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Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs
Office of Assistance Coordination
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 19.600
Tunisia Supporting the Inclusion of Vulnerable Communities
(IDMEJ)
Opportunity Number: *SFOP0008106*

Key Information:

Announcement Type:	New
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Deadline for Questions:	May 18, 2021
Application Deadline:	June 1, 2021
Expected Date of Notification:	August 31, 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 announce a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to empower vulnerable communities in Tunisia by promoting favorable social and institutional reforms that grant greater access to resources for victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and people with disabilities. This opportunity aims to advance U.S. foreign policy by supporting Tunisian government institutions to become more responsive to citizens and ensuring Tunisians understand and exercise their rights.

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

1. Strengthen the capacity of Tunisian institutions to support GBV victims and implement laws protecting their rights
2. Improve the Tunisian government's data collection and management to better distribute disability benefits to eligible citizens
3. Raise awareness among GBV victims and people with disabilities regarding their rights, and increase their capacity to exercise these rights.

A successful project will result in Tunisian institutions that are better equipped to protect vulnerable communities, leading to GBV victims and people with disabilities who can better understand and access resources afforded to them under Tunisian laws.

Applications will only be accepted 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 relevant institutions.

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 for a 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, the 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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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) and the United States Embassy in Tunisia seek proposals that empower vulnerable communities in Tunisia by promoting favorable social and institutional reforms that grant greater access to resources for victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and people with disabilities.

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 relevant institutions.

This programming responds to the U.S. Government priority to support Tunisian government institutions to become more responsive to citizens and ensure Tunisians understand and exercise their rights. It falls under the mission's Objective 2.1, *Tunisian government institutions become transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens*; and Objective 2.2, *Tunisian citizens and civil society understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities in a democratic system*.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tunisia has taken significant steps towards empowering vulnerable communities and promoting favorable social norms and behaviors to prevent discrimination. The country adopted a law to combat violence against women (Law 58) in 2017 and signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. Tunisia's Constitution contains provisions related to persons with disabilities as well as a national disabilities law. Despite the rights and protections these laws provide to Tunisians, comprehensive implementation remains elusive. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), and civil society indicate support for GBV victims and people with disabilities would help empower vulnerable communities and counter discrimination.

Regarding GBV, a 2017 study by the Tunisian Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) found that 53.5% of Tunisian women have experienced physical and sexual violence. Between January and November 2020, the MoWa registered 14,000 cases of violence, with women as victims of violence in most cases. According to the MoWA, this number increased sevenfold compared to previous years, likely due to long periods of confinement associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Law 58 codified a comprehensive approach to fighting GBV by combining measures for prevention of violence with support for survivors. Shelters and women's centers represent an integral component of Law 58, aiming to protect women survivors of violence and prevent repeated incidents while assisting victims with social and economic reintegration. They provide not only housing, but also essential services for well-being and empowerment, including legal assistance, psychosocial treatment, and education. However, Law 58 does not include specific funding sources for programs, leaving existing women's centers and shelters unable to sustainably manage the increasing number of victims they serve. Services provided by shelters and women's centers must be enhanced to meet Law 58's standards for protection and victims' support and to reach more women. Additionally, shelters rely heavily on donor financing and are vulnerable to closures or cutbacks in services when outside financing runs out. Another component of Law 58 is the creation of a National

Observatory to combat violence against women under the supervision of the Ministry of Women. The National Observatory aims to ensure the implementation of the law by evaluating policies' effectiveness in reducing and eliminating violence against women, publishing reports on data collected, and proposing necessary reforms related to GBV. Establishing an effective National Observatory will require systematic coordination among government ministries and justice sector and civil society partners to advance and track implementation of Law 58. Further complicating these efforts is the fact that understanding and awareness of the rights and protections afforded to GBV victims remains low, including among service providers and frontline responders. Due to the difficulty of accessing information, victims of GBV themselves are also often unaware of their rights and the judicial process. Cultural pressures and intimidation in addition to complicated legal processes prevent victims of discrimination and violence from seeking justice. As a result, instances of GBV often go unreported or complaints are withdrawn, thereby promoting the perception of impunity, including among the police. Even when victims pursue legal cases, there are a limited number of lawyers with the relevant knowledge and experience to take on these cases and most victims do not have the financial resources to afford legal services. Increased awareness among GBV victims and service providers of the rights and protections mandated under Law 58 will challenge the perceptions of impunity.

