Department of State
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO): FY 2017 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program
Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement
Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAAE-17-011
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.009
Key Date/Application Deadline: April 3, 2017
Program Description/Executive Summary: As part of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship
Program, the FY 2017 Tunisia Undergraduate Scholarship Program (herein referred to as
"Tunisia UGRAD") will offer full scholarships for an academic year of study in the United
States for outstanding students from underrepresented sectors of Tunisia. The program will
provide approximately 65 students from across Tunisia with a deeper understanding of the
United States and new academic and professional skills and expertise to help them contribute to
the economic growth and development of their country. Funding will support two consecutive
cohorts of students who will each pursue one academic year of non-degree undergraduate study
in the United States at accredited four-year institutions of higher education.

Tunisia UGRAD is one of two components of the higher education workforce development
scholarship program known as the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP). The second
component of TJSP is the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), which is
currently open for competition for FY 2017 (**Funding Opportunity Number:** ECA-ECAAS-
17-006) and can be accessed on Grant.gov and ECA's website. Applicant organizations are
encouraged, but not required, to apply to administer both programs in order to maintain a unified
program brand and promote efficiencies, particularly in the administration of recruitment and
alumni activities. If one organization is awarded Tunisia UGRAD and a different organization is
awarded TCCSP, both organizations will be expected to cooperate closely to promote the
programs under the unified branding of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program.

**It is the Bureau's intent to award one cooperative agreement for activity that will be
carried out over the course of four years for $2,672,500, pending the availability of FY 2017
funds. Please see section B) Federal Award Information, below for additional details.**

A. **Program Description:** Overall grant-making authority for this program is contained in the
Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended,
also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government
of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United
States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other
nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and
achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the
development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and
the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided
through legislation. This program is funded with an Economic Support Funds (ESF) transfer
pursuant to section 632(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the
Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2010
(P.L. 111-117, Division F), as carried forward by the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations
Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10, Division B).

Purpose: Tunisia UGRAD will provide substantive educational experiences at U.S. colleges or universities to a diverse group of emerging student leaders from underrepresented sectors of Tunisia. Recruitment efforts should target a diverse applicant pool based on factors including, but not limited to, gender, geographic origin, and field of study. The program will provide participants with a deeper understanding of the United States and new academic and professional skills and expertise to help them contribute to the economic growth and development of their country. The recipient organization should ensure that participants are able to enroll full-time in courses at U.S. higher education institutions alongside American peers and provide opportunities and enrichment activities both inside and outside of the classroom to help them further develop their professional skills and better understand the United States and its citizens.

Participants are subject to the two-year home-country physical presence requirement under U.S. law, Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 212(e). Participants will return to Tunisia at the conclusion of the program to re-enter their Tunisian colleges and universities and reintegrate with their home communities.

The objective of the program is twofold, including both academic and professional development. Participants will enroll in full-time undergraduate coursework, including courses related to their fields of study as well as American Studies, in order to broaden their knowledge of their chosen field and the United States. Tunisia UGRAD will also provide participants with tailored instruction in academic skills and study habits required to be successful at the undergraduate level and better prepared for higher level studies in the future. The program will further require students' participation in community service activities and internships to enhance their professional skills and provide valuable experience to prepare them to enter the workforce in Tunisia. The academic component of the program begins in the fall semester of the year following the Agreement start date (academic year 2018-2019). Tunisia UGRAD students will fulfill the community service requirement in their first semester and the internship requirement in their second semester. At the end of their programs, students are required to immediately return to Tunisia.

At the current funding level of $2,672,500, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds, Tunisia UGRAD will award approximately 32 scholarships each academic year for two consecutive years (approximately 65 in total) at U.S. higher education institutions to outstanding students from underrepresented sectors in Tunisia. A broad range of academic fields of study will be eligible, but students may **not** enroll in clinical coursework while on Tunisia UGRAD. The recipient organization should conduct recruitment in all 24 of Tunisia's governorates. Every effort should be made to select a balanced mix of male and female participants and to recruit participants who are from underrepresented backgrounds, from geographically diverse areas of Tunisia, studying a variety of eligible fields, and who have had little or no prior experience in the United States or elsewhere outside of their home country. All eligible student applications will be considered. Scholarships will be granted exclusively to students who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program in Tunisia. The recipient organization will place participants in non-degree programs at four-year U.S. colleges and universities. Placement at community colleges will not be permissible

under this program. **Note:** The FY 2017 Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program, a component of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, does place students at community colleges and is being openly competed at this time. Please refer to Funding Opportunity Number ECA-ECAAS-17-006 to access the NOFO on Grants.gov and the ECA website.

