NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
[Cooperative Agreement]

NOTE: If you are going to apply for this funding opportunity and have not obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and/or are not currently registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), please take immediate action to obtain a DUNS Number, if applicable, and then to register immediately in SAM at www.sam.gov. It may take 4 weeks or more after you submit your SAM registration beforeyour registration is active in SAM. Detailed information regarding DUNS and SAM is also provided in Section D of this NOFO, subsection 3a, Content and Form of Application Submission.

In addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM, you must also obtain Level 2 eAuthentication to apply for this funding opportunity in ezFedGrants. You must submit an online form requesting access. Normally you will receive an email within 24 hours of your submission, if your request is approved. After this occurs, you will need to schedule an appointment with an LRA. Once you meet with the LRA or obtain Digital Identify Verification, your Level 2 eAuthentication should be granted within 2 to 3 days after that meeting. See Section D of this NOFO for detailed information.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND PRIORITIES

The International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program will provide opportunities to eligible U.S. citizens with a bachelor's degree and agricultural experience, curriculum development or program development to assist developing countries in establishing school-based agricultural education and youth extension programs under the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, PL 115-334, Sec. 3307, 7 USC § 3295. FAS will consider proposals from all eligible organizations, including current recipients and new organizations.

The intention of the IAEFP is three-fold: (1) to develop a diverse group of globally-minded United States agriculturalists with experience living abroad, (2) collaboratively meet the food and fiber needs of the domestic population of eligible countries, and (3) strengthen and enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and the United States agricultural industry.

Proposal submission should include, but are not limited to, classroom instruction, field demonstrations, entrepreneurship projects, and leadership development. The proposal should address priority country's receptiveness of the IAEFP and what, if any, country policies and procedures will be necessary to incorporate into the project work plan for strong program implementation. Host country's government, agriculture community, and local authorities should demonstrate support and commitment to collaborate on the implementation and execution of the IAEFP.

The recipient should provide a suggested curriculum to all fellows that is tailored to the

needs of the priority country. Fellows training topics should align with USDA and the priority country's agricultural policy, development, and extension goals. Topics should also promote bilateral agricultural trade between the priority country and the United States and should address priorities on Climate Smart Agricultural practices. For additional recipient requirements, please see the performance expectations section. United States fellows participating under IAEFP must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in an agriculture-related field and understand U.S. school-based agricultural education and youth extension programs. In addition, the National FFA Organization (FFA) and the National 4-H Council (4-H) must be consulted on U.S. fellow selections.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

USDA anticipates issuing up to two awards to improve developing countries ability to meeting their food and fiber needs, as well as strengthen trade linkages between the United States and selected countries. Each award is expected to support up to nine (9) fellows. The fellowship is expected to last 8-9 months in concurrence with the priority country's academic year. After selection, recipients will be expected to identify fellows through an organized request for proposals and accompanying application selection process. This candidate selection process should also include 4-H and FFA representatives as subject matter experts (SME). Applicants are expected to identify their respective 4-H and FFA selection SME panel representatives within thirty days following negotiations. All final fellow selections must be submitted to the USDA for final concurrence.

Although each fellow should be assigned to a specific site within the proposed country, they are expected to participate as a cohesive cohort. Applicants should prepare their approach accordingly. Award recipients will be required to work with relevant FAS Posts, as well as appropriate U.S. Embassy personnel, on all programmatic issues. Regular periodic updates on program implementation should also be provided to USDA and FAS Post Representatives.

3. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

For FY 2021, in alignment with President Biden's February 02, 2021, Executive Order on addressing the cause of migration from the region to the United States, USDA has deemed the Northern Triangle region of Central America a priority for programming. Applicants may submit proposals for one or more countries within the Northern Triangle region. Each proposal must be country-specific and tailored to the context of that country. Depending on ever-changing on the ground security situations, the USDA may elect not to award or fund proposals for a country(ies). In addition, USDA may elect to make amendments to agreements.

