

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Cochran Fellowship Program – U.S. Softwoods for Structural Material: Quality, Grades, and Applications for Peru

Application Submission Deadline: April 10, 2023

Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, Fellowship Programs, announces this funding opportunity to support the Cochran Fellowship Program by issuing a new award. This opportunity is available to U.S. State Cooperative Institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States and is intended to increase the Fellows' capacity for understanding applications of agricultural research, extension, and teaching.

A. Program Description

The Cochran Fellowship Program's Latin America and Caribbean Region is requesting the design and delivery of a training program for a cohort of up to seven Fellows from Peru, currently consisting of (and subject to change):

- (1) Architect and Real Estate Supervisor for Fondo Mivienda S.A. (My Housing Fund)
- (1) Project Manager for Andina Proyectos (company)
- (1) CEO of Proycon Contratistas SAC
- (1) General Manager and Owner of Huayruro Furniture, Design, and Remodeling
- (1) Dean of Faculty for Architecture, Urbanism and Arts of Antenor Orrego Private University
- (1) CEO for the Peru Green Building Council
- (1) Executive President of National Construction Industry Training Service (SENCICO)

BACKGROUND

Since 1984, the U.S. Congress has made funds available to the Cochran Fellowship Program for training agriculturalists from middle-income countries, emerging markets, and emerging democracies. Training opportunities are for senior and mid-level specialists and administrators working in agricultural trade and policy, agribusiness development, management, animal, plant, and food sciences, extension services, agricultural marketing, and many other areas. Individuals selected for Cochran trainings come from both the public and private sectors. All training occurs in the United States. Training programs are designed and organized in conjunction with U.S. universities, USDA and other government agencies, agribusinesses, and consultants. The Cochran Fellowship Program is part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. Since its start in 1984, the Cochran Fellowship Program has provided U.S.-based training for over 19,250 international participants from 127 countries worldwide.

SCOPE

Government officials, academia, and architects in Peru need to strengthen their knowledge of technical science-based wood housing building codes and structures. This program on U.S. Softwoods for Structural Material should provide training on the technical science-based standards used for U.S. wood housing building codes and introduce participants to U.S.

softwoods and engineered woods and their uses and qualities for building construction. The Fellows should have opportunities to visit softwood plantations, sawmills, wood grading, and standardization facilities, and to see examples of wood housing construction. The Fellows should also meet with representatives of the U.S. lumber industry, including the Softwood Export Council, Southern Wood Products Association, and Engineered Wood Association (APA) as well as with architects, engineers, and wood construction companies. The objective of the program is to build demand for U.S. softwood and engineered wood products in Peru. The goal of the program is to increase the Fellows' capacity for agricultural research, extension, and teaching.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The recipient will ensure that the Fellows increase their knowledge in the following areas:

- Overview of U.S. lumber
 - Types of U.S. lumber: classification, grades, and sizes (nominal vs. actual)
 - ASTM standards development process
 - Physical and mechanical properties, including resistance capacity
 - Production of sawn wood
 - Production of pressure treated wood, including pressure treated wood studs
 - Technology used for selecting lumber, treatments for preservation, and wood testing
 - Engineered woods: wood-plastic composites, cross-laminated timber (CLT), and plywood OSB beams
 - Uses and characteristics of engineered woods for construction, including fire resistance
- Wood housing construction:
 - Benefits of building with lumber over other materials
 - Practical wood frame design, balloon framing, and wood flooring
 - Using lumber in large scale construction
 - U.S. standard construction standards, practices, and safety codes
 - Construction for tropical climates, rural housing, and structure reinforcement for earthquakes
 - Green building: tiny houses, energy efficiency, low ecological impact, and reducing waste
 - Wood construction solutions for social housing, including multifamily buildings
 - Prefabricated house construction
 - Wood trailer construction
 - Improving building speed: pre-fabrication and tools for increasing efficiency
- Marketing wood construction
 - Strategies for advertising advantages and sustainability of wood buildings and explaining benefits to clients

Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-FAS-10962-0700-10.-23-0002

Assistance Listing Number

10.962 Cochran Fellowship Program-International Training-Foreign Participant

Authorizing Legislation

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, PL 95-113, as amended, 7 USC §§ 3291, 3318(b), 3319a

B. Federal Award Information

Total Available Federal Funding:	up to \$86,000
Anticipated Number of Awards:	1
Cost Share/Match Requirement:	None/Not Required
Projected Period of Performance Start:	June 5, 2023
Projected Period of Performance End:	January 31, 2024

Extensions to this program may be 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 participants.

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.

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.

