

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600
WAGES: Women in Agriculture Gain Economic Security

Opportunity Number: SFOP0009761

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	May 4, 2023
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	May 25, 2023
Application Deadline:	June 15, 2023
Expected Date of Notification:	October 1, 2023
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit seek proposals to address the vulnerability of Tunisia's agricultural sector to climate change, as well as increased food security threats, particularly for women's economic security and empowerment. The project should advance women's economic futures by empowering previously marginalized women working in agricultural cooperatives to use innovative technical and entrepreneurial approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change, increase profitability, and protect against food insecurity. This project will also support women working at various stages of the agricultural value chain to enhance their business acumen, better access funding, and more effectively advocate for their economic and legal rights.

All applications must be submitted in English. Complete information on how applicants can submit proposals for this opportunity can be found in Section VI below.

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.

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.

Background Information about NEA/AC

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) offers Federal 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, youth and women 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 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 development with

economic, security, and governance assistance. U.S. support focuses on economically empowering Tunisians through inclusive, private sector-led growth, fostering democratic development, and protecting human rights.

The U.S. Embassy's Assistance Unit (AU) provides programming that responds to the needs of the Tunisian people to accelerate economic development and strengthen democracy. The AU works in coordination with other U.S. government agencies as well as the international community to advance distinct and defined elements of Tunisian economic and governance reforms. The AU manages projects funded through Bilateral Funds, Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) local grants, and three MEPI leadership programs. To learn more about the AU, you can visit the following webpage: [Foreign Assistance Unit | U.S. Embassy in Tunisia](https://usembassy.gov/foreign-assistance-unit/) (usembassy.gov)

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List of Acronyms

AC	Office of Assistance Coordination
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DOS	Department of State
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
ET	Eastern Time
FR	Final Report
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOT	Government of Tunisia
ILMS	Integrated Logistics Management System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAHRF	Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulic Resources, and Fisheries
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NEA	Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
ONAGRI	Tunisia's National Agriculture Observatory (ONAGRI)
QFR	Quarterly Financial Report
QPR	Quarterly Performance Report
RMP	Results Monitoring Plan
SAMS	State Assistance Management System
UEI	Unique Entity Identification

APPENDICES *(Posted with NOFO)*

APPENDIX 1— Budget Sample Template and Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

APPENDIX 3— Application Guidance

APPENDIX 4— Results Monitoring Plan Template

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and Embassy Tunis seek proposals to address the vulnerability of Tunisia's agricultural sector to climate change, as well as increased food security threats, while simultaneously promoting women's economic security and empowerment. The project should advance women's economic future by empowering previously marginalized women working in agricultural cooperatives to use innovative technical and entrepreneurial approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change, increase profitability, and combat food insecurity. This project will also support women working throughout the agricultural value chain to enhance their business acumen and better access funding.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tunisia is vulnerable to climate change in numerous ways. Rising temperatures, varied precipitation levels, rising sea levels, and extreme weather threaten the availability of water and land resources for the agricultural sector. Reductions in Tunisia's agricultural productivity will exacerbate food insecurity and could lead to further socio-economic instability. Tunisia's susceptibility to climate change is mainly tied to its reliance on agriculture. Agriculture accounts for ten percent of the country's gross domestic product, though inefficiency and slow adaptation to changing conditions have made agriculture's contribution to Tunisia's GDP markedly lower than neighboring countries. The sector employs approximately 14 percent of Tunisia's workforce, though the employment rate for the sector is high, reaching over 35 percent in certain agricultural regions.

Water is the single most threatened resource in Tunisia, posing a major threat agriculture, which relies mainly on rainfall. Tunisia's groundwater sources are already burdened and anticipated rainfall changes combined with evaporation increases caused by temperature rise will further affect surface and groundwater availability. Predicted extreme water stress will create tensions between various sectors and regions that are water-dependent if preservation and production technologies and models are not updated. In addition, forest fires caused and/or exacerbated by climate change devastate agricultural land and forests. In 2021, the impact of forest fires in Tunisia increased by 322% compared to 2020. The Tunisian

government currently lacks a disaster management system capable of responding to natural threats generated by climate change. To mitigate the loss of farmland and forests, the National Agricultural Observatory of Tunisia (ONAGRI) recommended the introduction of an improved land and forest management system, including an action plan to monitor and optimize the use of agricultural land, the introduction of regenerative agriculture to reduce erosion and the conservation of grassland for local livestock.