USDA encourages that applicants collaborate with existing in-country programming, such as: the Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program, the Cochran Fellowship Program, the Food for Progress Program, and the McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program, the Local and Regional Procurement Program, and/or USAID or other USG programming. All proposal submissions must demonstrate that security considerations have been assessed and

address all measures that would be implemented to ensure the safety and security of all program participants. All proposals should recognize any priority country government requirements to allow for smooth implementation of this program.

Issued By
Foreign Agricultural Service, Global Programs, Fellowship Programs Division, Scientific Exchanges.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number and Title
10.619 International Agricultural Education Fellowship Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Title
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE 2021 INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

NOFO Number
USDA-FAS-10619-0762-10.-21-0001

Authorizing Authority for Program
Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, PL 115-334, Sec. 3307, 7 USC § 3295

Appropriation Authority for Program
FY2021 Omnibus and COVID Relief and Response Act (PL 116-260)

Announcement Type
New

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions

Available Funding for the NOFO: Up to $1,000,000; *each award is anticipated to be up to $500,000*

Projected Number of Awards: 1-2

Period of Performance: 36 months
Period of performance includes time for program preparation, 8-9 months of program implementation in line with the priority country school calendar, and time for close out.

Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): September 1, 2021

Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): August 31, 2024

Extensions may be considered. Please refer to Section H for additional detail.

2. Funding Instrument

All awards will be made in the form of cooperative agreements as a result of this call for applications. FAS will be substantially involved throughout the award implementation period. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- FAS specification of the manner, method, performance, or timing of the work in an approved work plan;
- FAS review and approval of one stage of work before a subsequent stage may begin during the performance period;
- FAS review and approval of an evaluation plan;
- FAS review and approval of proposed subawards and contracts, prior to award;
- FAS participation in the selection and approval of the individuals or organizations that will conduct all required evaluations;
- FAS participation in data collection and analysis for required evaluations and other performance reports;
- FAS approval of an organizational chart identifying the names, roles and responsibilities of all the Applicant's key personnel and any subsequent changes or absences; and
- FAS provision of specific direction or redirection of the work during the period of performance.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Nonprofits in the United States with or without 501(c)(3) status, other than institutions of higher education

2. Eligibility Criteria

All applicants are required to have an active registration in the SAM database at www.sam.gov –pending or expired registrants are not eligible. This requirement must be met by the closing date of the announcement and will not be waived. Please contact the program officer listed if you have questions about this requirement.

In addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM, all applicants are required to obtain Level 2 eAuthentication to apply for this funding opportunity in ezFedGrants (eFG). You must submit an online form requesting access. Normally you will receive an email within 24 hours of your submission, if your request is approved. After this occurs, you will need to schedule an appointment with an LRA. Once you meet with the LRA or obtain Digital Identify Verification, your Level 2 eAuthentication should be granted within 2 to 3 days after that meeting. See Section D of this NOFO for detailed information.

3. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

MOE is not required.

4. Cost Share of Match requirements

A cost match or cost share is not required.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Key Dates and Times

Application Start Date:	May 10, 2021
NOFO Posted Date:	May 10, 2021
Application Submission Deadline:	June 17, 2021 at 11:59:59 PM EDT
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	June 30, 2021
Anticipated Award Date:	August 17, 2021

Applications must be submitted to USDA through the ezFedGrants system by 11:59:59 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on June 17, 2021. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered. **FAS advises Applicants to begin the application process early to allow time to address any information technology difficulties that may arise**. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline. Please be advised that incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Refer to Section C on applicant eligibility and application completeness requirements. Questions regarding this request for applications will be considered to the extent practicable and should be submitted to scientificexchangesNOFO@usda.gov.

2. Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO plus the appendices constitute the full application information.

Applications will be processed through the ezFedGrants portal at https://grants.fms.usda.gov. Prospective applicants are encouraged to register for this portal. Applicants that are unable to access the ezFedGrants portal should contact the program manager for alternative submission instructions. Note that if selected, registration is a requirement of performance.

3. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Application Format

Submitted applications must:

- Clearly outline all aspects of the program plan – what is planned, how this will be conducted, and the anticipated results;
- Be written in English and free of excessive grammatical and spelling errors;
- Be written using Times New Roman, 12-point font; tables and graphs may have a smaller font as appropriate, all other text font and size should be consistent throughout the application;
- Be typed on standard 8.5” x 11” sized paper with 1-inch margins;
- Be paginated with each page consecutively numbered;
- Cite source information and/or provide an explanation of the analysis undertaken;
- Be submitted in PDF.

b. Project Narrative

A project narrative includes the following elements to explain the overall program plan and the applicant's technical experience and expertise:

- Indicate the name of the institution applying;
- Indicate the country of proposed placement and justification for the selection;
- Provide a summary of relevant institutional capabilities for fellow's site selection in the proposed country;
- Include site selection, site development, and associated budget plans;
- Provide an approach to achieve each of the program objectives, including topics to be covered, possible field visits, and leveraging other FAS/USG activities/programming;
- Provide a description of how the award, including the logistical elements, will be administered and the role of the institution staff;
- Provide a description of how the applicant, if selected, will identify and recruit candidates, including any rubrics, a reasonable timeline, and how applicant will identify and involve 4H and FFA in the candidate selection process;
- Briefly describe any expertise and international experience of the applicant in the priority country, including an explanation of previous engagement with in-country stakeholders;
- Demonstrate understanding of cultural context including influence on program implementation and on fellow experience;
- Describe program strategy, including classroom instruction, field demonstrations, entrepreneurship projects, and leadership development;
- Include a plan to account for the goals and objectives of individual fellows and describe the skills or knowledge expected to be acquired by the fellows by the end of the program;
- Describe how the applicant will address individual needs of the fellows and help them to achieve the desired program deliverables and explain the monitoring and evaluation plan to be employed during the program;
- Describe means of flexibility to account for potential program changes and the ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances in the priority country (this should include information on how unforeseen problems will be addressed);
- Provide a quality assurance plan;
- Provide a risk mitigation plan.

c. Required Forms and Certifications

Institutions must be able to host a group of fellows over the period of performance and should submit a proposal following the guidelines below.

Required forms and certifications include:

- **Standard Form 424**, signed by the applicant.
- **Standard Form LLL**, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if warranted.
- A detailed **budget worksheet**.
- A detailed **budget narrative**. All line items should be described in sufficient

detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project, per federal regulations. Examples of a budget narrative are included in the appendix. These examples are not required but are included for your reference.

(**NOTE:** A budget narrative must be provided. Details on the budget narrative can be found in the Proposal Scoring Information section.)

- **Standard Form 424A**.

Definitions of cost items are listed below.

a. **Personnel:** Costs of employee salaries and wages. For each staff person, provide the name (if known), title, time commitment to the project as a percentage of a full-time equivalent (FTE), annual salary, and grant funded salary. Do not include the costs of consultants. Consultants are to be included under "Contractual."

b. **Fringe Benefits:** Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate. Provide the method used to calculate the proposed rate amount. If a fringe benefit has been negotiated with, or approved by, a cognizant federal agency, **attach a copy of the negotiated fringe benefit agreement**. If no rate agreement exists, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc. Identify the base for allocating these fringe benefit expenses. Attach the agreement to the application package.

c. **Travel:** Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (do not include costs of sub-contractor or consultant travel). For each proposed trip, provide the purpose, number of travelers, travel origin and destination, number of days, and a breakdown of costs for airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals.The basis for the airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals must be provided,such as past trips, current quotations, Federal Travel Regulations, etc.

d. **Equipment:** Equipment is **not** an allowable expenditure for this award. Any article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for financial statement purposes, or (b) $5,000.

> **NOTE:** Acquisition cost defined as the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, calibration and maintenance services, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for

which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.

e. Supplies: Supplies are tangible personal property other than that included in the equipment category if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information which supports the amount requested. A computing device is a supply.

f. Contractual: Costs of all contracts for services and goods that further the work of the project. Sub-contractors, sub-awardees, and/or sub-grantees that do not perform technical work (i.e., landscapers, trash collectors, etc.) belong under other cost categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, other, etc.

