to evaluate long-term outcomes.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	**Grant**
Estimated Number of Awards:	**1**
Estimated Total Program Funding:	**$5,000,000**
Estimated Award Ceiling:	**$5,000,000**
Estimated Award Floor:	**$4,000,000**
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	**Encouraged; NOT Required**
Estimated Length of Project Period:	**2.5 years**
Maximum Length of Project Period with Option Year(s):	**4.5 years**
Estimated Award Ceiling for the Option Year(s):	**$2,000,000**
Estimated Award Total with the Option Year(s):	**$7,000,000**

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately $5,000,000 will be issued for one (1) award through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for 30 months depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2019. NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit reserve the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding, and reserve the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two (2.5) years after the announcement's close date.

Note that this does **NOT** constitute any commitment or guarantee of funds or extension of period of performance beyond any initial award issued. Applicants should demonstrate through their proposal how project activities planned for the estimated period of performance and estimated funding noted above will achieve corresponding project objectives within that time frame and budget in the case that additional funding does not become available. Out-year budget materials as described in *Section V, Part A* below should demonstrate how the applicant would intend to build on initial success, but the proposal for the estimated period of performance and estimated funding noted above should be designed to produce a complete project, given that continuation is not guaranteed.

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.**

IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC 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 past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
    - Non-profit organizations;
    - For-profit organizations;
    - Public or state institutions of higher education;
    - Private institutions of higher education;
    - Public International Organizations; and
    - Small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of economic growth, capacity building, leadership training, and organizational development in the MENA region.

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit strongly encourage applications from 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**.

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit are committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its programs and activities. NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit welcome 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.

A.1. Prime Applicant

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, applicants SHALL:

- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section B* below;
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Section C, Additional Eligibility Considerations* (below);
- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., 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). This applies to BOTH prime applicants and any local partners receiving federally funded sub-awards. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

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:
Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp.
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.

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 organizations account expires, the organization cannot submit a grant application until it is renewed.**

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

Go to http://www.sam.gov.
Log In to complete authentication and create an account. On the My SAM page, select *Entity Registrations* from the sub-navigation menu and select *Register New Entity.*

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM Quick Start Guide for Grant Registration), 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 **12 - 15 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: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

C.1. Cost-Sharing or Matching
There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit encourage applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of programs.

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

All cost share or matching must be included in detail in the line item budget and noted in the budget narrative. Proposals offering potential, yet to be determined cost-share sourcing will NOT be considered to have met this requirement, and will be deemed ineligible. 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.

V. 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 (1) 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 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. 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

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.
NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state. 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.**

Federal Assistance Application Forms:
Applicants must complete the following three forms online to be considered for funding.

1. **SF-424**
2. **SF-424a**
3. **SF-424b** (if applicable*)

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3. A signature is required on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424).

* Note: The SF-424B is required only for those applicants who have not registered in SAM.gov or recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019 and completed the online representations and certifications.

Project Narrative:
The Project Narrative describes the efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 10 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.**

Option Years Project Narrative:
The Option Years Narrative describes the efforts the applicant would propose to undertake during the option year period(s) of up to two years (for up to a total four and a half year project period) in order to meet the objectives, priorities, and goals outlined in the funding description section of this NOFO. This section may not exceed **three (3) pages.**

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

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative
- Option Years Budget: A detailed budget for the initial project period is required, and a notional budget and brief budget narrative for option year funding up to two (2) additional years for up to an additional two (2) million dollars

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. **Please note that the Budget and Budget Narrative documents should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project.** As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "…key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

Logic Model:
Applicants shall provide a logic model or theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **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. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

Project Timeline:
Applicants must provide an overall breakdown of the order and timeframe in which all project activities will take place. This item should provide a macro snapshot of what will take place from beginning to end of the project. Applicants must ensure that the timeline of activities/events corresponds with details provided in the Project Narrative and Logic Model. This section **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary:
This item should provide details regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks, and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section **may not exceed 5 pages.**

Sustainability Plan:
The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project interventions will be sustained beyond the end of the award period. Sustainability Plans **may not exceed 2 pages**.

Letters of Agreement:
Applicants should submit letters of agreement from the Ministry of Agriculture or the AVFA, indicating commitment to work together on the project should the applicant be successful.

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions:
For each position designated as Key Personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

1. If the position is already filled: Provide brief biographical information summarizing the person's qualifications, as well as a brief description of the roles or responsibilities pertaining to this project.

OR

2. If the person to fill a key position has not yet been hired: Provide a brief summary of the job description, which should include a description of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to this project, as well as a description of qualifications of eligible candidates.

