

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
FY2024 Faculty Exchange Program – Southeast Asia Veterinary Sciences

Application Submission Deadline: March 15, 2024

Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Fellowship Programs, announces this funding opportunity to support the Faculty Exchange Program (FEP) by issuing a new award(s). This opportunity is available to state cooperative institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States, as defined at 7 USC 3103 and is intended to improve teaching methods, pedagogical skills, and curriculum development techniques among faculty of veterinary science and medicine in the listed priority countries.

A. Program Description

This program will support the design and delivery of training activities that include a mixed cohort of university professors in the veterinary science and medicine field from one or more of the following countries (the priority countries for this NOFO): the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Training programs are designed and organized in conjunction with U.S. universities, USDA/FAS, and other government agencies. The FEP emphasizes the development of improved and updated courses and curricula, teaching and student assessment methods, exposure to current research techniques, and practical field experiences while the Fellows study in the United States. In addition, the FEP includes follow-up visits by U.S. host professors (the Mentors) to their Fellow's home country. While visiting the participating Fellows' universities, U.S. faculty members are expected to assess progress on the implementation of courses developed during the U.S. based portion of the program and should continue to encourage collaboration between U.S. and participating universities. Veterinary training design and training under the FEP must include a curriculum that addresses science based Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) issues that connect to international trade.

Background

The FEP began in 1995 to bring junior or mid-level university professors from countries in the Former Soviet Union to the United States for one semester to increase their knowledge of, and ability to, teach agricultural economics, marketing, and agribusiness management at their home institutions. Between 2002-2012, the program evolved to also include an Agricultural Science area, which focused on subjects such as animal health, food quality, food inspection, phytosanitary measures, and grades and standards, and involved scientists from Africa and Central America in addition to Eastern Europe and Eurasian countries. Starting in 2016, the FEP narrowed its geographic focus to Africa, and to the area of Veterinary Science. From 2016 to 2021, this Veterinary Science area of the program nearly 100 early to mid-career instructors at Colleges of Veterinary Science and Medicine from Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

In 2022 and 2023, the FEP shifted focus to veterinary medicine in Southeast Asia, specifically Vietnam and the Philippines.

Objectives

The purpose of the FEP is to assist developing countries with improvements to their university agricultural education, research, and extension programs by providing a one-semester training program at U.S. agricultural universities. Participating Fellows upgrade their technical knowledge in their subject area, learn new teaching methods through class observation, and new research methods through experience in the lab, short courses, and/or one-on-one instruction. Fellows also learn about additional public/private grants/funding opportunities as well as proposal writing.

During this FY 2024 FEP programming cycle, USDA/FAS is seeking proposal submissions to host Fellows from one or more of the following countries: the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Participating Fellows will aim to revise and modernize their class outlines for introduction at their home university after they return. In addition to educational modernization, participating Fellow should travel to laboratories, farms, agribusinesses, and government offices to gain an understanding of how the veterinary science and animal health systems operate in the United States. Faculty Mentors should visit each participating Fellow in their home country 3-9 months after the conclusion of the U.S based program to provide follow-on support and advice. USDA/FAS will conduct the recruitment and interview process to select Fellows based on their experiences and expertise in their field and will then place them in two groups of up to ten Fellows. Each group of ten will be hosted by a selected U.S. university for the program.

Duration

The U.S.-based training will be 4-5 months within the full period of performance (one semester). All Fellows from Southeast Asia should participate in the program at the same time as a cohort. Ideally, this period would align with the Fall session of classes at the respective host university.

Location

The implementing institution is expected to host the Fellows at a research facility on their campus in the United States. The Mentors are expected to make reciprocal visits of up to 2 weeks to the Fellows' home institutions in Southeast Asia. In addition, the implementing institution is expected to conduct pre and post visits for the Fellows to Washington, DC to be greeted at USDA's Washington, DC headquarters and participate in meetings and presentations organized by the USDA/FAS Fellowship Programs team.

Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-FAS-10613-0700-10.-24-0001

Assistance Listing Number

10.613 Faculty Exchange Program

Authorizing Legislation

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, PL 95-113, as amended, 7 USC §§ 3291 and 3319a

B. Federal Award Information

Total Available Federal Funding: Up to \$1,000,000 total; up to \$500,000 per award
subject to the availability of funding

Anticipated Number of Awards: 2

Cost Share/Match Requirement: None/Not Required

Projected Period of Performance Start: September 15, 2024

Projected Period of Performance End: September 14, 2026

Extensions to this program are permitted, subject to approval.