In terms of people with disabilities, Tunisia's 2014 census found that 2.3% of the Tunisian population, approximately 252,000 people, had a disability, with women representing around 33.6% of this number. However, according to 2018 USAID-funded assessment by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), there are no reliable statistics regarding the numbers of people with disabilities in Tunisia. A 2011 World Health Organization report estimated that 15% of the world's population lives with a disability, which would equal roughly 1.7 million Tunisians. Data collection on people with disabilities in Tunisia is based on a system of self-declaration, which prevents an in-depth understanding of the prevalence of disability, a comparison between the different existing data sources, and a critical analysis of data quality. The lack of credible statistics makes it difficult for MoSA to comprehensively implement its disability strategy. Under current Tunisian law, only holders of disability cards are recognized as persons with a disabilities. According to MOSA, 340,000 Tunisians currently hold a disability card. Obtaining the card requires navigating a heavily bureaucratic procedure. People with disabilities complain that the card's noticeably large size and format accentuates social stigma. Given the lack of awareness among many people with disabilities regarding the benefits and protections afforded under this card, the bureaucratic hurdles needed to obtain the card, and the associated stigma of those possessing the card, many people with disabilities refrain from obtaining the card under the current format.

B. ACHIEVABLE OBJECTIVES

A successful project will result in:

1. Effective coordination between Tunisian government and civil society institutions to increase support to GBV victims and implement laws protecting their rights
2. Improved government capacity to identify people with disabilities and use data to distribute benefits that people with disabilities are legally entitled to
3. Increased awareness and capacity among GBV victims and people with disabilities to understand and exercise the rights afforded to them.

C. PROJECT DESIGN

This solicitation invites applications in support of empowering vulnerable communities by promoting favorable social and institutional reforms in Tunisia. The selected applicant must work closely with the Tunisian MoSA and MoWA, while seeking out and applying input from GBV victims and people with disabilities.

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

Empowering & Protecting GBV victims (Priority Area 1): In order to empower victims of GBV, it is essential to build the capacity of entities providing resources to victims. The first priority area therefore focuses on supporting victims' shelters and women's centers, improving the implementation of Law 58, and granting victims better access to legal aid and other support services. Successful applicants shall develop additional activities, but the following components are **required**:

- a. Provide capacity building for GBV victims shelters and women's centers and create a sustainable, income-generating model to reduce reliance on foreign funding;
- b. Support the establishment and development of the National Observatory for the Fight Against Violence Against Women to effectively monitor the implementation of legislation and policies, with a focus on standardizing data collection and a response framework for GBV victims;
- c. Assist the National Observatory for the Fight Against Violence Against Women to better track instances of GBV;
- d. Facilitate improved access to social services for GBV victims and better connect them to legal aid adapted to their needs; and
- e. Promote increased understanding of Tunisian women's rights and protections afforded under anti-discriminatory laws.

Empowering & Protecting People With Disabilities (Priority Area 2): The number of people with disabilities is severely undercounted in Tunisia and thus a significant portion of this vulnerable community is not currently receiving the social benefits available to them under Tunisian law. The second priority area aims to strengthen government data collection and management to improve distribution of disability benefits to Tunisians. Successful applicants shall develop additional activities, but the following components are **required**:

- a. Assist the MoSA with the establishment of a task force that develops and deploys a nation-wide survey on the prevalence of disability in each governorate and the existing levels of support for people with disabilities;
- b. Support the Tunisian government to create an efficient and equitable benefits distribution mechanism by developing a QR code-based disability card system;
- c. Conduct advocacy campaigns to raise awareness among people with disabilities of their rights;
- d. Promote and support efforts to destigmatize negative connotations associated with

- disability benefit cards; and
- e. Identify synergies with Priority Area 1 to ensure GBV victims with disabilities have access to support services adapted to their needs.

