U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Foreign Agricultural Service

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Increasing Market Opportunities in Vietnam for U.S. Innovative Biofertilizer Exporters

Table of Contents

1. Basic Information

1.1 Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) announces this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) to support the Technical Agricultural Assistance Program by issuing a new award. This opportunity is available to State cooperative institutions, or other colleges and universities in the United States, as defined at 7 U.S.C. § 3103. This program is intended to support applied research, extension, and education collaborations between U.S. biofertilizer exporters and researchers, and Vietnamese counterparts.

Benefits to the United States:

- This program makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous by strengthening trade. It aims to increase U.S. exports of innovative biofertilizers.
- This program makes America safer, stronger, and more prosperous by helping current and potential trading partners to expand and develop new markets. Vietnam is one of the top markets for U.S. agricultural products, but there is room for increasing market sales of innovative biological products.

1.2 Federal Agency Name

United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA/FAS)

1.3 Funding Opportunity Title

Increasing Market Opportunities in Vietnam for U.S. Innovative Biofertilizer Exporters

1.4 Announcement Type

New Announcement

1.5 Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-FAS-10960-0700-109-26-0005

1.6 Assistance Listing Number

10.960 Technical Agricultural Assistance

1.7 Funding Details

Total Available Federal Funding:	$500,000.00
Anticipated Number of Awards:	2
Total Available Funding per Award:	up to $250,000

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

1.8 Key Dates

<u>Deadline for Question Submission:</u> August 26, 2026

<u>Application Submission Deadline:</u> September 2, 2026 at 11:59pm Eastern Daylight Time

1.9 Agency Contact Information

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Clemen G. Gehlhar
Email Address: clemen.gehlhar@usda.gov
Phone Number: (202) 260-8289
Hours of Operation: 7:30am to 4:00pm Eastern Daylight time

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Applicants

State cooperative institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States, as defined at 7 U.S.C. § 3103.

All applicants must have an <u>active</u> 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. More information about SAM.gov registration can be found in Section 9.3, Other Information.

2.2 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, and USDA/FAS will not make assumptions as to the nature of the applicant's organization.

2.3 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 ES III on the Executive Schedule (for 2026, $209,600 per year, $806.15 per day, or $100.77 per hour). Non-monetizable fringe benefits, such as health insurance coverage, are not included in this ceiling.

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. Pursuant to USDA Departmental Regulation DR2255-001, a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with a cognizant U.S. Government agency will be honored, except where prohibited by statute. For cooperative agreements with nonprofit entities, including government entities, indirect costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs, as stipulated at Section 704 of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026.

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

2.4 Multiple Applications
An individual applicant may submit more than one application in response to this NOFO and may be offered more than one award.

2.5 Cost Share/Match Requirement
Cost sharing is not required, but encouraged.

3. <u>Program Description</u>

Fertilize Right Vietnam (FR Vietnam) is a program implemented by USDA/FAS since 2023. USDA's official partner is the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and an implementing partner from an international agricultural research organization. The objectives of FR Vietnam are to (1) increase fertilizer-use efficiency, (2) enhance fertilizer effectiveness, and (3) develop alternatives to traditional manufactured chemical fertilizers. Attaining these objectives enable farmers to reduce input costs while maintaining or increasing yield, leading to the development of a viable and sustainable agricultural system, thereby achieving the purposes of 7 U.S.C. § 3291(a)(3).

FR Vietnam activities are based on the 4Rs of nutrient management, a concept endorsed by USDA and the U.S. fertilizer industry. The 4Rs entail the use of the Right Source or type of fertilizer, applied at the Right Rate, at the Right Time and in the Right Place.

USDA/FAS is requesting the design and delivery of a two-year program to address the general objectives of the FR Vietnam program, with the specific objectives outlined below.

Specific Objectives:

1) Conduct comparative analysis in the U.S. and Vietnam, of reducing nitrogen leaching while maintaining or increasing yield, using U.S. manufactured biofertilizers such as liquid fish fertilizer;

2) Collaborate with implementing partner in Vietnam and provide input to the national guidelines for fertilizer management focused on innovative alternatives to synthetic fertilizers such as enhanced efficiency fertilizers using microbial coatings, and biofertilizers;

3) Informational outreach tour to Vietnam by U.S. organic rice farmers who used U.S. manufactured biofertilizers to reduce nitrogen leaching and maintain or increase yield; and

4) Evaluate the increase in Vietnam imports of at least three (3) U.S-. manufactured fertilizer enhancement products and biofertilizers, by companies participating in the FR Vietnam program.