Type of Assistance Instrument:

USDA/FAS anticipates that a Cost-Reimbursable Agreement will be funded pursuant to this funding opportunity.

This type of agreement allows for a collaborative relationship between USDA/FAS, the selected recipient, and other collaborating partners. The particular scope and depth of this collaboration may vary throughout performance, depending on the needs of the activity and the desires of the participating Fellows.

Additional Awards

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make additional awards under this solicitation, consistent with Agency policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

No Awards

USDA/FAS reserves the right to make no awards under this competition.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants: State cooperative institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States, as defined at 7 USC 3103.

All applicants must have an active registration in the U.S. Government System for Award Management (www.sam.gov) before the application submission deadline of the announcement; applicants with inactive, expired, pending, or excluded listings will be deemed ineligible. Exceptions, waivers, or extensions will not be considered. Please contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, if you have questions about this requirement. Applicants with inactive, expired, pending, or excluded listings will be deemed ineligible. Exceptions, waivers, or extensions will not be considered. Please contact the program

officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, if you have questions about this requirement.

Cost Share/Match Requirement: None/Not Required

Ineligible activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.

Application packages submitted on expired/inactive standard forms could be deemed ineligible. Applicants should ensure they are utilizing the active/nonexpired forms available on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

Multiple Applications/Awards

An individual applicant may not submit more than one application in response to this NOFO, and may not be offered more than one award.

Substantial Compliance

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and must meet the eligibility requirements described in Section C to be considered eligible. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within seven calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section D of this solicitation or else they will be rejected. However, where a page limit is expressed in Section D with respect to the application, or parts thereof, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.

Evidence of Eligibility

Applicants are responsible for including documentation, if necessary, establishing that they meet the stated eligibility requirements, when it is not immediately obvious. Applicants should not presume that USDA/FAS is sufficiently familiar with their organization that this is unnecessary, and USDA/FAS will not make assumptions as to the nature of the applicant's organization.

D. Application and Submission Information

This announcement contains all information necessary to apply to this funding opportunity.

Applicants may submit questions about this funding opportunity to the Section G contact.

Deadline for Question Submission: March 11, 2024

Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: March 15, 2024 at 11:59pm EDT (UTC -04:00)

Applications received after this time will not be accepted. Applicants are advised to make their submissions 1-2 days before this deadline in case of computer problems.

Anticipated Award Date:

June 10, 2024

Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete application package must include:

- Standard Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, showing the Unique Entity Identifier, and signed by the applicant
- Standard Form SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs, showing the budget categorization. Applicants are advised to consult 2 CFR 200 Subpart E for guidance on proper categorization of cost items. An improper categorization will not itself be grounds for a determination of ineligibility but may delay approval and/or adversely impact the application's evaluation scoring.
- A detailed budget and narrative, in which cost items are quantified and described in sufficient detail to enable USDA/FAS to independently determine that the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable for the project and consistent with applicable regulations.
 - Indirect costs are statutorily capped at 10% for cost reimbursable agreements.
- A detailed project narrative or plan of operation that addresses the following (there is no page limit or requirement, but narratives from 10-15 pages in length are expected):
 - Indicate the name of the institution that is applying to host an FEP cohort
 - Provide a tentative training plan based on the training interests listed in the statement of work, including topics to be covered, possible field visits and other activities with tentative dates
 - Include a narrative description of the proposed training including the following elements: orientations, classroom instruction, field demonstrations and/or field visits, leadership development, conference attendance, term break activities, and cultural opportunities
 - Include a narrative description of how the program will be administered and the expertise and roles of the university faculty, support staff, and collaborating scientists, including potential Mentors identified to participate
 - Provide a summary of relevant institutional capabilities for hosting international Fellows in Veterinary Science and Medicine and a description of how regional and university resources, including the presence of relevant agricultural practices in the region, would be used to enhance the program
 - Briefly describe the expertise and international experience of the applicant in the field of interest and in the countries of the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia
 - Briefly describe the expertise and experience of the applicant with international training and adult-education
 - Demonstrate understanding of cultural context and needs of the Fellows
 - Identify the expected skills or knowledge to be acquired by the Fellows by the end of the program
 - Include information on the J-1 Visa compliant medical insurance coverage to be obtained for all Fellows and ensure it is comparable to NRIOL.net's J-1 Visa Health Insurance Coverage (<https://www.nriol.net/j1-visa-health-insurance/>)