Include third party evaluation contracts (if applicable) and contracts with secondary recipient organizations. Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Identify proposed sub-contractor work and the cost of each sub-contractor. Provide a detailed budget for each sub-contractor that is expected to perform work estimated to be $25,000 or more, or 50% of the total work effort, whichever is less.

- Identify each planned subcontractor and its total proposed budget. Each subcontractor's budget and supporting detail should be included as part of the applicant's budget narrative.

- Provide the following information for each planned subcontract: a brief description of the work to be subcontracted; the number of quotes solicited and received, if applicable; the cost or price analysis performed by the applicant; names and addresses of the subcontractors tentatively selected and the basis for their selection; e.g., unique capabilities (for sole source subcontracts), low bidder, delivery schedule, technical competence; type of contract and estimated cost and fee or profit; and, affiliation with the applicant, if any.

- All required flow down provisions in the award must be included in any subcontract.

- Provide information for each planned subgrant. Identify each planned subawardee and its total proposed budget. Include a brief

description of the work to be performed.

g. **Other Direct Costs:** Any other items proposed as direct costs that do not fall under the budget categories listed above. Provide an itemized list of costs and state the basis for each proposed item.

h. **Indirect Costs:** If indirect costs are included in the budget, include in the budget narrative a description of how the indirect costs were calculated. Include the following information:

- Indirect cost percentages used;
- Indirect cost base;
- How the indirect cost base was calculated;
- How the indirect cost was calculated.

Attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If the applicant is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not also be charged as direct costs to the award. If the applicant is requesting a rate which is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

Any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate (except for those non-federal entities described in Appendix VII to Part 200 States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals, paragraph D.1.b) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in §200.403 Factors Affecting Allowability of Costs, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as a non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. For more information, see 2 CFR Part 200.414.

The SF-424 and SF-424A can be completed within the ezFedGrants platform. However, the other required forms must be downloaded from the Forms sections on Grants.gov or will be sent to you upon request to the program officer(s) named in Section G.

Please be aware that OMB Memorandum 18-24: Strategies to Reduce Grant Recipient Reporting Burden has been approved. Various required forms needed to apply for Federal Financial Assistance no longer need to be completed individually at time of application. They are covered in the Financial Assistance Certifications Report.

Effective January 1, 2020, the Financial Assistance Certifications are a common set of certifications and representations required by Federal statutes or regulations in accordance with the grants guidance under Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR 200.208 Certifications and Representations). Those non-Federal entities who intend to apply for, or are already recipients of Federal grants or agreements, must read and agree to the corresponding certifications and representations. Registrants who reply yes to the questions are required to keep these certifications and representations current, accurate, and complete as part of their entity registration.

FAS will verify in SAM.gov that the proper forms are completed, and if they have not been, you will be contacted and directed to do so. Your award will not be issued until the proper forms are completed within the SAM.gov portal. While preferred by the closing date of the announcement, these are not required for an application to be considered complete and an Applicant may have until the time an award is signed to complete the required grants forms.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

1. Be registered in SAM (https://www.sam.gov) before submitting its application;
2. Provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

FAS is using ezFedGrants, which is an electronic grants management system. Applicant(s) with electronic access are required to submit their applications electronically through the ezFedGrants portal.

Before you can apply, you must have a DUNS number, be registered in SAM, and have access to the ezFedGrants website at https://grants.fms.usda.gov

Applicants are encouraged to register early. The registration process can take approximately four weeks to be completed. Therefore, registration should be done

in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines.

DUNS number
Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at the following website: http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html

The DUNS number must be included in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the Standard Forms (SF)-424 forms submitted as part of this application.

System for Award Management
In addition to having a DUNS number, applicants applying electronically through ezFedGrants must register with SAM. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here: www.sam.gov

Failure to register with SAM will result in your application being rejected during the submissions process.

ezFedGrants System Access and Electronic Signature

Level 2 eAuthentication
The next step in the registration process is to obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account that will allow access to the ezFedGrants system. Instructions for getting a Level 2 eAuthentication account can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov

If you experience any issues with self-registration or have eAuthentication-related questions, please contact the eAuthentication Help Desk for assistance: eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov

Requesting a role in ezFedGrants
After obtaining eAuthentication, users will need a role in the system. Descriptions of the roles available and instructions on how to request a role can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.

