

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600
**Tunisian Health Center for University Research Excellence &
Sustainability**
(CURES)
Opportunity Number: *SFOP0008125*

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
Date Opened:	May 21, 2021
Deadline for Questions:	June 11, 2021
Application Deadline:	July 2, 2021
Expected Date of Notification:	September 30, 2021
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Funding Opportunity Synopsis

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to improve scientific research in Tunisia to better prevent and treat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through the establishment of a simulation center that allows doctors and medical students to apply research and test new technologies and treatments. This opportunity aims to advance U.S. foreign policy by improving healthcare quality in Tunisia and strengthening the business climate to become more conducive to private sector-led growth.

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

1. Establish a research and simulation center at the University of Sfax, Faculty of Medicine (SFM) and equip it with the resources and curriculum necessary to become a center of excellence for research on NCDs;
2. Create partnerships between SFM and American research centers to facilitate exchanges of information and experience focused on innovation and research; and,
3. Establish commercially viable partnerships between SFM and the private sector to foster locally developed technologies in the health sector.

A successful project will result in a modern research center in Tunisia that offers doctors and researchers the resources necessary to improve the prevention and treatment of NCDs, while also generating income for research and encouraging the development of healthcare technology in Tunisia through linkages with entrepreneurs, investors, and American institutions.

Applications will be accepted only from organizations that have previously operated in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region or have personnel who have previously worked in Tunisia and can demonstrate the ability to work with SFM and the Tunisian Ministry of Health (MoH).

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

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

Eligible Countries and Territories

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

Background Information about NEA/AC

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

Background Information about the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia

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

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APPENDICES *(Posted with NOFO)*

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APPENDIX 2— Logic Model Template

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia, Assistance Unit seek proposals that improve scientific research in Tunisia to better prevent and treat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through the establishment of a simulation center that allows doctors and medical students to apply research and test new technologies and treatments.

Applications will be accepted only from organizations that have previously operated in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) region or have personnel who have previously worked in Tunisia and can demonstrate the ability to work with SFM and the Tunisian Ministry of Health (MoH).

This programming responds to the Embassy's Mission Objective 3.2, *the business climate becomes more conducive to private sector-led growth*.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes, account for 71% of all global deaths annually. Around one-third of these deaths are premature (affecting people aged 30-69), a significant factor hindering economic development and increasing healthcare costs. The WHO also reports that NCD rates in Tunisia are significantly higher than global averages, with NCDs estimated to account for more than 86% of all deaths in Tunisia, 85% of which are considered premature. To decrease vulnerability to NCDs, the Tunisian MoH released a 2018-2025 strategy to combat NCDs that focuses heavily on changing Tunisians' lifestyle choices, including decreasing high consumption of sugar, vegetable oils, and salt, which are significant risk factors for obesity, diabetes and hypertension. To this point, however, Tunisians continue to lack awareness of behavioral modification to prevent NCDs, and primary care physicians lack adequate training to properly advise patients on how to make healthier choices and to provide care for chronic NCDs.

General practitioners (GPs) are generally patients' first point of access to the health-care system and should be proficient at both counseling healthy lifestyle choices to decrease vulnerability to NCDs and managing treatment for those suffering from the four common, chronic NCDs. Over the past decade, WHO research has shown that prioritizing GPs' skills has a substantial effect on lowering the instance and morbidity rates of NCDs. In Tunisia, however, most GPs have not received specific graduate, postgraduate, or continuing medical education and training on preventing NCDs, controlling high risk cases, and providing care for chronic diseases. In addition, Tunisian medical schools and other local institutions have not conducted sufficient research to determine the most effective ways to impact behavior. As a result, Tunisian GPs have limited ability to prevent, diagnose, and treat common chronic diseases.