Applicant organizations should demonstrate the ability to administer the following aspects of Tunisia UGRAD: participant recruitment and selection, pre-departure orientation, placement at U.S. colleges and universities for academic study and intensive English , program orientation, mid-year workshop in the U.S., monitoring and support of participants including all logistics, financial management, evaluation, follow-on, and alumni outreach. Applicants should highlight their experience or expertise administering successful exchange programs, including participant recruitment and selection, in the Middle East and North Africa or similar environments, in the proposal. The award recipient will serve as the principal liaison with Tunisia UGRAD host institutions and the Bureau. Further details on specific program responsibilities can be found in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) Statement, which is part of the formal solicitation package available from the Bureau. Interested organizations should read the entire announcement for all information prior to preparing proposals.

The Bureau will award one Cooperative Agreement for this program. Should an applicant organization wish to work with other organizations in the implementation of this program, the Bureau requests that subaward agreements be developed. The same requirements apply to the subaward recipient as to the recipient organization.

Programs must comply with J-1 Visa regulations. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further information.

Responsibilities of the award recipient for the administration of Tunisia USP for cohorts in academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 include:

1. Recruiting and nominating program participants from all 24 of Tunisia's governorates, seeking gender parity;
2. Recruiting and selecting accredited, four-year host institutions in the United States;
3. Conducting English language assessments and placement in intensive English programs in the United States for participants, as necessary;
4. Placing participants at accredited, four-year institutions of higher education in the United States;
5. Providing monitoring and support services for participants at host institutions in the United States;
6. Creating materials for orientations and workshops;
7. Assisting with community service and internship arrangements and other special program management;
8. Financial administration of the program budget including, but not limited to, stipend disbursement, domestic travel arrangements, student reimbursement for cultural events, adhering to federal and local income tax laws, and fiscal reporting;

9. Program reporting and evaluation;
10. Managing and monitoring the visa process, including the processing of DS-2019s;
11. Supporting alumni tracking and coordination, as well as creation of follow-on activities for program alumni; and
12. Ensuring that participants receive and review a release form that states whether they approve or do not approve the use of their photos or quotes in publications related to Tunisia UGRAD.

In a Cooperative Agreement, the Office of Academic Exchange Programs, Near East Asia Branch (ECA/A/E/NEA) is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring.

In this Agreement, ECA/A/E/NEA will be responsible for the following:

1. Participating in the design and direction of program activities;
2. Approving key personnel;
3. Approving final selection of program participants;
4. Approving and providing input for all program agendas and timelines;
5. Reviewing and approving all program recruitment, publicity, and outreach materials;
6. Approving final host institution selections;
7. Providing final approval, after thorough consultation with the cooperating agency, of all student placements;
8. Providing guidance in the execution of all project components;
9. Arranging for Department of State speakers during workshops;
10. Advising and consulting during participant emergencies, including SEVIS-related issues;
11. Approving decisions related to specific circumstances or problems throughout the program;
12. Providing background information related to participants' home country and cultures; and
13. Providing liaison with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy and country desk officer at the U.S. Department of State.

These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are also outlined in the attached POGI.

NOTE: All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program must acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State. The Department will retain copyright use of and distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Alumni Tracking and Follow-On Activities
Alumni activities are an important part of the Bureau's academic exchange programs. Alumni programming in the form of newsletters, listservs and use of social media provides critical program follow-on and maximizes and extends the benefit of the participants' program in the United States.   Proposed follow-on activities for alumni must be developed in close consultation with the Bureau and PAS Tunis, must reflect the goals and objectives of the FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD, and must contribute to the Bureau's goals to foster mutual understanding between the people of Tunisia and the people of United States. The proposal

should describe how long-term links with FY 2017 Tunisia UGRAD alumni will be fostered and maintained.

Proposals should outline ways to creatively organize and support engagement with alumni without additional Bureau funding, including a timeline. Proposals should explain how alumni activities will be integrated with initiatives for alumni of other ECA programs, rather than being isolated events. Alumni tracking is critical for the evaluation of the Program and for the implementation of worthwhile follow-on programs. The proposal should detail how database systems will be maintained and updated beyond the duration of the Cooperative Agreement and how often updated database information will be provided to the Bureau. Applicants should explain how these efforts will be coordinated with the Bureau and the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis.

All statistical information gathered and compiled by the award recipient on the program participants and alumni should be transferable to the database maintained at the Bureau. The proposal should describe how the applicant organization intends to store data on participants for transfer to the Bureau's system.

Because Tunisia UGRAD is one component of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program (TJSP), which also includes the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), the applicant must be willing to cooperate closely with the organization that is awarded the cooperative agreement for TCCSP to implement alumni activities that will be available to all TJSP alumni. These alumni activities should be promoted as TJSP alumni activities under unified branding.