Electronic Signature
Applications submitted through ezFedGrants constitute a submission as electronically signed applications. When you submit the application through ezFedGrants, the name of your Signatory Official on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure their signatory is on file and up to date. If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions email the Helpdesk at ezFedGrants-cfo@usda.gov.

Funding Restrictions
Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400, or the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Compensation for personal services (whether classified as personnel, contractual services, or any other form) may not exceed the pro-rated equivalent of Step III of the Executive Schedule. For calendar year 2021, this is $183,300 per year; $705.00 per day; or $ 88.12 per hour. Non-monetized fringe benefits are generally excluded from this ceiling, however, a federally negotiated fringe benefits rate agreement may be required if fringe benefits appear to be unusually high.

FAS agreement funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Agreement funds and non-monetary support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

These funds cannot be used for construction purposes, general purpose acquisitions (no particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose), equipment exceeding $5,000 per item, entertainment, capital improvements, thank you gifts, or other expenses not directly related to the project.

Management and Administration (M&A) Costs
M&A costs are not allowable.

Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs
Indirect F&A costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Pursuant to USDA regulation DR2255-001, USDA will accept a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with any agency of the federal government. An entity that does not have a NICRA may request a *de minimus* indirect cost recovery rate of 10%.

Other Submission Requirements
All applications must be submitted electronically as indicated above.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Application Evaluation Criteria

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 31 U.S.C. 3321 and41 U.S.C. 2313 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

In addition, the following applies:

i. Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold as defined by 48 CFR § 2.101, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS);
ii. An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM;
iii. Will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

2. Review and Selection Process

In all cases, the Program Manager will conduct an initial responsiveness review of all applications submitted to determine if the submission is complete and followed the rules outlined in this announcement. This review will ensure the following: (1) the application was submitted on time as specified in this announcement **(See Section D. Application and Submission Information)**, (2) the applicant is eligible (**see Section C. Eligibility Information)**, (3) all the required forms and documents are submitted timely as outlined (**See Section D Application and Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission).** If an applicant is determined to be ineligible (see Section C. Eligibility Information) or an application is determined to be non-responsive, FAS will notify the applicant.

In addition, FAS conducts a two-part application review process. If the Agency determines yourapplication to be responsive, the application will be reviewed by a review panel.

- FAS will assemble reviewers which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers to review the eligible applications. Reviews of submitted applications will be conducted either on site or by remote review.
- Technical reviewers will review each eligible application against the evaluation criteria. The reviewers will ensure that the organization is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative. The reviewers will assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified above. Evaluation Criteria: the evaluation criteria must be directly related to key aspects of the project. The criteria must be measurable with an associated point range. It is a best practice, but not required, that the entire review criteriascore range should be out of 100. All successful applications must score at least 70 points out of 100. From the scoring process, a recommendation list may be composed and sent to the FAS Administrator, or his/her designee.
- An application may be selected for a post-review quality control and possible

rescoring if it received significantly diverging scores and comments from reviewers.

- The second part of the application review process includes an internal review panel consisting of FAS staff, and the Administrator, or his/her designee, reviewing the recommendation list which will display the highest ranked applications. From this list this internal review panel will make final funding recommendations. The internal review panel may take applications out of rank order in consideration of: (1) strategic program priorities, (2) geographical distribution, or (3) the incorporation of minority serving institutions.
- FAS will perform an additional review of the applicant organization that may include reviewing any personnel. This review will include reviewing audit reports, publicly available materials and/or government databases and may have a bearing on award outcome. FAS may request additional materials fromthe applicant as part of this review, including:
  i. The summary letter from the applicant's most recent audit report; and
  ii. Documentation of previous grant award completion that includes the name of the grantor, amount awarded, and whether the grant recipientsufficiently completed the requirements of the grant award (e.g., a final close-out report, certification of grant award completion, etc.)
- After the technical review and before making final funding decisions, FAS may contact the highest-ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a sub-awardee, FAS may request to speak with all partiesincluded in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination hastaken place prior to making an award.