- Demonstrate flexibility within the training plan to account for potential program changes and explain the applicant’s ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances
- Include a quality assurance plan and a risk mitigation response plan explaining how unforeseen problems that could arise would be addressed and by whom
- Ensure the project narrative or plan of operation is organized, written in English, is free of excessive grammatical and spelling errors, contains any source information properly cited, and is submitted in PDF format
 - Applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in application format, including selecting a legible font type and size for use in the application.
- Standard Form SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable to the applicant

Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

- (i) Have an active registration in SAM before submitting its application;
- (ii) Have assented to the federal assistance certifications in the SAM platform;
- (iii) Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in its application; and
- (iv) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

SAM.gov Registration Instructions

Organizations applying to this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If you have never done business with the Federal Government, you will need to register your organization in SAM.gov. If you do not have a SAM.gov account, then you will create an account using login.gov¹ to complete your SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes obtaining Unique Entity ID (UEI), a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned an entity by SAM.gov, and requires assertions, representations and certifications, and other information about your organization. Please review the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for details on this process.

Entities outside the United States (defined at 2 CFR 200.1 as “[foreign organizations](#)” and “[foreign public entities](#)”) must obtain a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) Code prior to SAM.gov registration. An NCAGE is required for all foreign entities prior to registering in SAM.gov. You can complete the registration once you enter the NCAGE. You can submit your request for an NCAGE Code by going to the NATO Support Activity (NSPA) NCAGE Request Tool at [CAGE/NCAGE Code Request](#) which contains detailed instructions.

If you have done business with the Federal Government previously, you can check your entity status using your government issued UEI to determine if your registration is active. SAM.gov requires you renew your registration every 365 days to keep it active.

¹ Login.gov a secure sign in service used by the public to sign into Federal Agency systems including SAM.gov and Grants.gov. For help with login.gov accounts you should visit [http://login.gov/help](https://login.gov/help).

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates your organization's legal business name and address. Please review the [Frequently Asked Question](#) on the difference for additional details.

Organizations should ensure that their SAM.gov registration includes a current e-Business (EBiz) point of contact name and email address. The EBiz point of contact is critical for Grants.gov Registration and system functionality.

Contact the [Federal Service Desk](#) for help with your SAM.gov account, to resolve technical issues or chat with a help desk agent: (866) 606-8220. The Federal Service desk hours of operation are Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm ET.

Intergovernmental Review

Not applicable.

Funding Restrictions

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by applicable regulations, including 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400. Awards issued pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Capital expenses, such as the purchase of equipment, not entirely attributable to this award, must be pro-rated.

For example, agreement funds and other support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from acting as an agent of the applicant in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Also, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

Compensation for personal services: Employees, consultants, or other personnel, including those of subrecipients, and regardless of the method of engagement, may not exceed the pro-rata equivalent of GS-15 on the General Schedule (for 2024, \$159,950 per year, \$612.84 per day, or \$76.60 per hour). Non-monetizable fringe benefits, such as health insurance coverage, are not included to this ceiling.

Indirect Costs: In general, costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective but not readily assignable to specific awards, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved, are considered indirect costs. These may include facilities not specific to individual projects, enterprise-wide services such as IT, and enterprise management. For cost-reimbursable agreements, indirect costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs, as stipulated at 7 USC 3319a.

Other Submission Information

Applications should be submitted through the ezFedGrants system at <https://grants.fms.usda.gov/>

Applicants who require assistance with any USDA-managed computer system should reach out to the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, at least 5 business days in advance of the application submission deadline. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to facilitate resolution of the issue.

E. Application Review Information

Review and Selection Process

In all cases, the agency will conduct an initial responsiveness review of all applications submitted to determine:

- 1) the application was submitted on time as specified in this announcement (See Section D. Application and Submission Information);
- 2) the applicant is eligible (see Section C. Eligibility Information);
- 3) all the required forms and documents are submitted no later than the Application Submission Deadline specified in Section D. Application and Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission.