In Tunisia, climate change impacts are not gender-neutral and climate change has exacerbated gender inequality. Gender inequalities, rooted in patriarchal systems and discriminatory social norms, mean that women are less likely to have access to agricultural extension services, markets, land, and formal financial services despite their essential place in the agricultural world. This results in a deep cycle of poverty and social inequality experienced by women in the agricultural sector. For example, it is difficult for women to own land, one of the most common forms of collateral when applying for a loan. Women are consequently less likely to have access to financial credit, loans, crop insurance, livestock, and other productive assets, denying them agency, growth opportunities, and mechanisms to advocate for their needs and hold the government accountable. A lack of financial management and business knowledge often compounds these barriers. Living in precarious conditions, rural women are increasingly concerned about the effects of climate change compared to urban women, as they represent 70% of the agricultural workforce but only 15% of the permanent workforce.

ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

Project's Goal: Empower women working in agricultural cooperatives to use innovative technical and entrepreneurial approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change, increase profitability, and combat food insecurity.

A successful project will result in:

- **Objective 1:** Women-led cooperatives optimize their use of natural resources to mitigate the challenges caused by climate change;
- **Objective 2:** Women-led cooperatives improve business acumen and increase revenue throughout the value chain of their products.

PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications to empower women working in agricultural cooperatives to use innovative technical and entrepreneurial approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change, increase profitability, and protect against food insecurity. Funds are available to support projects that increase women cooperatives' resilience to the impact of climate change

on agriculture and food security and empower them to grow their entrepreneurial activities, and access funding opportunities.

Objective 1: Women-led cooperatives optimize their use of natural resources to mitigate the challenges caused by climate change.

- **Identify sector appropriate women cooperatives and assess their respective needs:** The project will first review existing studies on Tunisian cooperatives. A follow-on assessment will identify the targeted regions and the cooperatives that will benefit from this project, highlight their respective needs, and tailor the support activities accordingly.
- **Optimize use of natural resources:** The project will leverage the assessment to help the selected cooperatives identify sustainable and innovative techniques to optimize the use of natural resources, such as water. The project will provide cooperatives with technical capacity building and equipment to improve their cultivation practices and agricultural yields. The project will also help the cooperatives and private sector partners implement environmentally conscious practices, ensuring sustainable preservation of natural resources, and mitigating the threat of food insecurity.
- **Support innovative start-up solutions:** Activities will support start-ups that create sustainable agricultural solutions to address identified needs of cooperatives. The project will select three to five Tunisian start-ups based on an evaluation of how successful their business solution will be in helping the women cooperatives mitigate climate change and grow their businesses. The startups will receive business support and small grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000. Each entrepreneur will be matched with a cooperative most likely to benefit from its solution. These partnerships will provide women cooperatives direct access to innovative, cost efficient, and environmentally sustainable solutions while narrowing the digital gender gap.

Objective 2: Women-led cooperatives improve business acumen and increase revenue throughout the value chain of their products.

- **Provide cooperatives with capacity-building training:** The project will assess cooperatives' needs and create a personalized capacity-building program for each targeted value chain. These efforts will help cooperatives improve their products based on market demand, expand their product reach, and increase profits. Examples of capacity building opportunities include training in environmentally sustainable business approaches to protect the environment and adapt to climate change; participation in national and international fairs to expand cooperatives' networks; assistance with negotiation and product pitching techniques; partnerships with e-commerce platforms on website development and other sustainable technological solutions.
- **Facilitate cooperatives' access to finance:** The project will help cooperatives restructure their financial processes, connect them to investors to improve their access to land procurement loans, and provide in-depth financial educational training. The project will work with the cooperatives to create financial strategies to mitigate financial losses caused by COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and to anticipate future risks, such as climate change.