3. Proposal Scoring Information

Proposals will be scored based on how clearly they outline all aspects of the program plan – what is planned, how this plan will be conducted, and the anticipated results – for each of the following factors:

Factor 1: Technical Expertise and Experience (40 Points)

Applicants must have appropriate technical background to achieve the program objectives. The following competencies will be considered:

Fellow Recruitment Plan (5 Points)

- Strong fellow recruitment from multiple strategic medians nationwide;
- Thorough fellow selection process including final review by 4H, FFA and concurrence by USDA FAS;
- Process for fellow selection feedback such as strengths and weaknesses;
- Comprehensive contingency plan in the event selected fellows drop out;
- Strategy for fellows' participation as a cohesive cohort;

Knowledge and Connection within Prospective Countries (15 Points)

- Fluent Spanish-language ability and experience using local language in program implementation;
- Understanding of safety and security risks for all program participants;
- Strategic selection of priority sites for fellows with consideration of safety and security concerns and the needs of fellows;
- Ability to administer the program in-country, and work with local community leaders to ensure approval of program implementation;
- Tailoring of training and program implementation to the needs of the proposed country, the host communities, and the fellows;
- Knowledge of the culture, relevant agricultural conditions, opportunities for climate-smart agricultural practices, and methods of agricultural education within the proposed country;
- Knowledge of priority country program-specific policies and procedures and demonstrate potential influences on project success;
- Relationships with priority country government and community leaders, Ministry of Education and Agriculture, and any other related government personnel.

Experience and Expertise in Agricultural Education and Extension Programs (15 Points)

- Experience with international program implementation, training, and youth-focused experiential education;
- Experience developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship programming;
- Ability to monitor and evaluate the program, and respond to unforeseen circumstances;
- Ability to align training topics with USDA's and the priority country's agricultural policy, development, and extension goals.

Factor 2: Overall Program (40 Points)

The overall program plan and design should be relevant to the stated objectives and should describe program strategy including:

Alignment with USDA Priorities (10 Points)

- Promotion of bilateral agricultural trade between the proposed country and the United States;
- Alignment with proposed country's agricultural development and extension goals;
- Consideration of local/national government and community receptiveness to the program;
- Leveraging of other USG (including USDA/FAS) activities in the proposed country.

Professionalism and Clarity (10 Points)

- Clearly outline all aspects of the program plan in a clear and professional manner incorporating application format guidance in Section D3a: Application Format

Program Implementation (20 Points)

- Classroom instruction;
- Field demonstrations and/or field visits;
- Entrepreneurship projects;
- Community engagement;
- Leadership development;
- Term break activities and opportunities;
- Safety and Risk Mitigation Strategy
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan;
- Quality Assurance Plan;
- Predeparture orientation;
- In-country orientation;
- All elements as listed in Section D3b: Project Narrative.

Factor 3: Budget (20 Points)

The proposed budget should be appropriate for the number of participating fellows and the length of the program. The budget should also utilize cost item categories provided in Section D3c: Required Forms and Certifications section. The budget should include appropriate cost savings where available, and a clear budget narrative should address each line item. Please ensure excel rounding errors are resolved so final numbers equate exactly to the budget line item. For potential budget narrative examples, see Appendix: Budget Narrative Examples.

4. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Technical and cost proposals submitted under this funding opportunity will be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. FAS may use one ormore support contractors in the logistical processing of proposals. However, funding recommendations and final award decisions are solely the responsibility of FAS personnel.

FAS screens all technical reviewers for potential conflicts of interest. To determine possible conflicts of interest, FAS requires potential reviewers to complete and sign conflicts of interest and nondisclosure forms. FAS will keep the names of submitting institutions and individuals as well as the substance of the applications confidential except to reviewers and FAS staff involvedin the award process. FAS will destroy any unsuccessful applications after three years followingthe funding decision.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. Notice of Award

Notice of award will be given to the institution via email. This email is not an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award, signed by the Deputy Administrator of GlobalPrograms, is the authorizing document through electronic means. It should also indicate if thereare any pass-through obligations that successful applicants are required to meet upon receiving award funds, including specific timeline requirements.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions for Federal Assistance Awards, which are on the FAS website at: https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants-and-cooperative-agreements-administrative-general-terms-and-conditions

The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award, the Recipient should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

3. Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR), as known as the SF-425, must be submitted semi-annually, within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, and a final report within 90 days of the end of the agreement. The required form is available online at: https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149786

4. Program Performance Reporting Requirements

Performance Progress Reporting must be filed semi-annually, within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, and a final report must be filed within 90 days of the end of the agreementand should include details the activities undertaken, and progress made.