If an applicant is determined to be ineligible or an application is determined to be incomplete, the agency will notify the applicant prior to commencing with evaluation of applications, usually within five business days of the Application Submission Deadline. An applicant that feels such a determination is made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim, by email to the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact, within 3 business days of notification.

The agency will convene a review panel, which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers, to review the eligible applications against the evaluation criteria described below. The reviewers will ensure that the applicant is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative and assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified below. The review panel will make a recommendation list to the selecting official, who is not a member of the panel.

The selecting official may select applications out of rank order in consideration of strategic program priorities, such as geographical distribution, incorporation of minority-serving institutions, or congressional directive. Selection determinations are final and cannot be appealed.

Prior to selection, the agency may contact the highest ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a subaward, FAS may request to speak with all parties included in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination has taken place prior to making an award.

Evaluation Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate that they have the capabilities, staff, resources, and equipment to successfully perform the project as described in the following factors. Scoring will also be based on the level of detail and how clearly the applicant's capacities to address these factors are outlined in the proposal.

Factor 1: Technical Expertise and Experience (30 Points)

The applicant will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate how the program objectives will be achieved through their appropriate technical background, expertise and abilities, and program plans including:

- Experience with international training and adult education defined and detailed (20 Points)
 - Applicant's explanation of their experience with international training and adult-education (should experience be lacking, the applicant may not receive points for this section).
- Mentor and other support staff qualifications defined and detailed (10 Points)
 - Applicant's demonstration of their suggested Mentors' technical backgrounds and advanced training and how it can match the skills of Faculty Exchange Program Fellows.
 - Applicant's explanation of how other appropriate collaborating scientists might be identified to meet any of the objectives which the identified Mentors cannot address.

Factor 2: Overall Program Plan (30 Points)

The applicant will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate that the overall program design is strategically aligned and relevant to the stated objectives including:

- Program design, applicability, and alignment (15 Points)
 - Applicant's explanation of their ability to align training topics with USDA/FAS's agricultural programs, policies, and development and extension goals and those of the priority countries.
 - Applicant's demonstration of their experience and knowledge of relevant agricultural conditions within the Fellows' country or a similar location.
 - Applicant's demonstration how the overall program plan and design is relevant to the Fellows' objectives and backgrounds as instructors of veterinary science and medicine.
 - Applicant's explanation of their international expertise and ability to address any cultural considerations of the Fellow, including its ability to tailor the training and program implementation to the needs of the Fellows.
 - Applicant's demonstration of how regional and university resources, including the presence of relevant agricultural practices in the region, would be used to enhance the program.
- Program implementation plans and strategies included (15 Points)
 - Applicant's explanation of the overall program plan, how the institution will be involved to ensure the desired post-program deliverables will be achieved and Fellows' programs goals and objective met.
 - Applicant's explanation of the following details in their implementation plans:
 - Orientations
 - Classroom instruction
 - Field demonstrations and/or field visits
 - Leadership development
 - Conference attendance

- Term break activities and cultural opportunities
- Applicant's explanation of the following strategies and plans showcasing their flexibility and ability to respond in the event of unforeseen circumstances:
 - Risk Mitigation and Response Plan
 - Quality Assurance Plan

Factor 3: Professional detailed budget and budget narrative (30 Pts)

The applicant will be evaluated on the reasonableness, cost-effectiveness, and adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish the project, along with the extent to which the budget documents are detailed, organized, in-scope, and appropriate, including:

- Appropriate and detailed content included (15 Pts)
 - Applicant's demonstration that the proposed budget is appropriate for the number of participating Fellows and the length of the program.
 - Applicant's use of a detailed budget table that utilizes cost item categories and includes appropriate cost savings where available.
 - Applicant's explanation of proposed staff, including their role in the program.
- Budget narrative and budget table included (15 Pts)
 - Applicant's use of a clear budget narrative accompanying the budget table to address each line item therein.
 - Applicant's demonstration of successful rounding and calculating with final budget narrative numbers exactly matching the budget line items, rounded to the penny.

Factor 4: Professional formatting, spelling, and grammar (10 Pts)

The applicant will be evaluated on the extent to which their budget documents are detailed, organized, in-scope, and appropriate including:

- Professional formatting, spelling, and grammar utilized (10 Pts)
 - Applicant's demonstration of professional organization and formatting throughout the project narrative and supporting documents with limited spelling and grammatical errors.