Project activities should mostly focus on:

- a. A mapping of the current literature and an assessment to identify relevant beneficiary women cooperatives, as well as their respective needs and climate change mitigation solutions;
- b. Mechanisms to improve access to innovative and sustainable means of natural resource optimization for women agricultural cooperatives and methods to implement environmentally conscious practices;
- c. Partnerships with Tunisian start-ups offering sustainable solutions to help women cooperatives mitigate the impacts of climate change on their production;
- d. Collaboration with financial institutions, and other stakeholders to facilitate access to funding and improve financial literacy of rural women; and
- e. Mechanisms to build women cooperatives' capacities to grow their entrepreneurial activities.

Project beneficiaries include:

- f. At least 15 established women agricultural cooperatives with a total of at least 150 rural women members.
- g. At least 3 Tunisian start-ups developing sustainable agricultural solutions to cooperatives' needs; and

Illustrative outcomes may include but should not be limited to:

- Increased access to finance and sustainable long-term financial strategies for women agricultural cooperatives;
- Increased financial literacy of rural women;
- Established new climate change mitigation solutions in the agricultural sector;
- Increased access to innovative and sustainable infrastructure and equipment;
- Implementation of environmentally conscious practices, ensuring sustainable preservation of natural resources and the mitigation of food insecurity;
- Established partnerships with Tunisian start-ups to provide climate change solutions for women cooperatives;
- Growth of domestic and international entrepreneurial activities of women cooperatives;
- Increased access to business growth expertise and resources;

The following activities and costs are **NOT ALLOWED** under this announcement:

- Social welfare projects;
- 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;
- Cultural presentations, cultural research, cultural clubs, 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.

GENDER INTEGRATION

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 project's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programming should view the training video located here:

https://encompassworld.com/elearningfiles/DOS/DOS_Gender_Integration_E-Course/story_html5.html

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

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

Successful applicants will work with NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit program and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) teams to create a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan 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 success of the project in meeting expected outcomes.

Applicants are also required to include a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) in their application. The purpose of the RMP is to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives for each of the proposed project's three Priority Areas. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives (i.e. project outcomes). Please see Appendix IV for the RMP template.

The RMP will be judged based on the following elements:

- **Well-defined objectives:** Do the objectives provide a clear statement of what the project specifically plans to achieve? Objectives should be project specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.
- **Well-defined qualitative and quantitative indicators:** Indicators should objectively measure project progress towards achieving the application's proposed objectives. To

this end, applicants may include both output and outcome indicators. Indicators must all contribute towards an objective measurement of progress towards achieving project objectives. Applicants should not include indicators that track progress towards project milestones, deliverables, or activities.

- **Data collection and analysis:** How (and how often) will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to measure progress toward the project objectives? Data collection methods should be sound and realistic.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt implementation to changes on the ground to maintain progress? Do you plan to conduct or manage any internal or external evaluations?

It is expected that the RMP will include a combination of relevant DOS standard foreign assistance indicators¹ and custom project-specific indicators suggested by the applicant for NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit review. NEA/AC's and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit's MEL teams will work with the successful applicant on finalizing indicators and an RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award.

The quality and feasibility of the proposed RMP will be among the elements on which applications are evaluated (See Part VIII, Section A below for more information). More information about preparing this Plan can be found in Appendix IV.

As part of the negotiation process, successful applicants will work with the NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit program and MEL teams to finalize their proposed logic model/theory of change and RMP based on their proposal to ensure it meets the above-mentioned standards. The successful applicants will be responsible for collecting auditable data against pre-established indicators, which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award to inform necessary modifications to the project's design and assess the results of the project's success in meeting expected outputs and outcomes.