5. Performance Expectations:

a. Assignment of a Principal Investigator (Training Coordinator)

The recipient will designate a contact person as the Principal Investigator (PI) responsible for coordinating all administrative and programmatic arrangements.

b. Selection of Fellows

The recipient will recruit and identify the appropriate fellows. Recruitment and solicitation of candidates should focus on diversity, in addition to applicant qualifications, with the goal of ensuring a diverse group of fellows. Recipient will consult with 4H and FFA for final candidate review and receive concurrence from USDA/FAS.

Required Fellow Qualifications

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in an agricultural-related field of study;
- A developed understanding of United States school-based agricultural

education and youth extension programs;
- Able to provide hands-on experience in and outside of the classroom;
- Have flexibility and resilience in the face of changing work environments and understand the impacts and benefits of cultural differences.

Preferred Fellow Qualifications

- Experience with agricultural extension and/or youth education;
- Able to demonstrate what it means to operate in an international setting;
- Participation and leadership roles in FFA or 4-H will be considered along with a letter of recommendation from one of these organizations.

c. Site Selection for Fellows

The recipient will recommend sites to USDA/FAS for approval.

- Sites should align with programmatic objectives with consideration of current in-country USG activities;
- Proposed country's government policies and requirements related to agricultural education curricula should be factored into selection of sites;
- Safety and security concerns should be addressed in the justification of site selection;
- Scoping costs should also be planned and presented within the budget and budget narrative.

d. Travel and Transportation

- Travel will be arranged consistent with Federal Travel Regulations (41 CFR 300et seq.) and the institution's policies and procedures.
- The recipient will provide round trip, economy class, international airfare from the fellow's home to the assigned country.
- The recipient is responsible for arranging and purchasing all domestic travel related to the fellow's training program.
- The recipient will provide housing for the fellow for the duration of the training program, taking into account gender and cultural norms.
- The recipient will pay lodging fees directly. The recipient will not require the fellow to pay for his or her lodging expenses, whether through reimbursement or advance payment.
- Lodging will include a private bedroom, private or shared bathroom, access to a laundry room, and access to a kitchen with pots, pans, and utensils.
- Necessities, such as sheets, towels, and cleaning supplies, will be provided for fellow's use. The fellow should not have to pay for these items.
- Lodging will be within walking distance to the campus/training location or easily accessible by public transportation.
- If public transportation is required to access campus/training location, the

recipient will provide the fellow with a bus pass or proper allowance for transportation expenses.
- When planning lodging options, the recipient should check with the fellow and account for any special dietary restrictions or preferences.

e. Meals and Incidentals (M&IE)
- The recipient will provide each fellow with meal and living allowances for the duration of their stay.
- Daily M&IE allowance may not exceed current GSA and State Department per diem rates.
- The recipient can determine the frequency of per diem allotments, but the fellow must receive per diem within the first week of the program. The PI must inform the fellow and USDA/FAS immediately if this cannot be accommodated.

f. Emergency Health Insurance
- The recipient will purchase emergency health insurance for the fellow for the duration of their stay. Dates of coverage must include date of departure from the United States to the assigned country until date of the fellow's return from the assigned country.
- The fellow will not be required to purchase his or her health insurance and then be reimbursed.
- The recipient will educate the fellow as to what is covered under health insurance policy, especially highlighting that pre-existing medical conditions are not covered.
- The recipient will immediately alert USDA/FAS staff if any health/medical conditions arise during the program.