Integrity in Performance

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by [31 USC 3321](#) and [41 USC 2313](#) to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$250,000, the federal agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (currently FAPIIS).

- An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM.gov and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov.
- The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR [§ 200.206](#)

Conflict of Interest

The Applicant's Conflict of Interest (COI) Point of Contact as defined in USDA/FAS Conflict of Interest Policy must notify the USDA/FAS contact identified in Section G of this solicitation of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the Applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for USDA/FAS financial assistance awards within 10 calendar days of becoming aware of the conflict of interest. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an USDA/FAS employee reviewed and commented on or drafted all or part of an applicant's application. Note that USDA/FAS does not generally consider receiving information from an USDA/FAS employee limited to whether the applicant or the applicant's proposed project is eligible to compete for funding to confer an unfair competitive advantage. In addition, assistance agreements made under this solicitation will include a term and condition notifying recipients of their COI disclosure obligations and responsibilities under the award including the need to have systems in place to address, resolve and disclose COIs to USDA/FAS.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified of the status of their application/award by email. This notification is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the applicable General Administrative Terms and Conditions, which can be found at https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp. The applicant is presumed to have read, understood, and accepted these terms when accepting a USDA/FAS award. Applicants with questions about the applicable terms should contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G, Federal Awarding Agency Contact.

The applicable Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL.

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

Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting

Applicants must ensure that they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the subaward and executive total compensation reporting requirements established at [2 CFR 170](#), unless they qualify for an exception from the requirements, should they be selected for funding.

Mandatory Disclosures

As required by [2 CFR 200.113](#), non-federal entities or applicants for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR 200.339](#) including suspension and debarment.

Performance Expectations

- 1) Duration: The U.S.-based training should last 4-5 months (one academic semester) within the full period of performance for the agreement. All Fellows should be present at the same time as a cohort. Ideally, the activity should align with the Fall session of classes at the university. Each university should anticipate hosting 10 Fellows.
- 2) Location: The applicant is expected to host the Fellows on their campus in the United States. Each Mentor is expected to make a reciprocal visit of up to 2 weeks to their assigned Fellow's home institutions.
- 3) Assignment of a Principal Investigator (Training Coordinator): The implementing institution should designate a contact person as the Principal Investigator (PI) responsible for coordinating all administrative and programmatic arrangements.
- 4) Assignment of Mentors: A key component of the program is matching each Fellow with a Mentor. The implementing institution should select an appropriate Mentor for one-on-one work with each Fellow for the duration of the program.
 - Mentors should not be assigned to multiple Fellows during the same time frame.
 - Each Mentor should establish a professional relationship, providing guidance and training in each Fellow's area of research/study.
 - Each Mentor should work with the Fellow before arrival to discuss an appropriate work plan, site visits, and all other arrangements. A work plan should be agreed upon and finalized no later than 2 weeks after the program start date.
 - Each Mentor should provide a draft of their work plan through the PI to USDA/FAS for consultation and approval approximately 2 weeks before the commencement of the program.
 - Each Mentor should agree to commit a significant amount of time each week for one-on-one work with the Fellow during the program.
 - Mentors should be prepared to empower the fellow to be a leader by supporting leadership and science communication trainings that contribute to program objectives and may require time outside of the lab/field.

- Each Mentor should continue communicating with the Fellow beyond the end of the U.S.-based portion of the program and through the Mentor's follow-up visit.
- Each Mentor should submit quarterly progress reports that indicate all program activities – should be organized by the PI and sent to USDA/FAS; video and pictures are encouraged as well.
- Ongoing posting of success stories/pictures to the university's social media accounts/platforms should include appropriate USDA social media tags to allow program visibility and successes.
- Each Mentor should assign other faculty members to assist with the Fellow's training and research activities as appropriate.

5) Pre- and Post-Program Visits to Washington, DC

- The implementing institution should organize, coordinate, and pay for the Washington, DC visits for orientation and wrap-up sessions at the USDA headquarters. This can include but is not limited to arranging per diem, lodging, air and ground transportation to/from, as well as in, Washington, DC.
- USDA will organize the internal to USDA headquarters portion of the visit.