All projects funded through this NOFO will be required to complete a mid-term and final evaluations. The final evaluation of the project will assess the entire period of performance with technical support from the NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit MEL teams. Successful applicants will dedicate between 3 percent and 5 percent of their total budget to perform and facilitate 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 and Embassy Tunis team to evaluate long-term outcomes.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type: Cooperative Agreement

¹ Links to Foreign Assistance Standard Indicators and their definitions can be found at <https://www.state.gov/foreign-assistance-resource-library/#managing>

Estimated Number of Awards:1

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$1,500,000

Estimated Award Ceiling: \$1,500,000

Estimated Award Floor: \$1,250,000

Cost-Sharing or Matching: Encouraged; NOT Required

Estimated Length of Project Period:3 Years

Maximum Length of Project Period with Option Year(s): Five years

Estimated Award Ceiling for the Option Year(s): \$2,500,000

Estimated Award Total with the Option Year(s): \$4,000,000

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$1,500,000 in Economic Support Funds for 1 award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to **3 Years**, with a possibly two-year option period, depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is October 1, 2023.

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 years after the announcement's close date.

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

Non-Competing Continuation

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

Pending successful implementation of this project for the initial estimated length of time as indicated above and pending the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit may extend this grant for additional time, not to exceed a 5-year

total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years of non-competing continuations. See Section VI Application and Submission Information for more details.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Activities in which NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit will be substantially involved include:

- Approval of equipment and infrastructure improvements;
- Approval of the project's partners;
- Approval of the mid-term and final evaluations;
- Review and approval of the annual M&E plan with an annual DQA;
- Approval of the selected women cooperatives and start-ups
- Approval of any public advocacy and awareness campaign strategy
- Approval of the project's annual workplan with periodic reviews and performance assessments; and
- Review and approval of the M&E plan no later than 90 days after the project's launch with semiannual reviews, if deemed necessary.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

All applicants will be screened by NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit to determine whether they meet all the program eligibility requirements detailed below.

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all 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.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
 - Non-profit organizations;
 - For-profit organizations;
 - Private institutions of higher education;
 - Public or state institutions of higher education;
 - Public international organizations;
 - Small businesses with functional and regional experience in the areas of:
 - Climate change, women's economic empowerment, and agriculture in the MENA region.

A.1. Prime Applicant

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

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region. This should be addressed within the project narrative section of your application.
- Meet ALL the registration requirements listed below.
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage the Government of Tunisia
- Demonstrate experience working on similar projects focused on climate change, especially related to the agricultural sector and land conservation

A.2. Local Partners

Applicants are **required** to include partnerships with local organizations as part of their project design for this NOFO. **Applicants who do not incorporate local partners in their proposal will be deemed ineligible and will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage.**

Applicants should propose partners that would work together on specific programmatic objectives or priorities and that utilize local expertise. Partnerships may, but are not required to, take the form of sub-grants.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should [submit a help desk ticket \(“incident”\)](#) with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: “I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated.”

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant’s identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization’s status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a

justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

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 its programs.

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

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only 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 stage. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it is submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424 and SF424a)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding.

Guidance on how to complete the SF-424 and SF424a is provided in Appendix 3. NOTE: In addition to following all guidance outlined below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Application Evaluation Criteria section of this NOFO closely as they prepare their proposal. The Evaluation Criteria section is the rubric by which each application will be scored.

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 15 pages**. More details on

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

Option Years Project Narrative:

The Option Years Narrative should clearly describe the efforts the applicant would propose to undertake during the option year period(s) of up to two years (for up to a total five-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 two (3) pages.

Wages represents a pilot project, and thus option years project narrative **may** include the following activities. Expansion of existing activities may be implemented by selecting women cooperatives and beneficiaries in new regions and throughout different agricultural sectors pending their success in the initial phase of the project. The initial assessment will be used as a reference for the new selection with research updates if necessary.

Objective 1: Women-led cooperatives optimize their use of natural resources to mitigate the challenges caused by climate change.

- Optimize use of natural resources
- Support innovative start-up solutions
- Promote good governance within cooperatives and advocate for women economic rights: The project will work with the selected cooperatives to ensure a better structure of their teams, built on democratic values and principles, and leading to effective management, equity, and decision making. This action aims to ensure that all cooperatives members' rights are protected and to mitigate internal conflict that could hinder their activities. This activity aims to spread awareness and mobilize women as well as men in combatting economic violence against women.