D. Application and Submission Information

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

Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: April 10, 2023 at 11:59pm EST (UTC -05:00)
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 Funding Selection Date: May 5, 2023

Anticipated Award Date: May 29, 2023

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 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.
 - 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.
- A detailed project narrative or plan of operation: the project narrative should include the following elements to explain the overall program plan and the applicant's technical experience and expertise:
 - Indicate the name of the institution applying to host the fellows;
 - Provide an approach to achieve the objectives listed in each section, including topics to be covered, possible field visits and other activities;
 - A description of how the award, including the logistical elements, will be administered and the role of the university faculty and support staff;
 - A summary of relevant institutional capabilities for hosting international fellows in the applicable topic;
 - A brief description of the expertise and international experience of the recipient in the group's field of interest and various countries;
 - An overview of the trainer's qualifications in international training and/or adult education, understanding of the cultural context and needs of the trainees, and knowledge of relevant agricultural, market, and/or trade conditions within the fellows' country(ies) or a similar location.

- If necessary, other appropriate collaborating scientists should be identified to meet any of the objectives which the primary trainer cannot address.
- The skills or knowledge expected to be acquired by the fellows at the end of the program;
- Means of flexibility to account for potential program changes and the ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances; this should include information on how unforeseen problems that can arise will be addressed.
- A quality assurance plan.
- Application following designated format:
 - Clearly outline all aspects of the program plan – what is planned, how this will be conducted, and the anticipated results;
 - Be written in English and free of excessive grammatical and spelling errors;
 - Be written using Times New Roman, 12-point font; tables and graphs may have a smaller font as appropriate, all other text font and size should be consistent throughout the application;
 - Be typed on standard 8.5” x 11” sized pages with 1-inch margins;
 - Be paginated with each page consecutively numbered;
 - Cite source information and/or provide an explanation of the analysis undertaken;
 - Be submitted in PDF.
- Standard Form SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, if applicable to the applicant

While these guidelines establish the minimum type size requirements, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the application.

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 requires several weeks to process and cannot be expedited; prospective applicants should therefore ensure that registrations are submitted timely.

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

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).

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.

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, 2 CFR Part 400, and the program-specific regulations identified in Section A (if any). 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 2023, \$195,000 per year, \$747.13 per day, or \$93.39 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.

Pre-Award Costs: Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award, directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award, and where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work, are not allowable.

Other Submission Requirements

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 5 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

Each eligible application will be evaluated according to the criteria set forth below.

Technical Expertise (30 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate they have the technical background as well as experience and knowledge of relevant agricultural conditions within the Fellows country (ies).

Experience (10 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate experience in implementing international trainings and adult education programming.

Training Plan 30 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which the training program plan fulfill specific training objectives and is relevant to the Fellows' backgrounds as identified in Section A, including appropriate site visits and meetings.

Quality Assurance Plan (10 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the extent and quality to which they provide a quality assurance plan to ensure that quality of the training is being maintained throughout the duration of the program and demonstrates the flexibility to sustain training quality when there are unforeseen circumstances or requested changes to the training plan.

Budget (15 points)

Applications will be evaluated on the reasonableness, cost-effectiveness, and adequacy of the proposed budget to accomplish the project. The budget will be evaluated on cost savings, where available, and the inclusion of a budget narrative for each line item.

Overall Quality (5 points)

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

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.

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.

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](#)

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.

Post-Award Performance Expectations

- Provide digital copies of the training highlights to each Fellow and the Cochran Fellowship Program.
- Ensure that each Fellow completes the Cochran Training Program Evaluation (which will be provided).
- Development of an Action Plan by each Fellow. The Action Plan identifies goals and outlines specific steps or activities which each Fellow will perform upon return to home country. An Action Plan generally includes steps, milestones, measures of progress, responsibilities, assignments, and a timeline. The applicant shall provide a copy of each Fellow's Action Plan to the Cochran Fellowship Program.
- A brief final report (format at the discretion of the applicant).
- A pre-training questionnaire to determine Fellows' baseline knowledge of the learning objectives. (Template and examples shall be provided upon request)
- A post-training questionnaire to determine the knowledge gained in each of the learning objectives. (Template and examples shall be provided upon request)
- Analysis of the pre- and post-training questionnaire.
- Deliverables are due two weeks after the completion of each training.
- All transportation within the United States, from the point of arrival to the point of departure.
 - The host institution is not responsible for international airfare of participants.
 - Please include baggage fees for any domestic flights.
- Lodging accommodation, in single occupancy.
- Fellows' subsistence (meals and/or per diem allowance, please add a \$5/day supplement for incidentals).
- Implementors should offer appropriate cross-cultural activities for the purpose of sharing language, culture, or history in accordance with J-1 Visa requirements.
- Please note all meetings with Federal Government offices or officials must be initiated by the Fellowship Programs team.

Government Furnished Items

USDA FAS will provide Fellows with J-1 compliant Emergency Medical Insurance and arrange for DS-2019/J-1 visas for Fellows.

Reporting

Financial Reports, using form SF-425, Federal Financial Report (FFR), must be submitted 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 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 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, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance. 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: Adam Scheinkman

Email Address: Adam.Scheinkman@usda.gov

Phone Number: (202) 205-9824

Hours of Operation: 8:00am to 4:30pm

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.

The Recipient is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval of the agency.

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 recipient's approved request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.