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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600

SMART GRID

Opportunity Number: ***SFOP0006266***

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	**New**
Date Opened:	**11/14/2019**
Deadline for Questions & Notification of Intent to Apply:	**12/5/2019**
Bidder's Conference	**12/13/2019**
Application Deadline:	**1/14/2020**
Expected Date of Notification:	**1/31/2020**
Federal Agency Contact:	**John Daniels** **NEA-Grants@state.gov**

Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support Tunisia's state power utility company through the development of a pilot program for advanced power management systems. This opportunity aims to advance US foreign policy in Tunisia by improving the management of public and natural resources to allow for increased, sustainable economic growth.

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

1. Assess existing grid management infrastructure and analyze options for integration of an advanced smart grid management system in Tunisia
2. Support the acquisition of smart grid systems and provide technical assistance to the Government of Tunisia for managing them

Applications will be accepted only from U.S. organizations that have previously worked with foreign governments on implementing advanced smart grid and power management programs. Successful applications will work closely with the Government of Tunisia (GoT) and the Société Tunisienne de l'Electricité et du Gaz (STEG), Tunisia's state power utility company.

Eligible Countries and Territories:

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

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

Background Information about NEA/AC:

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

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

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

Table of Contents

APPENDICES *(Posted with NOFO)*

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support Tunisia's state power utility company through the development of a pilot program for advanced power management systems.

Applications will be accepted only from U.S. organizations that have previously worked with foreign governments on implementing advanced smart grid and power management programs. Successful applications will work closely with the Government of Tunisia (GoT) and the Société Tunisienne de l'Electricité et du Gaz (STEG), Tunisia's state power utility company.

This programming responds to the U.S. Government priority that Tunisia adopts reforms and practices to improve competition, inclusive opportunities, and economic governance in order to boost economic growth and job creation, as well its mission to improve the management of public and natural resources.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

From 2008 to 2010, insufficient investment in Tunisia's energy sector resulted in the country's greater reliance on imported natural gas for its domestic consumption. Today, importation of natural gas equates to about 10% of GoT's budget. This reliance on foreign energy resources depletes foreign currency reserves and impedes the government's ability to direct its revenues elsewhere to develop the economy. Furthermore, because of delays in power plant construction, the power sector does not possess surge generation capacity and is susceptible to brownouts. STEG is hard-pressed to meet peak summer electricity demand, in addition to keeping up with Tunisia's annual 5% growth in power consumption. Increasing renewable power production puts additional pressure on STEG to upgrade its management system for the electrical grid to handle intermittency issues that come from solar and wind power, and to make power delivery more efficient through the adoption of advanced smart grid solutions.

In order for the Tunisian government to accelerate its energy efficiency program, better prepare for the progressive inclusion of renewable energy solutions, and gain better understanding of power generation needs, STEG has to move toward advanced energy management and distribution management systems as part of a comprehensive smart grid approach. STEG has already announced that it intends to invest in advanced software and infrastructure grid technology for generation, transmission, and distribution. STEG's adoption of Advanced Energy Management Systems (AEMS) and Advanced Distribution Management Systems (ADMS) would ultimately decrease energy imports, reduce the country's trade deficit, improve foreign exchange reserves, and slow the depreciation of the dinar – in essence, helping address some of the gravest threats to the overall health of Tunisia's economy.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in:

1. A technical feasibility study that provides an assessment of existing grid management infrastructure and an analysis of strategies for integrating an advanced smart grid management system (AEMS and ADMS) in Tunisia

2. The acquisition and implementation of a pilot of advanced smart grid technology and subsequent infrastructure and technical assistance to optimize the new systems

C. PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications that support STEG through the development of a pilot program for advanced power management systems in Tunisia. Successful applicants will work closely with the GoT and STEG. Two priority areas have been identified. Responsive applications will be those that address both priority areas through one application submission.

Technical Feasibility Study (Priority Area 1): In order to determine the current capacity of Tunisia's grid management systems and establish a strategy for integrating advanced smart grid technology throughout the country, it is necessary to conduct an initial assessment and subsequent analysis. Required activities include but are not limited to:

a. An initial assessment of the seven (7) existing STEG grid management systems and infrastructure in Tunisia
b. An analysis of different methods and options for integrating an advanced smart grid management system. This study must incorporate a representative sample set of the entire variety of STEG clientele throughout Tunisia, in order to assist the STEG in determining how to optimize its power systems from the supply (generation) and demand (consumption) sides. It shall seek to obtain thorough information on consumer behavior, generation needs, and grid load management during normal and peak seasons that is representative of the population. A representative sample of demand would include residential, commercial, and industrial consumers distributed as the following – 2,500 in the Low Voltage (LV), 25 in the Medium Voltage (MV), and 5 in the High Voltage (HV).