3.1 Authorizing Statutes and Regulations
National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, P.L. 95-113, as amended, 7 U.S.C. § 3291(a)(3).

3.2 Type of Assistance Instrument
USDA/FAS anticipates that Cooperative Agreement(s)will be funded pursuant to this funding opportunity.

This type of agreement provides for substantial involvement between USDA/FAS and/or other USDA agencies, and the selected applicant in the performance of the project. This may include:

- Close monitoring of the successful applicant's performance to verify the results proposed by the applicant;
- Collaboration during performance of the scope of work;
- In accordance with 2 CFR 200.317 and 2 CFR 200.318, review of proposed procurement;
- Approving qualifications of key personnel (USDA will not select the recipient's employees or contractors, but may disallow costs for specific individuals where required by statute or regulation); and
- Review and comment on reports prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

4. Application Contents and Format

4.1 Complete Application Package
A complete application package must include:

1. Standard Form SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, showing the Unique Entity ID, and signed by the applicant.

2. Standard Form SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs, showing the budget categorization. Applicants are advised to consult 2 CFR. Part 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 scoring.

3. A detailed budget narrative, in which cost items are clearly identified, correspond to the appropriate cost category, and 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.

For nonprofit institutions, indirect costs are limited to 10% of direct costs for cooperative agreements, pursuant to Section 704 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agency Appropriations Act, 2026. If indirect costs are included in the budget, attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If a negotiated indirect cost agreement does not exist, please attach a description of the basis for the indirect cost calculation. If electing to utilize the de minimis rate, consistent with 2 CFR 200.414(f), please include a statement of election.

4. A detailed project narrative or plan of operation

- Include a narrative description of the proposed activities, how they will be conducted, the role of the applicant and any other collaborators, and the desired result.
- Provide a plan including how the activities will achieve objectives in Section 3, a description of specific activities proposed with timelines, the proposed target audiences, and how progress will be measured.
- Briefly describe the expertise and international experience of the applicant in the field of interest and in Vietnam.
- Project narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages, double-spaced.
    - Narratives in excess of the page limit will not be reviewed.
    - Supplemental documents (CVs, etc.) are not subject to the page limit.
    - Demonstrated support from proposed on-the-ground partners or collaborators, such as through letters of support, Memorandums of Understanding, should be noted in the narrative and included as supplemental documents (thus these documents are not placed within the project narrative itself)
- Note that the project narrative should be well-organized, written in English, relatively free of excessive grammatical and spelling errors, and contain any source information in a properly cited manner.

5. Supplemental to the project narrative, USDA requests submission of the CVs of the applicant's proposed project director and the lead staff person of any organization expected to receive a subaward. Applications missing any of the above required documentation or information will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered.

4.2 Specific Application Formats

Applicants should ensure they are using active, i.e. non-expired, versions of standard forms. The use of an expired standard form will not itself be grounds for a determination of ineligibility but may delay processing of an applicant selected for award.

There are no page limitations, excluding the project narrative which has a 10-page limit, and formatting requirements (including, but not limited to, font and font size, margins, paper size, and color limitations) for applications.

4.3 Programmatic Capability and Past Performance

Applicants must submit a list of federally funded assistance agreements (assistance agreements include Federal grants and cooperative agreements but not Federal contracts) that their organization performed within the last three years (no more than 5 agreements, and preferably USDA or USDA/FAS agreements) and describe:

- (i) Whether, and how, the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage those agreements; and
- (ii) The applicant's history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including whether the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes of those agreements (and if not, explain why not) and whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under the agreements; and
- (iii) The applicant's organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project, and the applicant's staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

In evaluating applicants under these factors and those in Section 6 below, USDA/FAS will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including information from USDA/FAS files and from current/prior grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information provided by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, please indicate this in the application and the applicant will receive a neutral score for these factors (a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, the applicant will receive a score of 0 for these factors.

4.4 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.

4.5 Proprietary Information

Applicants should generally refrain from including the details of proprietary information in applications. In cases where, in the applicant's judgement, the inclusion of proprietary information is essential to application review and scoring, the applicant should clearly indicate information it wishes to designate as proprietary.