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

- Exchange activities with other countries or territories;
- 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, applicants should achieve the following results:

- Shelters and women's centers staff are better equipped to provide enhanced quality services to women victims of violence in a sustainable manner;
- The National Observatory to combat violence against women effectively monitors the implementation of legislation and policies and conducts the necessary data collection and scientific research on violence against women to determine the required interventions and address forms of violence;
- Tunisian women have a better understanding of the rights guaranteed by Law 58, as well as enhanced access to legal assistance and social services;
- Tunisia improves the collection of data on the number of people with disabilities in order to more effectively inform public policy and advocacy for people with disabilities; and
- Tunisia offers better access to both health and social services for people with disabilities and limits stigmatization through the design of a QR code-based disability card.

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 the stated objectives. 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.

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

Below is a list of U.S. Department of State standard social service and gender indicators for foreign assistance that are commonly used for measuring and reporting program results. 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. 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.

Social Service Indicators

- ES.4-1 Number of vulnerable persons benefitting from USG-supported social services
- ES.4-2 Number of service providers trained who serve vulnerable persons
- ES.4-3 Number of USG assisted organizations and/or service delivery systems that serve vulnerable persons strengthened

Gender Indicators

- GNDR-5 Number of legal instruments drafted, proposed, or adopted with USG assistance designed to improve prevention of or response to sexual and gender based violence at the national or sub-national level
- GNDR-6 Number of people reached by a USG funded intervention providing GBV services (e.g., health, legal, psycho-social counseling, shelters, hotlines, other)

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

Selected applicants are required to have project information available for up to twelve months

after the project closeout for the NEA/AC 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:	\$4,000,000
Estimated Initial Award Ceiling:	\$4,000,000
Estimated Initial Award Floor:	\$3,000,000
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):	\$3,000,000
Estimated Award Total with the Option Year(s):	\$7,000,000

Contingent on the availability of funds, approximately \$4,000,000 in Economic Support Funds for one (1) award will be awarded through this announcement. If selected to receive an award, an applicant will be awarded funds for up to three 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 mid-term and final evaluation consultant and/or company

- Approval of selected shelters
- Approval of the company conducting the people with disabilities' survey
- Approval of project partners
- Approval of any Memorandum of Understanding with the Tunisian Government
- Approval of the selection criteria of the beneficiaries
- Approval of any public advocacy and awareness campaign strategy
- Approval of the yearly workplan with mid-year performance review

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
 - Non-profit organizations;
 - For-profit organizations;
 - Private institutions of higher education;
 - Public or state institutions of higher education;
 - Public international organizations;
 - 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 good governance and human rights issues;
- Have demonstrable previous experience working with government ministries and partners on electronic solutions;
- Meet ALL of the registration requirements listed below;
- Meet the requirements of the government of Tunisia to conduct programmatic activities within the country; and,
- 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 should clearly describe the 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 should clearly describe 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
 - a. **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 budget of \$3,000,000 total.

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 and Logic Model / Theory of Change. 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 and clear 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 clear 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 MoSA, MoWA 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 June 1, 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 and evaluation activities will be carried out 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 MoSA and MoWA faces.
- **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 good governance, human rights, and administrative reform
- The applicant and/or partners demonstrates an institutional record of successful programs implementing electronic government solutions
- 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 MoSA, MoWA, 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 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.
- Additional sources (cost-share or matching) for project funding are proposed, as well as an explanation of how those additional sources will be used.
- The budget demonstrates a reasonable cost per participant.
- The budget accounts for monitoring and evaluation costs.

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis are 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 and Embassy Tunis reserve 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 and Embassy Tunis programmatic goals and objectives and how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities.

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 and Embassy Tunis expect to notify applicants who proceeded past the Technical Eligibility Review stage about the status of their application by August 31, 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 and Embassy Tunis reserve 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 required to report program and beneficiary achievements on a quarterly basis (or provide written confirmation that there is no related news for the given quarter) beginning with second quarter's program report.

Recipients are encouraged to report success stories and program updates on a bi-weekly basis beginning with second quarter's program report. 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 a NEA/AC project on participants and relate to some US 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 and provide 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.fsr.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 **May 18, 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.