During the past 15 years, there has been widespread adoption of simulation in health care education as a method to train and assess students. The move towards more simulation-based training has been necessitated by reduced patient availability, limited faculty teaching time, technological advances in diagnosis and treatment, greater attention to patient safety with the need to reduce

medical errors, and a focus on outcomes-based education. Interviews with stakeholders revealed medical residents often lack the time to learn surgical techniques by apprenticeship – thereby limiting opportunities to practice their skills and learn how to deal with adverse events. Simulation-based training will allow for a more rigorous curriculum that will improve surgical interventions to treat NCDs.

Opened in 1974, the SFM is a public higher education and research institution, which is supervised by both the Ministry of Higher Education and MoH. According to the Pasteur Institute, the passage of Law 96-6 in 1996 led to an increase in the number of research labs established at universities and hospitals focusing on health issues, including infectious and non-communicable diseases. Boosting research in these areas remains a national priority, though know-how and a lack of expertise continue to limit researchers' impact in the health sector. In 2016, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Technologies selected SFM as the leading faculty for research activities. SFM currently operates several research programs in partnership with international universities, including Harvard University. SFM would like to expand its research program to include more post-graduate doctors. Furthermore, commercially viable research is a key component of sustainable university development, as successful monetization of studies generates income and acclaim for research facilities and the universities that house them.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in:

1. The establishment of a research and simulation center at SFM equipped with the resources and curriculum necessary to become a center of excellence for research on NCDs;
2. Partnerships created between SFM and American university research centers to facilitate exchanges of information and experience focused on innovation and research; and,
3. The establishment of commercially viable partnerships between SFM and the private sector to foster locally developed health-sector technologies.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications in support of improving scientific research in Tunisia to better prevent and treat NCDs through the establishment of a research and simulation center. The selected applicant must work closely with SFM and the MoH.

This notice identifies Three Priority Areas. Successful applicants will address each Priority Area and all of the components deemed required.

Establishing the SFM Research & Simulation Center (Priority Area 1): In order to improve scientific research in Tunisia, it is important to first create a safe learning environment in which researchers and practitioners can test new clinical processes and enhance their individual and team skills. The first priority area therefore focuses on establishing a Research & Simulation Center at SFM, including the procurement of essential resources and the design of innovative programs and curriculum. Successful applicants shall develop additional activities, but the following components are **required**:

- a. In coordination with SFM and the MoH, support the establishment of a Research & Simulation Center through both physical procurement as well as technical assistance on the design, resourcing, and organizational structure of the Center;
- b. Conduct an assessment of the existing curriculum at SFM to determine if it includes the most current research on the prevention and management of NCDs;
- c. Design and launch special trainings and curricula in coordination with SFM, including an in-service training program targeting medical students and practicing GPs that is focused on prevention, care, and treatment of NCDs;
- d. Support the creation and implementation of a simulation laboratory for surgical care of NCDs;
- e. Deliver capacity building sessions to SFM instructors to improve the quality of education offered to medical students; and
- f. Identify methods and opportunities to expand successful, newly-created curriculum to other medical institutions in Tunisia.

U.S. Research Linkages (Priority Area 2): The Tunisian medical community can benefit greatly from more opportunities for exchanges of information and experience with gold-standard medical professionals. Thus, the second priority area seeks to develop and leverage linkages with U.S.-based research institutions to strengthen SFM doctors' innovation and research skills. Successful applicants shall develop additional activities, but the following components are **required**:

- a. Support the adoption of permanent partnerships between SFM and U.S.-based medical research institutions or universities, leveraging existing partnerships and creating opportunities for more post-graduate doctors; and
- b. Facilitate the creation of sustainable mechanisms for knowledge exchange between SFM students and U.S.-based researchers, such as mentorships, research fellowships and collaboration, and academic exchanges between the United States and Tunisia.