Pilot of an Advanced Smart Grid System using U.S. technology (Priority Area 2): In order to make concrete advancement in its power management infrastructure, STEG must be able to achieve comprehensive smart grid solutions and improved technical management. Thus, the second priority area aims to use data from the initial feasibility study to provide STEG with the adequate pilot of advanced smart grid system technology to demonstrate potential efficiency and cost savings outcomes. Required activities include but are not limited to:

a. Advise and assist on the acquisition of smart grid technology as the country diversifies into renewable energies.
b. Develop a process to select with STEG a U.S. origin technology that would meet STEG goals and other needs identified during the feasibility study conducted under Priority Area 1.
c. Support the design and implementation of necessary technical solutions for the supervision, monitoring, and real-time regulation of the grid using AEMS and ADMS systems.
d. Utilize automated demand side management solutions to manage peak demand.
e. Introduce GOT and STEG officials to U.S. electric power transmission technology providers through site visits.
f. Implement a pilot of advanced smart grid technology and provide related training
g. Collect, analyze, and interpret the pilot output data in collaboration with STEG in order

to provide technical recommendations for future full deployment.

Project beneficiaries shall include the STEG and other GOT entities as relevant:

NEA/AC requires that all activities fully address gender considerations, ensuring that both men and women benefit from support where applicable, and that gender awareness is a built-in component of project activities. This should be documented through gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies any relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives. Applicants who are unfamiliar with integrating gender in foreign assistance programing should view the training video located here. Recipient Gender Integration E-course.

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

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

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

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

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

- Improved quality, reliability, and cost savings of the power systems in Tunisia;
- A comprehensive assessment of the seven (7) existing STEG grid management systems;
- Validation of the appropriate power demand-side management (DSM) system through the targeting of a representative sample of consumers covering residential, commercial, and industrial activities throughout the country;
- An enhanced power-grid management system that optimizes the balance between production and demand in real time;
- Validation of the appropriate advanced energy management system (AEMS) and advanced distribution management systems (ADMS) for STEG, including a pilot of U.S. technology hardware and software;

- Improved supervision, control, and data security in STEG's grid;
- Reduced dependency on imported natural gas and improved power prices as a result of more efficient energy distribution from rural areas and less expensive clean energy;
- Assessment of the environmental impact of a reduction in carbon emissions due to an increase in the use of clean energies distributed more efficiently from rural regions.

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

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

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

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

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

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	**Cooperative Agreement**
Estimated Number of Awards:	**1**
Estimated Total Program Funding:	**$5,000,000**
Estimated Award Ceiling:	**$5,000,000**
Estimated Award Floor:	**$4,000,000**
Cost-Sharing or Matching:	**Encouraged; NOT Required**
Estimated Length of Project Period:	**3 years**

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately $5,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately one (1) award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to three (3) years, depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is March 1, 2020. NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis 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
A Continuation cooperative agreement funded under this award, beyond the initial budget period, will be contingent upon the availability of funds; awardee's progress in meeting cooperative agreement 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; achievement of results set out in this NOFO and the project design; demonstration that further work is feasible and realistic; and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Department of State and in line with U.S. foreign policy goals in Tunisia.

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 may extend this cooperative agreement for additional time, not to exceed a five-year total project period. Please note that this NOFO requires that applicants submit additional budget materials to plan for potential out-years per non-competing continuation. See Section VI Application and Submission Information for more details.

Note that this does **NOT** constitute any commitment or guarantee of funds or extension of period of performance beyond any initial award issued. Applicants should demonstrate through their proposal how project activities planned for the estimated period of performance and estimated funding noted above will achieve corresponding project objectives within that time frame and budget in the case that additional funding does not become available.

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

NEA/AC shall be involved in the program and management performance of these cooperative agreements through consultation and technical collaboration on specified program activities.

NEA/AC Responsibilities

- Approval of key personnel;
- Collaboration in establishing annual program objectives and approval of an annual work plan;
- Collaboration in defining the sample set of STEG clientele;
- Collaboration in defining the scope and location of the smart-technology pilot program;
- Collaboration in development of training materials on selection of smart-grid systems and data collection, analysis, and interpretation;
- Review and approval of the final report, including the technical recommendations for full deployment.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

NOTE: Applications that do not demonstrate that they meet all of the eligibility requirements in Section A and Section B will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage and may be deemed ineligible for funding under this announcement. Nothing can be added to an application once the competition deadline has passed.

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S.
  - Non-profit organizations;
  - For-profit organizations;
  - Private institutions of higher education;
  - Public or state institutions of higher education;
  - Public international organizations;

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis strongly encourage applications from U.S. organizations with personnel experience in the Middle East and North Africa region. International non-governmental organizations with principal bases of operations outside the Middle East and North Africa are also encouraged to apply, **but the percentage of total budget actually spent in the region through local partners will be among the elements of evaluation for this competition**.