g. Communication

The recipient will initiate contact with the fellow as soon as possible.
- The recipient will develop the training program in consultation with USDA/FAS.
- The recipient will keep USDA/FAS informed regarding any logistical or program planning.
- The recipient will keep USDA/FAS, FAS Post and the appropriate U.S. Embassy personnel abreast of all programmatic issues including program implementation.
- The recipient will provide USDA/FAS, FAS Post and the appropriate U.S. Embassy personnel with the fellow's temporary address and phone number, and emergency contact numbers for the PI, local contact, or other appropriate institution personnel. This information is required so that Fellow can be reached in the event of an emergency.

h. Program
- The recipient will provide educational materials and supplies to each

fellow to allow their full participation in the program.
- The recipient will pay for all fees related to the fellow's training program.
- The recipient will arrange relevant field visits as applicable to the fellow's training program.
- The recipient will ensure interim and final reports (no more than 2-3 pages each) to USDA/FAS.

i. Orientation

The PI/Training Coordinator will communicate directly with the fellow at least 6- 8 weeks before fellow departure to ensure that all pertinent information is provided.

- The Institution will provide a virtual pre-departure orientation to prepare fellows for the program, set expectations, provide a forum for Q&A, and start the development of a cohesive fellowship cohort. At minimum, this should include:
  - Name and contact information of PI/Training Coordinator
  - Name and contact information of host site, including details of host institution
  - Program plan/calendar and anticipated site visits
  - Professional development expectations
  - Visa information
  - Housing, M&IE allowance, and other expense information
  - Country-specific guides including safety protocols, emergency contact information, as well as cultural, political, and social tips, weather information, and other introductory materials
  - Explain what is and is not covered under emergency health insurance policy (e.g. no pre-existing conditions, no dental, etc.)
  - Reminder to bring any necessary prescription medications
- The Institution will provide an orientation upon the fellow's arrival to acquaint them with site and community resources. At minimum, this should include:
  - Demonstration of local bus/transportation options
  - In-depth security briefing
  - Explanation of:
    - cultural and legal expectations
    - local agricultural knowledge, technology, and practices
    - agricultural education in the country, and teaching methodology that can be applied specifically to youth agricultural education
- Recipient will provide a welcome and orientation guide for selected fellows.

j. Monitoring

FAS through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to:

- Make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems;
- Provide technical assistance as required;

- Review recipients' files related to the funded program;
- Review related records and interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program upon reasonable request;
- Respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their program.

6. Close Out Reporting Requirements

Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

If applicable, an inventory of all construction projects that used funds from this program must be reported using the Real Property Status Report (Standard Form SF 429) available at: https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149866.

Acceptance of final reports by the agency constitutes a closeout of the award with no further notice or obligation to either party. This acceptance will indicate the period of performance hasexpired, and any remaining funds will be deobligated. Records must be retained for a minimumof three years after the final reports are submitted, as described in 2 CFR 200.333

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down or reimbursed but remain as unliquidated on recipient financial records.

G. Awarding Agency Contact Information

Contact and Resource Information

For all general questions, contact: scientificexchangesNOFO@usda.gov

Hours of operation: 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Inquiries will be returned within 24 working hours (3 business days). All questions must be received no later than 16 working hours (2 working days) prior to submission deadline, except the point of contact will confirm receipt of proposals upon request.

H. Additional Information

1. Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed. Recipients may request a No-Cost Extension (NCE) in order to complete all project activities. No-Cost Extension requests should be submitted with an attached electronic letter, on company letterhead, stating the purpose for the no cost extension and the proposed new end date. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to approval.

2. Prior Approval of Pre-Award Costs
The recipient shall not request reimbursement for costs incurred pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the approved project period.

3. Budget Revisions

a. Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this award require prior written approval.
b. The recipient shall obtain prior written approval for any budget revision that would result in the need for additional resources/funds.
c. The recipient is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval.

4. Post-Award Program Income
In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, aspart of their request for guidance and/or approval. The Program Manager will review approval requests for program income on a case-by-case basis; approval is not automatic. Consistent withthe policy and processes outlined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, pertinent guidance, and options, as determined by the type of recipient and circumstances involved, may be approved by the Grant Officer. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note.