Commercializing SFM Research (Priority Area 3): A key component of strengthening Tunisian medical institutions is commercializing research, as it ensures sustainable funding and boosts the Tunisian medical research community's reputation. Therefore, the third priority area aims to connect SFM researchers with entrepreneurs and investors in Tunisia, the U.S., and internationally to drive collaboration on new health technologies and increase funding for important medical research. Successful applicants shall develop additional activities, but the following components are **required**:

- a. Create connections between SFM researchers and entrepreneurs to encourage collaboration that leads to either employment or other opportunities to monetize research;
- b. Establish channels for SFM researchers to engage with investors, with a focus on developing locally generated health technologies;
- c. Deliver capacity building sessions to SFM students on the patenting process in Tunisia in order to protect their intellectual property; and
- d. Develop mechanisms at the Center to attract students from regional countries and promote medical tourism to Tunisia.

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

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

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

Key Deliverables:

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

- The establishment and equipping of a modern research and simulation center to increase doctors' tools to prevent and treat NCDs;
- An increase in the number of doctors offering counseling and treatment to prevent and care for NCDs;
- SFM students and faculty equipped with more modern and effective research skills;
- A newly-designed curriculum prioritizing medical and behavioral research as well as a curriculum focusing on counseling, care, and general (non-surgical) treatment for NCDs that can be expanded to other universities;
- Simulation-based training allowing graduate students to hone in-depth surgical and other treatment techniques;
- Links between researchers, investors, and entrepreneurs to create an innovation ecosystem that allows research to generate income and encourage start-ups in healthcare technology.

D. GENDER INTEGRATION

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

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

II. MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS

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

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

The RMP will be judged based on the following elements:

- *Well-defined objectives:* Do the objectives provide a clear statement of what the project specifically plans to achieve? Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic (achievable), and time-bound. Objectives should be project specific.
- *Well-defined qualitative and quantitative indicators:* Indicators should objectively measure project progress towards achieving the application's proposed objectives. To this end, applicants may include both output and outcome indicators. Indicators should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, realistic (achievable), and time-bound. Indicators must all contribute towards an objective measurement of progress towards achieving project objectives. Applicants should not include indicators that track progress towards project milestones, deliverables, or activities.
- *Data collection and analysis:* How (and how often) will you collect and present indicator data and analysis to show progress toward the project objectives? Data collection methods should be sound and realistic.
- *Monitoring and reporting:* How will you monitor and assess results during the implementation of the project to adapt to changes on the ground and maintain progress? Do you plan to conduct or manage any internal or external evaluations?

Below is a list of U.S. Department of State standard education indicators for foreign assistance that are commonly used for measuring and reporting program results ([full standard indicators can be found here](#)). Not all of the indicators below will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant in the development of the logic model and the RMP. It is expected that the applicant will propose a combination of the relevant standard indicators as well as custom indicators suggested by the applicant for NEA/AC review. NEA/AC's and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit M&E teams will work with the successful applicant on finalizing indicators and an RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award.

- ES.1-6: Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance
- ES.2-1: Number of host country higher education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance
- ES.2-2: Number of individuals attending higher education institutions with USG scholarship or financial assistance
- ES.2-52: Number of individuals affiliated with higher education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance
- ES.2-53: Number of physical spaces built, repaired, or refurbished for higher education with USG assistance
- ES.2-54: Number of USG-supported partnerships that address regional, national, and/or local development objectives through or with higher education institutions

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

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

All projects funded as a result of this NOFO will be required to complete a mid-term and final evaluation. The final evaluation at the project assessing the entire period of performance with technical support from the NEA/AC M&E and Embassy Tunis Assistance Unit M&E teams. Successful applicants will dedicate between 3% and 5% of their total budget to perform and facilitate monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

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

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Mechanism Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Number of Awards:	1
Estimated Initial Project Funding:	\$5,000,000
Estimated Initial Award Ceiling:	\$5,000,000
Estimated Initial Award Floor:	\$4,000,000

Cost-Sharing or Matching:	Encouraged, not required
Estimated Length of Initial Project Period:	Three years
Maximum Length of Project Period with Option Year(s):	Five years
Estimated Award Ceiling for the Option Year(s):	\$5,000,000
Estimated Award Total with the Option Year(s):	\$10,000,000

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$5,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for approximately 1 award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to three years, depending on the activities proposed. The estimated start date for this project is no later than October 1, 2021.