Objective 2: Women-led cooperatives improve business acumen and increase revenue throughout the value chain of their products.

- Provide cooperatives with capacity-building training
- Facilitate cooperatives' access to finance

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission

Applicants must provide the following three elements as part of their budget submission:

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line-Item Budget
- Budget Narrative

- **Option Years Budget:** A detailed budget for \$1,500,000 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 \$2,500,000).

Key staff members must be clearly identified in both the detailed budget and budget narrative documents.

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 Narrative 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. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Logic Model

Applicants shall provide a logic model and a theory of change statement to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model and 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**.

Results Monitoring Plan

Applicants shall provide an RMP outlining how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives for each of the proposed project's three Priority Areas. The RMP can be generated using the template in **Appendix 4**. **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 4 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, Logic Model / Theory of Change, and RMP. This section **may not exceed 2 pages.**

Job Descriptions/Biographical Information 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 identified: 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.**

Sustainability Plan

The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. More information on preparing the Sustainability Plan is provided in **Appendix 3.** Sustainability Plans may not exceed **2 pages.**

Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary

This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks and implement 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 3 pages.**

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent

Applicants proposing partner organizations and/or government bodies should include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from line ministries and any other proposed partners.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Applicants proposing indirect costs in the Budget greater than a 10% de minimis rate 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. Below are examples of some additional documents an applicant may wish to submit.

1. **Organizational Chart:** The organizational chart outlines the clear lines of responsibility and authority in the applicant organization to include budgeted level of effort listed by each person.
2. **GANTT Charts:** A Gantt chart is a type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. The Chart should list the tasks to be performed on the vertical axis, and time intervals on the horizontal axis with the width of the horizontal bars, in the graph, showing the duration of each activity. Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements and summary elements of a project.

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.

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 VI 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.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using **SAMS Domestic**. SAMS Domestic requires 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. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application.** NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit are not able 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.

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 <https://afsism.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the username 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.

SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on June 15, 2023 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 able to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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.

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.

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 (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf>) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

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.
- 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 and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them.
- M&E: The applicant explains how monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out throughout the award's period of performance and who will be responsible for them. The applicant includes a final evaluation of the project at the completion of the award.
- M&E: The applicant includes a midline evaluation of the project to inform the use of option years
- M&E: The applicant includes an endline 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: Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- Rationale: To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- Project Management: Clear description of 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 any local partners.
- Feasibility: The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process: The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- Duplication: The applicant acknowledges if activities like 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.
- Contingency Plan: The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- Division of Labor: The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- Marginalized Communities: The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion. This can include religious and ethnic minority communities, female-headed households, and communities in underserved geographic regions.
- 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 (30 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the proposed country/territory/region.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed (e.g., agricultural capacity building).
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding as well as managing sub-awards and grants.
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and 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 any proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (10 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in the country/territory/region proposed, in the proposed content area, 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 – demonstrating that the project will be sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The costs proposed are allocable, allowable, and 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.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation, and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

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 Section V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. 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 Assistance Unit reserve the right to have all applications deemed to be technically 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 Section VIII. Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory.

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's

overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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 and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit expect to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by September 30, 2022. 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.

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.

TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

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

APPLICANT VETTING AS A CONDITION OF AWARD

N/A

SPECIAL PROVISION FOR PERFORMANCE IN A DESIGNATED COMBAT AREA (SPOT) REQUIREMENTS

N/A

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 and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit when negotiating an award.

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 V. B. **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.**

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.

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact: nea-grants@state.gov.

All questions should be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by May 25, 2023, at 17:00:00 eastern standard time (EST). All questions should include the opportunity number (SFOP0009753) in the subject of the email. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

For questions regarding creating an account or using SAMS Domestic to apply, 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.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>.

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

<https://afsitsm.servicenowservices.com/ilms/>

XI. 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.