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

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.
- Have extensive experience working within the energy sector.
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed in *Section B* below.

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for NEA/AC (Federal) funding, organizations, whether based in or outside the U.S., must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, currently referred to as a DUNS number, and an active account with the System for Award Management (SAM). This applies to BOTH prime applicants and any local partners receiving federally funded sub-awards. Applicants who do not meet all registration requirements are NOT eligible for funding under the opportunity.

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

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:
Go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp.
Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC), and annual revenue.

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

System for Award Management (SAM)
SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about award applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

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

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

Go to http://www.sam.gov.
Select *Create User Account*, and then select *Create an Account* on the left-hand side of the screen under *Individual Account Details.* Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM User Guide), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **three to fourteen business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

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

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS
C.1. Cost-Sharing or Matching

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

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

All cost share or matching must be included in detail in the line item budget and noted in the budget narrative. Proposals offering potential, yet to be determined cost-share sourcing will NOT be considered to have met this requirement, and will be deemed ineligible. When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, recipients must maintain written records to support all costs that are claimed as their contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB 2 CFR 200.306 – Cost Sharing and Matching.

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English. Applicants may submit only one (1) application.** Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements. **NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review state.** Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b):
Applicants must complete all three 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 outlines below regarding application materials, applicants are strongly encourage 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.**

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
- A detailed budget for the initial project period is required, and a notional budget and brief budget narrative for option year(s) funding up to two (2) additional years for up to an additional four million dollars.

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. Relevant key personnel must have documented experience within the energy sector and expertise with smart grid technology. 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 instruction, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Narrative.**

In addition to the detailed budget for up to three years, applicants shall submit a notional budget for up to two additional years. This may be included as additional tabs in the main budget excel workbook.

Logic Model:
Applicants shall provide a logic model or theory of change to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives. The logic model or theory of change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as found in the sample.** If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. This section **may be no longer than 3 pages.**

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

Sustainability Plan:

The sustainability plan outlines how the proposed project will be sustained beyond the initial award period. Sustainability Plans may not exceed 2 pages.

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

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

OR

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

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

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

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

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.

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

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

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

It is strongly recommended that applicants submit applications using Microsoft Office. If applicants do not have access to Microsoft Office products, Adobe PDF files may be submitted.

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit their application electronically using either Grants.gov OR SAMS Domestic. Both systems require that the applying organization have an account with the system and both require a UEI number and SAM.gov account as detailed in B.3 above. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have an active account and will be able to submit its application. Applicants must select one of these systems to submit their application; do not submit an application through both systems.** NEA/AC is not in a position to grant exceptions to these requirements.

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

C.1. Grants.gov

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

C.2. SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.
To create an account, go to http://mygrants.service-now.com, and click the "create an account" hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled "User Registration Request;" complete the online form and click the "Submit" button.

Users will receive an activation email entitled "Verify Your Grants Account Registration;" click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

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

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on 1/14/2020 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. **Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. 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.

2. 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 http://gao.gov/assets/590/587281.pdf

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

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

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

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (20 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.

Project Design (20 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 demonstrates interest and support from the STEG in the proposal**.**
- 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 similar to those proposed are already taking or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- 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 Populations: The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.
- Program Logic: Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?
- 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) implementing power management programs with foreign governments.
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the content area proposed.
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project. Specifically, the project manager must have extensive experience working in the energy sector.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from other proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (30 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, that demonstrate experience working in Tunisia and with Tunisians.
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project, whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer demonstrates that the project will be adequately but efficiently staffed, avoiding redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience and knowledge in entrepreneurship, finance, banking and/or government regulations..
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

- The applicant provides a detailed budget that accounts for the entire project duration.
- The costs proposed are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results, which are clearly explained in the budget narrative.
- The budget provides details of calculations, including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- The preponderance of the budget is spent on supporting the project participants/activities in country.
- The budget includes costs dedicated to management, monitoring, and evaluation and any costs needed for further gender analysis and for addressing gender gaps. Successful applicants will dedicate between 3% and 5% of their total budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- Adequate travel costs are proposed.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in **Part V** and have submitted all required documents outlined in **Part 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 reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

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

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC'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. ADMINSTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

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

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by 01/31/2020. 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 reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.
Recipients are required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

Selected applicants will be required to provide prior notification of all international travel as a requirement of their agreement. This includes travel which is already included in the approved budget and Scope of Work. The 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.

D. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

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

E. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see **Part V, Section 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.

F. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

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

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

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

All questions and a confirmation of Intent to Apply must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by December 5, 2019 at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.