Please note that option year documents are required as part of this NOFO. Option years are subject to negotiation and availability of funds.

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis reserve the right to award more or less than the estimated program funding and reserves the right to award funding under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

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

IV. SUBSTANTIAL INVOLVEMENT

Activities that NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis will be substantially involved include:

- Approval of the center's equipment
- Approval of the designed curriculum
- Approval of the selected university personnel and students that will participate in an exchange activities
- Approval of the selected entrepreneurs and investors
- Approval of the project's annual workplan with periodic reviews and performance assessments
- Review and approval of the MEL plan no later than 90 days after the project's launch with bi-annual reviews, if deemed necessary.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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

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

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include:

- U.S. or foreign
 - o Non-profit organizations;
 - o For-profit organizations;
 - o Private institutions of higher education;
 - o Public or state institutions of higher education;
 - o Public international organizations;
 - o Small businesses with function and regional experience in the areas of: good governance, human rights, or organization strengthening in the MENA and Africa regions.

A.1. Prime Applicant

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

- Have demonstrable previous experience working in the MENA region
- Have demonstrable previous experience working with government ministries and partners on medical and research programs
- Have demonstrable previous experience working with government ministries and partners on higher education initiatives
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below
- Meet the requirements of the government of Tunisia to conduct programmatic activities within the country
- Meet any requirements listed as MANDATORY in *Additional Eligibility Considerations*, below

B. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

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

UEI Number

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

All applicants must have a UEI number. To obtain a UEI number, please follow the steps below:

Go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>.

Select the country or territory where your organization is physically located. Complete and submit the form. Organizations will need to provide basic information, including physical and mailing addresses, name and title of the chief executive, primary Standard Industrial Code (SIC) (https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sic_manual.html), and annual revenue.

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

System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM is a U.S. government wide registry of vendors doing business with the Federal government and requires annual renewal. The system centralizes information about grant applicants/recipients, and provides a central location for grant applicants/recipients to change organizational information.

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

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

Go to <http://www.sam.gov>.

Log In to complete authentication and create an account. On the My SAM page, select *Entity Registrations* from the sub-navigation menu and select *Register New Entity*.

Organizations must have a UEI number and a CAGE number (US Domestic Organizations) or a NCAGE number (Foreign Organizations), to create an account.

Complete and submit the online form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM Quick Start Guide for Grant Registration:

https://sam.gov/SAM/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf), the online form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it might take anywhere from **12-15 business days** to complete the process of creating an account with the system.

For help with SAM.gov, please visit their support page at <https://www.fsd.gov> or contact them at: 866-606-8220 (U.S.) or +1-334-206-7828 (international).

C. ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Cost-Sharing or Matching

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

VI. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

All applications must include the application components detailed below. **All application documents must be submitted in English.** Applicants may submit only 1 application. Please refer to Section B below for additional submissions guidance and requirements.

NOTE: Applications that do not include all the required documentation described in Section 1 below will not advance past the Technical Eligibility Review stage. Further, applications that exceed the allowable page limits will not be reviewed by the review panel. **Applicants may not add any materials to an application once it has been submitted and the competition deadline has passed.**

A.1. Required Documents

Federal Assistance Application Forms (SF-424, SF424a, and SF-424b)

Applicants must complete each of these forms online to be considered for funding. The SF-424B is only required for those applicants who a) have not registered in SAM.gov or b) have not recertified their registration in SAM.gov since February 2, 2019.

If an organization has an active registration in SAM.gov that was either created or updated **on or after** 2/2/2019, then the applicant does **NOT** need to submit the SF-424B because their registration or recertification will have included the necessary information.