NOTE: If an applicant is proposing sub-grant partner(s) as part of their project design, **Key Personnel/Positions of the sub grantee must also be included.** This section of the application **may not exceed 5 pages.**

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: **NOTE: This item is required only IF applicable.**
Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than a 10% de minimis must provide a copy of their Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). This item will not be counted toward any page limits.

A.2. Optional Documents
Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10 page limit for this section of the application. Some examples of additional documents an applicant may wish to submit include but are not limited to letters of agreement/intent, organizational chart, etc.

NOTE: Applicants must adhere to all maximum allowed page counts. Applications that exceed any of the allowable page limits will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.

B. 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.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either Grants.gov OR SAMS Domestic. *Applicants are encouraged to submit through SAMS Domestic.* Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in **Section V** 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/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

The application process is not complete until the applicant receives notification that its application has been validated and forwarded to the granting agency (NEA/AC). 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.

C.1. 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.2. SAMS Domestic
SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to http://mygrants.service-now.com, and click the "create an account" hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled "User Registration Request;" complete the online form and click the "Submit" button. Users will receive an activation email entitled "Verify Your Grants Account Registration;" click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

SAMS Domestic has Quick Tours available to educate users about the system. These documents can be found on the Support tab upon logging into the system.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES
Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on 8/9/2019. There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC 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.

VI. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A. 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 may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient's cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

B. Audit Requirements

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend $750,000 or more in a fiscal year in 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 https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.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.

C. Compliance with Applicable Federal Funding Regulations and DOS Terms and Conditions

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (30 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results. The applicant need also assess to what extent these results will positively and/or negatively impact U.S. agricultural interests.
- Timeframe: The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.
- Beneficiaries: The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- Milestones: The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- M&E: The applicant explains how monitoring & evaluation activities will be conducted throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them. The applicant includes tool(s) that will be utilized to assess and measure organization capacity, the vocational training centers, and the Tunisian agriculture sector.
- M&E: The applicant includes a final evaluation of the project at the completion of the award.

Project Design (30 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- Responsiveness to NOFO: The applicant explains how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Rationale: The applicants justifies how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- Project Management: The applicant clearly describes how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation, and closing.
- Partnerships and Buy-ins: The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies local partners.
- Feasibility: The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- Selection Criteria and Process: The applicant explains how the five (5) vocational training centers will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process, etc.).
- Duplication: 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.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners, if applicable.
- Curriculum: The applicant identifies and proposes training materials to effectively address needs of participating vocational training centers.
- Commercial: The applicant proposes supplying U.S. products or equipment in center modernization and/or the proposal generated commercial opportunities for U.S. firms.

- Gender Considerations: The applicant includes gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit both men and women.

Organizational Capacity (25 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in Tunisia, including the organization's experience and depth of working relationships with the Tunisian agriculture sector.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., organizational capacity development, agriculture sector, etc.).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring & evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from proposed partners, if applicable.

Staff and Position Specifications (15 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in the proposed content area.
- Applicant and/or partner staff has relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)

- 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.
- Adequate sub-award and travel costs are proposed.
- The budget accounts for sub-award and monitoring & evaluation costs.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring & evaluation and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps. Successful applicants will dedicate between 3% and 5% of their total budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

- The budget captures reasonable procurement costs for equipment and supplies

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit are committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in **Part IV** and have submitted all required documents outlined in **Part V**. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

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

All applications that proceed to the Merit Review Panel 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 VII, Section A**. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets 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.

VIII. ADMINSTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility 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/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application approximately October 15, 2019. 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/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit reserve the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

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 Performance Reports (QPR) and a Quarterly Financial Report (QFR). The QPRs 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. The QFRs 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/AC 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 recipient must notify the Grants Officer and the Grant Officer Representative at least three (3) business 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 make 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/AC 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 **Section IV**. 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.

IX. AGENCY CONTACTS

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

Program Specialist
John Daniels
nea-grants@state.gov

All questions and a confirmation of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by July 15, 2019 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

The intent to apply is a notification to the Bureau of Near East Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination via email expressing the intent to submit a proposal under this announcement. The notification does not require any specific format or template, and unless specifically indicated, the notification is not mandatory.

The intent to apply is optional and will not be binding.

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

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to submit an application, contact the ILMS Help Desk. The Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays. The ILMS Help Desk utilizes a user-facing ticketing interface that allows users to submit and monitor their SAMS Domestic tickets. The ILMS Self Service Portal can be accessed by going to https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home.

ILMS Help Desk
(888) 313-ILMS (4567)
ILMS Self Service Portal

X. 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 public 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.