6) Mentor Follow-up Visit

- Each Mentor's reciprocal follow-up visit to the Fellow's home country is a required component of the Faculty Exchange Program.
- Each Mentor should work with the Fellow to plan a follow-up visit. The trip should occur within 3-9 months after the U.S.-based portion of the program ends.
- The PI should provide USDA/FAS with an agenda for each Mentor's travel, including goals and objectives. The Mentor's travel information should also be provided to USDA/FAS for emergency contact purposes, and also for country clearance if required by the cognizant FAS Overseas Office.
- Each Mentor should plan to meet with the USDA/FAS Attaché, Councilor, and/or local staff at the U.S. Embassy while they are traveling, if feasible. USDA/FAS can assist with coordination prior to the trip.
- Each Mentor should provide a trip report highlighting conducted activities and results through the PI to USDA/FAS within 30 days after the visit. Compiled trip reports should be included in the semi-annual performance reporting identified in the "Reporting" section below.

7) Travel, Transportation, and Housing

- The implementing institution must make all travel arrangements for Fellows consistent with [2 CFR 200.474](#), Transportation Costs. This will include round trip, economy class international airfare from each Fellow's home to the university, and any domestic travel related to the training program.
- The implementing institution should provide housing for the Fellow either within walking distance to the campus/training location or easily accessible by public transportation for the duration of the training program. This housing should consider gender and cultural norms. Housing should include, inter alia, a private bedroom, private or shared bathroom, access to a laundry room and allowance for laundry costs, access to a kitchen (with pots, pans, and utensils), sheets, towels,

and cleaning supplies. The implementing institution should not require the Fellow to pay for these expenses and provide either reimbursement or advance payment.

- If public transportation is required to access campus/the training location, the implementing institution should provide the Fellow with a bus pass or proper allowance for transportation expenses.
- The implementing institution is not required to arrange the Fellows' U.S. travel visa. USDA will provide Fellows with a DS-2019 for the Fellow to request and obtain a J-1 visa.

8) Meals and Incidentals (M&IE)

- The implementing institution should provide each Fellow with meal and living allowances for the duration of stay.
- When planning lodging and/or dining options, the implementing institution should check with the Fellows and account for any special dietary restrictions or preferences.
- Daily M&IE allowance should not exceed current GSA per diem rates.
- The implementing institution can determine the frequency of per diem allotments, but the Fellows should receive per diem within the first week of the Fellowship. The PI should inform the Fellows and USDA/FAS immediately if this cannot be accommodated.

9) Emergency Health Insurance

- The implementing institution will purchase emergency health insurance for each Fellow for the duration of stay, as required for all J-1 Visa holders ([22 CFR 62.14](#)) (see J-1 Visa website for emergency health insurance requirements). Dates of coverage should include date of departure from their home country to the university until date of arrival back in their home country from the university.
- Fellows must not be required to purchase their own health insurance and then be reimbursed.
- The implementing institution should educate Fellows as to what is covered under the health insurance policy, especially highlighting that pre-existing medical conditions are not covered.
- The implementing institution should alert USDA/FAS staff if any health/medical conditions arise during the Fellowship.

10) Communication

- The implementing institution should initiate contact with Fellows as soon as possible after signing of the agreement and final selection of Fellows.
- The implementing institution should develop the training program in consultation with USDA/FAS, and Mentors should customize each work plan in consultation with the Fellows.
- The implementing institution should keep USDA/FAS informed regarding any logistical or program plan modification.
- The implementing institution should notify USDA/FAS immediately upon Fellows' physical arrival to and departure from the U.S. to comply with U.S. Department of Homeland Security requirements.

- The implementing institution should notify USDA/FAS when Fellows go on trips that take them away from the university overnight and will provide itineraries and updates.
- The implementing institution should provide USDA/FAS with the Fellows' temporary U.S. address and phone number, and emergency contact numbers for the PI, Mentor, or other appropriate institution personnel. This information is required so that Fellows can be reached in the event of an emergency.

11) Fellowship Program

- The implementing institution should provide educational materials and supplies to each Fellow as necessary to allow their full participation in the Fellowship.
- The implementing institution should ensure all fees related to the training program, such as (but not limited to) technology fees, administrative fees, laboratory fees, etc., are fully paid.
- The implementing institution should arrange relevant field visits as applicable to the Fellows' training program.
- Implementors should organize and offer appropriate cross-cultural activities for the purpose of sharing language, culture, or history in accordance with J-1 Visa requirements.
- Implementors should organize and offer training on future award/funding opportunities that could be applicable and beneficial, and on proposal/grant writing to prepare Fellows for future funding applications, including how to search for opportunities.
- Implementors should organize and offer leadership training and training on communications – specifically communications with non-scientific communities.
- Plans should contribute to the strategic goals and objectives of individual Fellows, the host institutions, and USDA/FAS, as well as provide an opportunity for the application of research agendas that can have a direct impact on international trade, food security, and economic growth in emerging economies.