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

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative and its comprehensive GANTT Chart describes the steps and efforts the applicant will undertake to address the priorities and goals of this announcement. It may **be no longer than 10 pages**. More details on preparing the Project Narrative are provided in Appendix III. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix III before preparing their Narrative.**

Option Years Project Narrative:

The Option Years Narrative and its associated GANTT Chart describes the efforts the applicant would propose to undertake during the option year period(s) of up to two years (for up to a total five-year project period) in order to meet the objectives, priorities, and goals outlined in the funding description section of this NOFO. **This section may not exceed two (2) pages**

Budget & Budget Narrative Submission

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

- Summary Budget
- Detailed Line Item Budget
- Budget Narrative
- **Option Years Budget:** A detailed budget for the initial project period is required, and a notional budget and brief budget narrative for option year funding up to two (2) additional years for up to an additional one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$5,000,000).

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

There is no page limit for this section of an application. A sample fillable template can be found in Appendix 1. This template includes three tabs: The first tab includes written guidance on preparing the **Budget Narrative**. Applicants are strongly encouraged to create their Budget Narrative in Word and submit as either a Word Doc or PDF file. Please note that the Budget Narrative should include designations of who is considered Key Personnel for this project. As defined in the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (for assistance awards, Key Personnel means, "...key professional and supervisory personnel; i.e., the members of the professional staff in a program supervisory position engaged for or assigned to duties under the award." The second tab has the template for the **Summary Budget**. This tab will auto-fill as you complete the Detailed Line Item Budget, which can be found on the third tab. The third tab is where you can fill in the template for the **Detailed Line Item Budget** as stated above.

NOTE: Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the same format as provided in the template, and to submit summary and detailed line item budgets in Excel form, and the Budget Narrative as either a PDF or Word file. If the applicant does not use the template, the applicant must ensure that their submission includes all elements outlined in the sample. The template, which includes more detailed instructions, can be found in Appendix 1. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to review Appendix 1 before preparing their Budget and Budget Narrative.**

Logic Model

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

Project Timeline

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

Job Descriptions / Biographical Info for Key Personnel Positions

For each position designated as key personnel for this project, applicants must provide the following:

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

OR

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

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

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

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

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

Sustainability Plan

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

Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Planning Summary

This item should provide detail regarding the applicant's intended due diligence to assess and mitigate risks and implement adequate security measures to ensure the safety and well-being of project staff, participants, and partners, if applicable. This should include specific actions by the applicant to ensure risks are adequately and routinely assessed, and that security measures are commensurate with operational concerns specific to the locale. The applicant should also

include a contingency plan that highlights potential challenges and limitations to project implementation in the operating environment and propose contingency plans should program activities be impacted. Please note that this section should not be limited to physical security and risk but should cover any applicable factors relevant to the given operating environment. This section **may not exceed 3 pages**.

Letters of Agreement or Letters of Intent: Applicants must include Letters of Intent or Letters of Agreement from the SFM and any other proposed partners.

A.2. Optional Documents

Applicants may submit additional documents for consideration with their application. These documents are not required and there is a 10-page limit for this section of the application. Some examples of additional documents an applicant may wish to submit include but are not limited to organizational chart, organogram etc.

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

B. APPLICATION FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

C. SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

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

Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a UEI number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile,

including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

SAMS Domestic

SAMS Domestic is a comprehensive grants management system that allows applicants to apply for, manage, and report on the use of U.S. government funds for multiple programs, accessed online at mygrants.service-now.com.

To create an account, go to <http://mygrants.service-now.com>, and click the “create an account” hyperlink, located above the user name prompt. Users will be directed to a page entitled “User Registration Request;” complete the online form and click the “Submit” button. Users will receive an activation email entitled “Verify Your Grants Account Registration;” click the activation link within the email to receive a username and password.

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

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before 17:00:00 eastern time (ET) on July 2, 2021.