4.6 Other Application Information

Successful applicants must submit the following information after USDA/FAS notification of our intent to make a Federal award, but prior to a Federal award, if the applicant request for funding or the intended award amount is over $100,000:

- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- Standard Form SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable to the applicant

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

5.1 Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO contains all information required to submit a complete application package.

5.2 Unique Entity ID and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant must:

(i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
(ii) Provide a valid unique entity ID in its application; and
(iii) Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal agency.

5.3 Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted through the ezFedGrants system at https://grants.fms.usda.gov/. USDA-managed computer systems require applicants to have an identity-proofed account through the login.gov platform and, in some cases, may require at least two persons. Identity-proofing and subsequent registration with any USDA-managed computer system may take several days, and applicants who do not already have system access should begin the registration process immediately, even if they are unsure if they will apply to this funding opportunity.

Applicants who require assistance with any USDA-managed computer system must reach out to the agency contact listed in Section 1, Agency Contact Information, prior to the application submission deadline date in Section 5.4, Submission Dates and Times. USDA/FAS strongly encourages applicants to reach out at least 5 business days in advance of the application submission deadline to ensure resolution prior to the application submission deadline date. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to facilitate resolution of the issue. USDA/FAS will make a reasonable effort to resolve the issue and in rare cases may offer alternative avenues for application submission. If applicants do not contact USDA/FAS prior to the application submission deadline date and submit an application package through an alternative method, their application will be deemed ineligible.

5.4 Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: September 2, 2026 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.

5.5 Intergovernmental Review

Not applicable.

6. Application Review Information

6.1 Eligibility Threshold Review

USDA/FAS will conduct an eligibility threshold review of all applications submitted to determine that:

- The applicant is eligible, as defined in Section 2, Eligibility; and
- The application was submitted by the application submission deadline date and time as specified in Section 5, Submission Requirements;
- The applicant submitted a complete application, including all required forms and documents as defined in Section 4, Submission Requirements.

An application that does not include all documentation required by this NOFO at the time of submission, including documentation required in SAM.gov, will be deemed ineligible.

If an applicant is determined to be ineligible, USDA/FAS will notify the applicant prior to commencing with evaluation of applications, usually within 5 business days of the Application Submission Deadline. An applicant that believes such a determination was made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim, by email to the program officer(s) listed in Section 1, Agency Contact Information, within 3 business days of notification. If USDA/FAS determines an error occurred during the application submission and/or eligibility review process, the application will rejoin the group of eligible Participants and continue to the merit review process.

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.

6.2 Review Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated by 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 applicant's ability to clearly articulate and detail its capacity to address the following factors in its proposal.

- Technical Approach, Implementation and Evaluation Plans (60 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which their project narrative fulfills the objectives of the work as outlined in Section 3. This includes the strength of the proposed approach on the following elements:

(i) Detailed description of specific project objectives, desired outcomes and how outcomes will be accomplished. (20 points)
(ii) Description of relevant experience to carry out this project, including names and positions of people who will lead the project (Note: CVs of people leading the project must be included as supplemental documents and not placed within the project narrative). (15 points)
(iii)Detailed description and relevance of potential on-the-ground partners or collaborators

and their proposed roles. Demonstrated support from proposed on-the-ground partners or collaborators, such as through letters of support, Memorandums of Understanding, should be noted in the narrative and included as supplemental documents (thus these documents are not placed within the project narrative itself). (10 points)

(iv) Measures of project success relevant for indicating increase in exports by U.S. manufacturers of enhanced efficiency fertilizers and biofertilizers to Vietnam, and imports of these products by Vietnamese companies. (10 points)

(v) Action plan and recommendations for post-project sustainability. (5 points)

- Programmatic Capability and Past Performance (15 points)

Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project considering their:

(i) Past performance in successfully completing and managing the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 3 of the solicitation;

(ii) History of meeting the reporting requirements under the assistance agreements identified in response to Section 3 of the solicitation including whether the applicant submitted acceptable final technical reports under those agreements and the extent to which the applicant adequately and timely reported on their progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes. And, if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately reported why not;

(iii) Organizational experience and plan for timely and successfully achieving the objectives of the proposed project; and

(iv) Staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the proposed project.

Note: In evaluating applicants under items (i) and (ii) of these criteria, USDA/FAS will consider the information provided by the applicant and may also consider relevant information from other sources, including agency files and prior/current grantors (e.g., to verify and/or supplement the information supplied by the applicant). If the applicant does not have any relevant or available past performance or past reporting information, the applicant must indicate this in the application and the applicant will receive a neutral score for these subfactors (items (i) and (ii) above-a neutral score is half of the total points available in a subset of possible points). If the applicant does not provide any response for these items, the applicant will receive a score of 0 for these factors.

- Budget (20 points)

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

(i) Applicant’s demonstration that the proposed budget is appropriate for the number of activities, type of activities, and number of participants.

(ii) Applicant’s use of a detailed budget table and budget narrative that utilizes cost item categories and includes appropriate cost savings where available.

- Overall Quality (5 points)

Applications will be evaluated on comprehensiveness, completeness, and correct spelling and grammar.

6.4 Review and Selection Process

The agency will convene a review panel to review the eligible applications against the evaluation criteria described above. USDA/FAS documents that reviewers, whatever their affiliation, are free from a conflict of interest that would affect their assessment of an applicant, whether positively or negatively.

The reviewers will ensure that the applicant can deliver 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 above. 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. Selection determinations are final and cannot be appealed.

Prior to selection, the agency may contact the highest-ranking applicants to seek clarification and to discuss programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a subaward, USDA/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.

6.5 Risk Review

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 2 CFR 200.206, 31 U.S.C. § 3321 and 41 U.S.C. § 2313 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing a 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 $350,000, the Federal agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov (41 U.S.C. § 2313). An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov.
- Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

7. Award Notices

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application/award by email. Notification to successful applicants is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional until an award document has been signed by authorized officials of USDA/FAS and the recipient.

Award documents will be transmitted by email to the individuals or offices who submitted them, or to those persons or offices that USDA/FAS believes, to the best of its information, are proper. The applicant is recommended to ensure that the agency is provided with the correct point(s) of contact.

8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

8.1 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the applicable General Terms and Conditions, which can be found at https://fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions.

The applicant is presumed to have read, understood, and accepted these terms when accepting a USDA/FAS award. USDA/FAS will specify in the terms and conditions of all final awards all termination provisions that apply, including terminations for all reasons specified in 2 CFR 200.340(a). Applicants with questions about the applicable terms should contact the program officer(s) listed in Section 1, Agency Contact Information.

Before accepting an award, the applicant should carefully read all award documents 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.

8.2 Reporting

Financial Reporting

Financial Reports, using form SF-425, Federal Financial Report (FFR), must be submitted quarterly, for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 30, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final financial report must be submitted no later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance.

Performance Reporting

Performance Progress Reports must be submitted quarterly, for the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 30, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final performance progress report must be submitted no later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance. The recipient may use any appropriate format for performance progress reports, provided the report includes:

a) A comparison of actual accomplishments to the established goals 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.

Financial and Performance reports must be submitted through the ezFedGrants system at https://grants.fms.usda.gov/. USDA/FAS may authorize alternative means of submission for recipients who demonstrate a bona fide need.

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.

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, should they be selected for funding.

Closeout
No later than 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance or after an amendment has been issued to close out a USDA/FAS financial assistance agreement, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance. 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 is disbursed, the award is subject to closeout. Acceptance of final reports by USDA/FAS 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 de-obligated. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted.

8.3 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 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, recipients must permit USDA/FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review assistance agreement-related records and to interview the organization's staff and other knowledgeable persons regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to agency requests for information relating to the program.

8.4 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 1, Agency Contact Information, 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.

8.5 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.

9. Other Information

9.1 Extensions

Extensions to this program may be permitted, subject to approval.

9.2 No Awards

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

9.3 SAM.gov Registration Instructions

Organizations applying for this funding opportunity must have an active SAM.gov registration. If the applicant has never done business with the Federal Government, the applicant will need to register their organization in SAM.gov. If the applicant does not have a SAM.gov account, then the applicant will create an account using login.gov[1] to complete their SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov registration is FREE. The process for entity registrations includes several steps and validations and is not complete until the registration is shown as Active. Please review the Entity Registration Checklist for details on this process.

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

Please note that SAM.gov registration is different than obtaining a UEI only. Obtaining an UEI only validates an 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.

[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, visit http://login.gov/help.