Alumni Workshop
The proposal should include a detailed plan for the administration of a workshop that would include alumni from all cohorts of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program, including Tunisia UGRAD and the Tunisia Community College Scholarship Program (TCCSP), totaling approximately 600 alumni. The alumni workshop should offer alumni ample opportunity to network amongst themselves and with Tunisian representatives from various sectors; to present the work they have been doing since their exchange programs in the United States; and to reflect on the impact their exchange programs have had on their lives and communities. The workshop should take place in Tunisia after the return of the final program cohort and no later than March 2021.

The cooperating organization will develop the workshop agenda in close consultation with the Bureau and PAS Tunis, and must be willing to work with cooperating organizations previously responsible for implementing Tunisia UGRAD and TCCSP to include all program alumni equally. Proposals should explain how the applicant organization would plan this workshop if there are multiple organizations administering the two components of the Thomas Jefferson Scholarship Program: Tunisia UGRAD and TCCSP. For the purposes of this proposal, the applicant should budget for the participation of approximately 320 Tunisia UGRAD alumni.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement – ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description.
Fiscal Year Funds: 2017
Approximate Total Funding: $2,672,500, pending the availability of funds.
Approximate Number of Awards: 1
Approximate Average Award: $2,672,500
Floor of Award Range: None.
Ceiling of Award Range: $2,672,500
Anticipated Award Date: May 16, 2017, pending the availability of funds
Anticipated Project Completion Date: May 31, 2021
Additional Information: At the current funding level of $2,672,500, Tunisia UGRAD will award approximately 32 scholarships each academic year for two consecutive years (approximately 65 in total) at U.S. higher education institutions to outstanding students from underrepresented sectors in Tunisia. At this time, ECA cannot predict whether additional Economic Support Funds (ESF) or other funding will be made available to support additional programs in FY 2018 and FY 2019. However, pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, ECA reserves the right to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

C. Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible Applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements: Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to

$130,000 in Bureau funding. The Bureau anticipates making one award, in an amount up to $2,672,500, pending the availability of FY 2017 funds, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

– Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note**: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D. **Application and Submission Information**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:
Please contact Program Officers Cameron Davis-Bean and Jamie Sharp in the Middle East and North Africa Programs Branch, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, Fourth Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Mr. Davis-Bean can be reached at (202) 632-3277, or DavisBeanCC@state.gov. Ms. Sharp can be reached at (202) 632-9446 or SharpJ2@state.gov. To request a Solicitation Package and on all other inquiries and correspondence, please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number when making your request.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:
The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding or from the Grants.gov website at http://www.grants.gov.

Please read all information before downloading.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access http://www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

D.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

D.3d. You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior

executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at http://j1visa.state.gov or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State

SA-44, Suite 668
301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it

will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program <u>outputs</u> and <u>outcomes</u>. <u>Outputs</u> are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. <u>Outcomes</u>, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):
1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen

participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include the following:
1) Program costs including, but not limited to, outreach and recruitment materials, orientations, and enrichment events;
2) Participant costs including, but not limited to, costs associated with travel, stipends, cultural allowances, health insurance, and tuition and fees;
3) Administrative costs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:
Application Deadline Date: Monday, April 3, 2017
Method of Submission:
Applications may only be submitted electronically
through Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support
Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays
Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3q. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. **Quality of the Program Idea and Program Planning:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

2. **Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:** Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

3. **Multiplier Effect/Impact:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

4. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.

5. **Institutional Record and Capacity:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of administering successful exchange programs in the Middle East and North Africa or similar environments, including participant recruitment and selection, responsible fiscal management and full compliance

with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6. **Project Evaluation and Follow-on Activities:** Proposals also should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. A draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives is recommended. Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.

7. **Cost-sharing and cost-effectiveness:** The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

8. **Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:** Proposed programs should receive positive assessments by the Bureau's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices:
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.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:
Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:
Office of Management and Budget's Circular 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB circular cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants
https://www.statebuy.state.gov/fa/pages/home.aspx

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

   Mandatory:

     1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here: http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68.   The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a Grant Note under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to GrantSolutions.gov, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

     2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award.

     3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

     4.) Quarterly program and financial reports which should include summaries of program activity and lessons learned.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. Program Data Requirements:
Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

     1.) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.

2.) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, please contact Program Officers Cameron Davis-Bean and Jamie Sharp in the Middle East and North Africa Programs Branch, Office of Academic Exchange Programs, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, Fourth Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Mr. Davis-Bean can be reached at (202) 632-3277, or DavisBeanCC@state.gov. Ms. Sharp can be reached at (202) 632-9446 or SharpJ2@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:
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 published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the 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 per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Mark Taplin   **January 30, 2017**
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State