There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to be reviewed. **Each applicant is encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so that the applicant can alert NEA/AC (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline.** Although NEA/AC will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

E. AWARDS TO COMMERCIAL FIRMS OR FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of State prohibits profit under its assistance awards to commercial organizations. No funds will be paid as profit to any recipient that is a commercial organization. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR Part 31. Program income earned by the recipient may be:

- added to the total of the amount of this award, including the required cost sharing or matching, and use it to further eligible project objectives;
- used to meet the Recipient’s cost sharing or matching requirement;
- OR deducted from the total project or program allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

F. AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

Domestic and foreign organizations that expend \$750,000 or more in a fiscal year in federal assistance must perform an independent, recipient-contracted Single Audit or Program Specific Audit. [**Program-specific Audit** means an audit of one Federal award program. **Single Audit** means an audit which includes both the entity's financial statements and the Federal Awards to be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS).] The audits must be independently and professionally executed in accordance with GAGAS either prescribed by a government's Supreme Audit Institution with auditing standards approved by the Comptroller General of the United States, or the host country's laws or adopted by the host country's public accountants or associations of public accountants, together with generally accepted international auditing standards. However, foreign entity audits consistent with International Standards for Auditing or other auditing standards are acceptable with the Grants Officer's approval. More information can be found at <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/693136.pdf>

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

G. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE FEDERAL FUNDING REGULATIONS AND DOS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Payment of funds awarded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity will not be disbursed until the DOS has been assured that the Recipient's financial management system will provide effective control over and accountability for all Federal funds in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable. Awards issued under this NOFO are subject to the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions (<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/U.S.-Department-of-State-Standard-Terms-and-Conditions-10-01-2019508.pdf>) and 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 600 as applicable.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

A. APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Achievable Objectives (20 points)

Each of the project objectives listed above (in Section I) are clearly addressed.

- Impact and Effectiveness: The applicant describes the project's potential contribution to solving the problem addressed in the problem statement and achieving results
- Timeframe: The applicant describes realistic results to be accomplished within the timeframe of the proposed award.

- **Beneficiaries:** The applicant clearly identifies the anticipated beneficiaries and explains how the project's objectives will positively affect them.
- **Milestones:** The applicant provides realistic milestones to indicate progress toward goals and objectives as described in the program announcement.
- **M&E:** The applicant explains how monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities will be carried out, inform implementation throughout the award's period of performance, and who will be responsible for them. The applicant includes a mid-term and final evaluations of the project of the award.

Project Design (35 points)

The applicant clearly describes how each proposed project activity will address each of the objectives outlined in the requested priority area above (Section I).

- **Responsiveness to NOFO:** Explain how the proposed activities respond to the objectives listed in the NOFO.
- **Rationale:** To justify how the proposed activities will achieve the above objectives in this context.
- **Project Management:** Clear description of how the project will be managed in terms of initiation, planning, implementation and closing.
- **Partnerships and Buy-ins:** The applicant addresses how the project will engage or obtain support from relevant stakeholders and identifies any local partners; the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the issues the MoH and SFM face.
- **Feasibility:** The applicant proposes activities that are feasible, and are also practical, and/or experiential in nature to encourage innovation.
- **Beneficiaries Selection Criteria and Process:** The applicant explains how participants will be selected (e.g., criteria for selection, selection process).
- **Duplication:** The applicant acknowledges if activities similar to those proposed are already taking, or have taken place previously, and provides an explanation as to how proposed new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing/recent activities.
- **Contingency Plan:** The applicant articulates programming assumptions and potential challenges to project implementation and proposes contingency plans.
- **Division of Labor:** The application describes the division of labor among the applicant and any partners.
- **Marginalized Populations:** The applicant identifies and addresses support for marginalized populations in all proposed activities and objectives and provides specific means for their inclusion.
- **Gender Considerations:** The applicant includes gender analysis in the project narrative that identifies relevant gender gaps and ways the proposed activities will address those gaps. Proposals should demonstrate how addressing relevant gender gaps will enhance the program's goals and objectives and how the project will benefit both men and women.
- **Program Logic:** Is it theoretically sound? Do all elements of the logic model fit together showing plausible pathways to achieving project outcomes? Have all the key assumptions been identified and their potential influences described? Are the risks to implementation (external factors) fully accounted for and described?