12) Orientation

- The PI (Training Coordinator) should communicate directly with Fellows at least 4-8 weeks before arrival in the U.S. to ensure that all pertinent information is provided and available, including:
 - Name and contact information of PI (Training Coordinator)
 - Name and contact information of Mentor
 - Institution information, weather information, and clothing needs
 - Housing and M&IE allowance
 - Program plan and anticipated site visits
 - Professional development expectations
 - Reminder to bring any necessary prescription medications
 - Explain what is and is not covered under emergency health insurance policy (e.g., no pre-existing conditions, no dental, etc.)
- The implementing institution should provide an orientation upon the Fellows' arrival to introduce them to campus and community resources, such as:

- Explanation and demonstration of local bus/transportation, and grocery shopping options
- Explanation of cultural and legal expectations as a visitor to the U.S.
- Safety and security protocol

13) Programmatic Reporting

- Each Fellow should work with their assigned Mentor to develop an action plan to identify and state goals for their return while also outlining specific steps or activities they will do upon return to their home country. An action plan generally includes steps, milestones, measures of progress, responsibilities, assignments, and timeline.
- Each Fellow should complete the program evaluations (mid and final) provided by USDA/FAS.

14) Suggested Field Trips/Activities

- State-level Department of Agriculture and State Veterinarian's office(s) for an overview of animal health programs, disease surveillance and eradication, animal registration/license requirements, vaccination programs, disease testing programs, emergency disease outbreak planning and programs, etc.
- State or APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) laboratories for information on disease testing/research
- Livestock farms
- Large animal health vet practices
- Small animal/pet practices
- Briefings on the role of private veterinarians in disease identification and surveillance and cooperation with state and federal government
- If an international border or a seaport is nearby, a visit to the border/port to learn animal inspection protocols and requirements that enable trade
 - Information on the role of APHIS in animal health and import and export regulations
- Briefings on food safety and animal inspections at slaughterhouses
- Briefings on the concept of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point)
- Briefings on continuing education requirements for veterinarians
- Briefings on the role of Veterinarian associations

Reporting

Financial Reports, using form SF-425, Federal Financial Report (FFR), must be submitted semi-annually, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final financial report must be submitted within 120 days of the end date of the agreement.

Performance Progress Reports must be submitted semi-annually, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final performance progress report must be submitted within 120 days of the end date of the agreement. The recipient may use any appropriate format for performance progress reports, provided the report includes:

- a) A comparison of actual accomplishments to those projected for the period;
- b) The reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and

- c) Additional pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

Recipients are encouraged to include photographs and other supplemental material in performance progress reports. For awards in which the total lifetime value exceeds \$500,000, additional reporting may be required as described in [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).

Monitoring

USDA/FAS through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, USDA/FAS will review recipients' files related to the program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, grant recipients must permit USDA/FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review assistance agreement-related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to the program.

Closeout

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance. After final reports have been reviewed and approved by the agency, and any residual amount due to the recipient or due to be returned to the agency, the award is subject to closeout. Acceptance of final reports by the agency constitutes a closeout of the award with no further notice or obligation to either party. This acceptance will indicate the period of performance has expired, and any remaining funds will be deobligated. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Chris Biles

Email Address: Christine.Biles@usda.gov

Hours of Operation: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Eastern Time

1400 Independence Ave. SW

Washington, DC 20250

H. Other Information

Budget Revisions

Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this Award require written approval from the agency. The total budget amount may not be increased without a bilaterally executed amendment to the award.

Post-award program income

In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the USDA/FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, as part of their request for guidance and/or approval. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note in the remarks section of the face page concerning guidance and/or options pertaining to the recipient's approved request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.

Electronic Signatures

Consistent with the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (ESIGN Act), USDA/FAS uses and accepts electronic signatures for application and award documents. USDA/FAS will neither solicit nor send physical copies of documents.