Organizational Capacity (30 points)

- The applicant demonstrates experience (e.g., has previously worked and/or has established contacts/partners) in the MENA region, Tunisia in particular
- The applicant demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs in the medical research field
- The applicant and/or partners demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs implementing higher education programs
- The applicant and/or partners demonstrates experience working with vulnerable communities, especially in the MENA region
- The applicant demonstrates capacity for responsible fiscal management of donor funding (e.g., successful management of a previous sub-award or grant).
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- The applicant has adequate staffing and demonstrates the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- The applicant includes letters of intent/commitment/agreement from the MoH, SFM and any proposed partners.

Staff and Position Specifications (15 points)

- Pre-identified key staff members, including volunteers, demonstrate experience working in Tunisia, in the proposed content area, and with participants from that area (e.g., language skills, cultural understanding).
- A description of the roles of each person or position on the project – whether staff, partner, consultant, or volunteer – demonstrating that the project will be effectively and sufficiently staffed but will avoid redundancy or duplication of effort.
- A job description, including hiring criteria, is provided for each open key position.
- Applicant and/or partner staff have relevant language competencies.

Budget & Budget Narrative (Acceptable or Not Acceptable)

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

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Section V and have submitted all required documents outlined in Section VI. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

NEA/AC reserves the right to have all applications deemed to be technically eligible undergo a Subject Matter Expert (SME) review prior to the Merit Review Panel. Applications that do not pass SME review will not proceed to the Merit Review Panel.

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

Final award decisions will be influenced by whether the application meets NEA/AC's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications.

IX. ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

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

NEA/AC expects to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by August 2, 2021. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. NEA/AC reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Recipients must report **immediately** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

Recipients are encouraged to report success stories and program updates on a bi-weekly basis beginning with second quarter of the project implementation. A success story focuses on the achievement(s) of grant recipients or project participants as a direct result of the funded project. A success story should outline the goals and objectives of the project and the project's results to date. A success story should show widespread impact of the project on participants and relate to some U.S foreign policy and strategic objectives, such as expanding economic prosperity, participatory and responsive governance, and greater access to services. A success stories' template will be shared with the successful applicant.

C. TRAVEL NOTIFICATIONS

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

D. BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to make all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. Grantees are required to ensure that U.S. support is acknowledged appropriately in all dealings with program participants, and in press releases, ceremonies, videos, dedications, interviews, etc. Such instruments should stipulate that all award recipients must coordinate publicity, ceremonial events, dedications, etc., with NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis. Grantees are also required to inform Embassy Tunis of planned public events on a monthly basis and to ensure the proper

coverage of all events and activities that fall within the framework of the project as well as providing graphic content (videos, pictures, etc.) following each public event. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis when negotiating the award.

The successful applicant will need to actively promote the project achievements through social media platforms, and in collaboration with local media outlets. The successful applicant will work closely with Embassy Tunis outreach team to ensure a proper public dissemination of information relevant to the project.

E. UEI NUMBER REQUIREMENT FOR SUB AWARDEES

All sub-awardees are required to have a UEI number. For information on obtaining a UEI number, please see Section V. B. **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a UEI number prior to the submission of an application but must have one prior to a sub-award being issued.**

F. SUB AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

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

X. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

Program Specialist
John Daniels
nea-grants@state.gov

All questions must be submitted in writing to nea-grants@state.gov by **June 11, 2021** at 17:00:00 eastern time (ET). NEA/AC will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on SAMS Domestic and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

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

Grants.gov Contact Center
(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

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

ILMS Help Desk

(888) 313-ILMS (4567)

ILMS Self Service Portal

XI. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the bureau that contradicts public language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO.