

**The Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
Office of Capacity Building and Development**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Borlaug Fellowship Program – South Africa - Biotechnology – Fellow #1**

A. Program Description

Program Overview, Objectives, and Priorities

The Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program (Borlaug Fellowship Program) is requesting the design and delivery of a collaborative training and research program for a Fellow from **South Africa to research the factors affecting cryopreservation of immature and matured cattle oocytes in order to maintain the viability of oocytes post-thaw.**

BACKGROUND

Since 2004, the U.S. Congress has made funds available to the Borlaug Fellowship Program to advance USDA’s agricultural research goals of promoting collaborative programs among agricultural professionals of eligible countries, agricultural professionals of the United States, the international agricultural research system, and United States entities conducting research by providing Fellowships to individuals from eligible countries who specialize or have experience in agricultural education, research, extension, or other related fields. Fellowships promote food security and economic growth in eligible countries by educating a new generation of agricultural scientists, increasing scientific knowledge and collaborative research to improve agricultural productivity, and extending that knowledge to users and intermediaries in the marketplace. The collaborative nature of the training and research programs not only benefits the Fellow, his or her home institution, and partner country; the U.S. host institution, its professors, researchers, and students; and the global agricultural sector by improving agricultural productivity, systems, and processes in partnering nations through the transfer of new science and agricultural technologies.

Objectives

USDA identifies Borlaug Fellows based on country-specific topics of importance to international, agricultural trade. USDA then places Fellows with U.S. research institutions for 10-12 week, intensive programs. These programs are expected to contribute to the strategic goals and objectives of the Fellow and those institutions through a hands-on experience in a “real-world” agricultural research scenario, providing opportunity for application of research agendas where they can have a direct impact on food security and economic growth in an emerging economy. It is hoped that host institutions will share the knowledge gained through the program in their classroom and extension work with their faculty, students, extension officers, and constituents; and that they will continue to maintain professional contacts with the Fellows after their departure from the United States.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected institution will design and implement a training program to meet the Fellow's proposed research goals and objectives to the closest extent possible. The Fellow's application proposed the following research and training objectives.

Proposal and Action Plan

Fellow #1 (NOFO#: USDA-FAS-10777-0700-10.-19-0009): South Africa, Male, Researcher, Agricultural Research Council, MS in Animal Science and Production

Goal

The fellow's goal is to compare/improve protocols for freezing/cooling mature and immature cattle oocytes.

Research Background

Successful oocyte freezing/cryopreservation is important for establishing the animal germplasm banks. However, this procedure has proved very difficult in mammals and only limited success has been obtained in the bovine. Oocytes and early embryos are very sensitive to chilling and cryopreservation process. Although new advances have been achieved in the past few years, the perfect/suitable protocol has not yet been established. The cryopreservation process has the ability to store oocytes for extended periods of time. If immature bovine oocytes could be successfully cryopreserved and/or vitrified, the timing of in vitro maturation (IVM), in vitro fertilization (IVF) and nuclear transfer could be more manageable. It would also improve the capacity to maintain frozen banks of bovine oocytes for the advancement of genetic improvement and increase the availability of materials for basic research.

Expected Accomplishments

The fellow hopes to find a suitable freezing protocol for both immature and mature oocytes with a higher survivability/viability post-thaw during the fellowship. Their research interest and scientific background is related to the goals of their proposal since oocytes freezing is still challenging.

Working with the mentor from U.S will help the fellow to archive their research goals. The mentor in U.S is the best on the field of Cryobiology/reproduction. This will be help the fellow to learn more from the well experienced U.S mentor on freezing of both mature and immature cattle oocytes.

Contributions to South Africa's Agriculture Sector

This Borlaug Fellowship will contribute to enhanced agricultural productivity, economic development, and/or food security in the fellow's country of South Africa by currently freezing of cattle oocytes for future use. South Africa has many indigenous cattle and it is therefore important to develop protocol that can be used for a gene bank.

Suggested Schedule

Weekly plan/activities:

Week 1: Preparation for cattle oocytes mediums

Week 2: Ovaries collection and oocytes recovery

Week 3: Selection of good oocytes and freezing

Week 4 -5: Toxicity test of the EG and DMSO different concentrations

Week 6 -7: In vitro maturation of oocytes

Week 8 - 9: Freezing of mature oocytes

Week 10: Thawing/warming of frozen/cooled mature and immature oocytes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

-To test the effectiveness of the Brilliant Cresyl Blue (BCB) staining solution during the selection of competent oocytes for cryopreservation.

-To compare two freezing methods (conventional slow freezing and solid surface vitrification) during freezing/cooling of mature and immature cattle oocytes and compare different freezing containers on oocytes viability.

-To compare the cryo-effectiveness of EG and DMSO during freezing/cooling of mature and immature oocytes with different cryoprotectants.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is 2 years, including the time for the Fellow's training and the mentor's reciprocal visit approximately 6 months to 1 year after the training. The actual training period at the institution can range from 8 – 12 weeks as outlined in the Fellow's proposal and action plan.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The applicant is expected to host the Fellow at a research facility on their campus in the United States. The mentor is expected to make a reciprocal visit of up to 2 weeks to the Fellow's home institution, which may be in a developing country.

EXPECTATIONS:

(1) Assignment of a Principal Investigator (Training Coordinator)

The host institution will designate a contact person as the Principal Investigator (PI) responsible for coordinating all administrative and programmatic arrangements.

(2) Assignment of a Mentor

A key component of the program is matching the Fellow with a mentor. The host institution will select an appropriate mentor for one-on-one work with the Fellow for the duration of the program.

- The mentor will establish a professional relationship, providing guidance and training in the Fellow's research and studies.
- The mentor will work with the Fellow before arrival to discuss appropriate work plan, site visits, and other arrangements. A work plan should be agreed upon and finalized no later than 2 weeks after the program start date.
- The mentor will provide draft of work plan through the PI to USDA/FAS for consultation and approval approximately 2 weeks before the commencement of the program.
- The mentor agrees to commit a significant amount of time each week for one-on-one work with the Fellow during the program.
- The mentor will continue communicating with the Fellow beyond the end of the program in the U.S. through the mentor visit.

- Mentor will submit semi-annual progress reports that indicate all program activities conducted.
- The mentor may assign other faculty members to assist with Fellow's training and research activities.
- The mentor may not be assigned to multiple Fellows during the same time frame.

(3) Mentor Follow-up Visit

- The mentor visit is a required component of the Borlaug Fellowship Program.
- The mentor will work with the Fellow to plan a follow-up visit to the Fellow's home country. The trip should occur within 6 months to 1 year after the program ends.
- The PI will provide USDA/FAS with an agenda for mentor's reciprocal visit, including goals and objectives, three weeks prior to the trip. The mentor's travel information must be provided for emergency contact purposes and country clearance (if required by the cognizant FAS Overseas Office).
- The mentor will provide a trip report highlighting the trip's activities and results through the PI to USDA/FAS within 30 days after the visit.
- The mentor should plan to meet with the USDA/FAS Attaché or staff from the U.S. Embassy while they are traveling, if feasible. USDA/FAS can assist with coordination prior to the trip.

(4) Travel and Transportation

- The host institution must comply with the Federal Travel Regulations (41 CFR 300 et seq.).
- The host institution will provide round trip, economy class, international airfare from the Fellow's home to the university.
- The host institution is responsible for arranging and purchasing all domestic travel related to the Fellow's training program.
- The host institution will provide housing for the Fellow for the duration of the training program, taking into account gender and cultural norms.
- The host institution will pay lodging fees directly. The host institution will not require the Fellow to pay for his or her lodging expenses, whether through reimbursement or advance payment.
- Lodging will include a private bedroom, private or shared bathroom, access to a laundry room, and access to a kitchen with pots, pans, and utensils.
- Necessities, such as sheets, towels, and cleaning supplies, will be provided for Fellow's use. The Fellow should not have to pay for these items.
- Lodging will be within walking distance to the campus/training location or easily accessible by public transportation.
- If public transportation is required to access campus/training location, the host institution will provide the Fellow with a bus pass or proper allowance for transportation expenses.
- When planning lodging options, the host institution should check with the Fellow and account for any special dietary restrictions or preferences.

(5) Meals and Incidentals (M&IE)

- The host institution will provide each Fellow with meal and living allowances for the duration of stay.
- Daily M&IE allowance may not exceed current [GSA per diem rates](#).
- The host institution can determine the frequency of per diem allotments, but the Fellow must receive per diem within the first week of the Fellowship. The PI must inform the Fellow and USDA/FAS immediately if this cannot be accommodated.

(6) Emergency Health Insurance

- The host institution will purchase emergency health insurance for the Fellow for the duration of stay, as required for all J-1 Visa holders ([22 CFR 62.14](#)). Dates of coverage must include date of departure from home country to the university until date of arrival in home country from the university.
- The Fellow will not be required to purchase his or her health insurance and then be reimbursed.
- The host institution will educate the Fellow as to what is covered under health insurance policy, especially highlighting that pre-existing medical conditions are not covered.
- The host institution will immediately alert USDA/FAS staff if any health/medical conditions arise during the Fellowship.

(7) Communication

- The host institution will initiate contact with the Fellow as soon as possible.
- The host institution will develop the training program in consultation with USDA/FAS and the Fellow.
- The host institution will keep USDA/FAS informed regarding any logistical or program planning.
- The host institution will notify USDA/FAS immediately upon Fellow's physical arrival and departure from the U.S. to comply with U.S. Department of Homeland Security requirements.
- The host institution will provide USDA/FAS with the Fellow's temporary U.S. address and phone number, and emergency contact numbers for the PI, mentor, or other appropriate institution personnel. This information is required so that Fellow can be reached in the event of an emergency.

(8) Fellowship Program

- The host institution will provide educational materials and supplies to each Fellow necessary for their full participation in the Fellowship.
- The host institution will pay for all fees related to the Fellow's training program, such as (but not limited to) technology fees, administrative fees, laboratory fees, etc.
- The host institution will arrange relevant field visits as applicable to the Fellow's training program.

- The host institution will ensure the Fellow submits an interim and final report (2-3 pages each) to USDA/FAS before the Fellow leaves the United States.

(9) Orientation

- The PI/Training Coordinator will communicate directly with the Fellow at least 4-8 weeks before his or her arrival in the U.S. to ensure that all pertinent information is provided, including:
 - Name and contact information of PI/Training Coordinator
 - Name and contact information of mentor
 - Institution information, weather information, and clothing needs
 - Housing and M&IE allowance
 - Program plan and anticipated site visits
 - Professional development expectations
 - Reminder to bring any necessary prescription medications
 - Explain what is and is not covered under emergency health insurance policy (e.g. no pre-existing conditions, no dental, etc.)
- Institution will provide an orientation upon the Fellow’s arrival to acquaint them with campus and community resources, such as:
 - Explanation and demonstration of local bus/transportation options
 - Explanation of cultural and legal expectations
- USDA will provide a welcome and orientation packet for mentors

GOVERNMENT FURNISHED ITEMS: USDA FAS will provide Fellows with a DS-2019 for the Fellow to request and obtain a J-1 visa.

Issued By

Foreign Agricultural Service, Office of Capacity Building & Development, Trade & Scientific Exchanges Division, Borlaug Fellowship Program

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number and Title

10.777 Norman E. Borlaug International Science and Technology Fellowship Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title

Borlaug Fellowship Program – South Africa – Biotechnology – Fellow #1

NOFO Number

USDA-FAS-10777-0700-10.-19-0009

Authorizing Authority for Program

The legislative authority for the Borlaug Fellowship Program is provided in Section 1543 of the Agriculture Development and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S. Code 3293) as amended in 1996 and supported by the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended.

Appropriation Authority for Program

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (PL 115-141)

Announcement Type

New

**B. Federal Award Information
Award Amounts, Important Dates, and Extensions**

Available Funding for the NOFO: Up to \$50,000 per award

Projected Number of Awards: 1

Period of Performance: 24 months

Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): Subject to the availability of implementer and Fellows, not later than one year after the application deadline in Section D.

Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): Up to 24 months from start of agreement.

Extensions are allowable, please see Section H. Additional Information to see how to requests one should the need arise.

Pre-Award costs: Not Allowable

Cost Share or Match requirements: A cost match or cost share is not required.

Funding Instrument

USDA will enter into a cost-reimbursable agreement under 7 USC § 3319a with selected recipients. Program staff will maintain involvement in the administration of the Borlaug Fellowship Program.

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Proposals may be received from U.S. State Cooperative Institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States.

A single mentor may not host two Fellows simultaneously. Both the PI and the mentor must hold a position at an eligible U.S. institution.

Eligibility Criteria

All applicants must have an active registration in the SAM database at www.sam.gov – pending or expired registrants are not eligible. This requirement must be met by the closing date of the announcement and will not be waived. Please contact the program officer listed if you have questions about this requirement.

In addition to obtaining a DUNS number and registering in SAM, you must also obtain Level 2 eAuthentication to apply for this funding opportunity in ezFedGrants (eFG). You must submit an online form requesting access. Normally you will receive an email within 24 hours of your submission, if your request is approved. After this occurs, you will need to schedule an appointment with an LRA. Once you meet with the LRA, your Level 2 eAuthentication should be granted within 2 to 3 days after that meeting. See Section D of this NOFO for detailed information.

Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

MOE is not allowable.

D. Application and Submission Information

Key Dates and Times

Application Start Date:	May 13, 2019
NOFO Posted Date:	May 13, 2019
Application Submission Deadline:	June 18, 2019 at 11:59PM EDT
Anticipated Funding Selection Date:	Approximately 2-3 weeks after submission
Anticipated Award Date:	Approximately 2-3 weeks after selection

Address to Request Application Package

This NOFO represents the full application information.

Applications will be processed through the ezFedGrants portal at <https://grants.fms.usda.gov> – prospective applicants are encouraged to register for this portal. Applicants that are unable to access the ezFedGrants portal should contact the program manager for alternative submission instructions. Note that if selected, registration is a requirement of performance.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Institutions must be able to host multiple groups over the period of performance and should submit a proposal following the guidelines below:

Required forms and certifications, including:

- [Standard Form 424](#), signed by the applicant
- [Standard Form 424A](#). This should be accompanied by a detailed budget worksheet and a detailed budget narrative (NOTE: A budget narrative must be provided). All line items should be described in sufficient detail that would enable FAS to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per federal regulations. Definitions of cost items are listed below.
 - a. **Personnel:** Costs of employee salaries and wages. For each staff person, provide the name (if known), title, time commitment to the project as a percentage of a full-time

equivalent (FTE), annual salary, and grant funded salary. Do not include the costs of consultants. Consultants are to be included under “Contractual.”

- b. **Fringe Benefits:** Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate. Provide the method used to calculate the proposed rate amount. If a fringe benefit has been negotiated with, or approved by, a cognizant federal agency, **attach a copy of the negotiated fringe benefit agreement**. If no rate agreement exists, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, taxes, etc. Identify the base for allocating these fringe benefit expenses. (Attach the agreement to the application package.) For foreign entities this may not apply.
- c. **Travel:** Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (do not include costs of sub-contractor or consultant travel). For each proposed trip, provide the purpose, number of travelers, travel origin and destination, number of days, and a breakdown of costs for airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals. The basis for the airfare, lodging, meals, car rental, and incidentals must be provided, such as past trips, current quotations, Federal Travel Regulations, etc.
- d. **Equipment:** Equipment is not an allowable expenditure for this award. Any article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5000.
NOTE: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, calibration and maintenance services, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.
- e. **Supplies:** Supplies are tangible personal property other than that included in the equipment category if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information which supports the amount requested. A computing device is a supply.
- f. **Contractual:** Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third party evaluation contracts (if applicable) and contracts with secondary recipient organizations.
Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Identify proposed sub-contractor work and the cost of each sub-contractor. Provide a detailed budget for each sub-contractor that is expected to perform work estimated to be \$25,000 or more, or 50% of the total work effort, whichever is less.
 - Identify each planned subcontractor and its total proposed budget. Each subcontractor's budget and supporting detail should be included as part of the applicant's budget narrative.

- Provide the following information for each planned subcontract: a brief description of the work to be subcontracted; the number of quotes solicited and received, if applicable; the cost or price analysis performed by the applicant; names and addresses of the subcontractors tentatively selected and the basis for their selection; e.g., unique capabilities (for sole source subcontracts), low bidder, delivery schedule, technical competence; type of contract and estimated cost and fee or profit; and, affiliation with the applicant, if any.
 - All required flow down provisions in the award must be included in any subcontract.
- g. **Other Direct Costs:** Any other items proposed as direct costs. Provide an itemized list with costs, and state the basis for each proposed item.
- h. **Indirect Costs:** This will be a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 USC § 3319a. By statute, indirect cost rates for cost reimbursable agreements cannot exceed 10%.
- [AD-3030](#), revised February 2016
 - [AD-3031](#), revised February 2016
 - A project narrative that includes the following elements:
 - Indicate the name of the institution applying to host the Fellow;
 - Indicate the training topic;
 - Provide a tentative training plan based on the training interests listed in the statement of work, including topics to be covered, possible field visits and other activities;
 - Please include a narrative description of the proposed training, how it will be administered and the role of the university faculty and support staff;
 - Provide a summary of relevant institutional capabilities for hosting international Fellows in the applicable topic(s);
 - Briefly describe the expertise and international experience of the trainer in the group's field of interest and various countries;
 - Demonstrate understanding of cultural context and needs of the trainees;
 - Identify the expected skills or knowledge to be acquired by the Fellows at the end of the program;
 - Briefly demonstrate flexibility in training plan to account for potential program changes and the ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances;
 - Include a quality assurance plan. This should include information on how unforeseen problems that can arise will be addressed.

The SF-424 and SF-424A can be completed within the ezFedGrants platform. However, the other required forms must be downloaded from the Forms sections on Grants.gov or will be sent to you upon request to the program officer(s) named in Section G.

Please be aware that OMB Memorandum 18-24: Strategies to Reduce Grant Recipient Reporting Burden has been approved. After January 1, 2020, the following forms will need to be completed in SAM on an annual basis and will no longer be required to be submitted as part of your application package:

- [USDA AD-3030](#)
- [USDA AD-3031](#)

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

The link below provides information on 2 CFR §25.110. Please read.

<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=7a45f973880240465cd255471f1380ef&ty=HTML&h=L&mc=true&n=pt2.1.25&r=PART>

FAS is using ezFedGrants to post NOFOs and issue agreements, which is an electronic grants management system. Applicant(s) with electronic access are to submit their applications electronically through:

<https://grants.fms.usda.gov>

Before you can apply, you must have a DUNS number, be registered in SAM, and have access to the ezFedGrants website).

Applicants are encouraged to register early. Due to recent changes in the SAM platform, the registration process can take 6-8 weeks to be completed. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required submission deadlines.

DUNS number. Instructions for obtaining a DUNS number can be found at the following website: <http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>

The DUNS number must be included in the data entry field labeled "Organizational DUNS" on the Standard Forms (SF)-424 forms submitted as part of this application.

System for Award Management. In addition to having a DUNS number, applicants applying electronically through ezFedGrants must register with SAM. Step-by-step instructions for registering with SAM can be found here:

www.sam.gov

Failure to register with SAM will result in your application being rejected.

ezFedGrants System Access and Electronic Signature

Level 2 eAuthentication. The next step in the registration process is to obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account that will allow access to the ezFedGrants system. Instructions for getting a Level 2 eAuthentication account can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.

You may also request Level 2 eAuthentication online at:

<https://www.eauth.usda.gov/MainPages/index.aspx>

If you experience any issues with self-registration or have eAuthentication-related questions, please contact the eAuthenticationHelpDesk for assistance:

By email to eAuthHelpDesk@ftc.usda.gov

Requesting a role in ezFedGrants.

After obtaining eAuthentication, users will need a role in the system. Descriptions of the roles available and instructions on how to request a role can be obtained by emailing ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov

You may also go into the link below for instructions on requesting eFG access. The document is called “External Portal Access Request Submission”.

https://www2.nfc.usda.gov/FSS/Training/Online/ezFedGrants/access_user_roles.php

Electronic Signature. Applications submitted through ezFedGrants constitute a submission as electronically signed applications. When you submit the application through ezFedGrants, the name of your Signatory Official on file will be inserted into the signature line of the application.

If you experience difficulties accessing information or have any questions please email the Helpdesk at ezFedGrants@cfo.usda.gov.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Intergovernmental Review

An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicant(s) must contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the State’s process under Executive Order 12372 (see <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/rgeo12372.pdf>). Name and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget’s home page at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SPOC-Feb.-2018.pdf>

Funding Restrictions

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by 2 CFR Part 200 and 2 CFR Part 400.

Compensation for personal services (whether classified as personnel, contractual services, or any other form) may not exceed the pro-rated equivalent of Step III of the Executive Schedule. For calendar year 2019, this is \$176,900 per year; \$680.38 per day; or \$85.05 per hour. Non-monetized fringe benefits are generally excluded from this ceiling, however, a federally-negotiated fringe benefits rate agreement may be required if fringe benefits appear to be unusually high.

FAS agreement funds may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Agreement funds and non-monetary support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from serving in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Federal employees may not receive funds under this award. In addition, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

These funds cannot be used for construction purposes, general purpose equipment (no particular scientific, technical, or programmatic purpose), scientific equipment exceeding \$5,000 or more, entertainment, capital improvements, thank you gifts, or other expenses not directly related to the project

This will be a cost reimbursable agreement issued under 7 U.S.C. 3319a. University indirect costs for cost reimbursable agreements are limited to 10% of direct costs.

Management and Administration (M&A) Costs:

M&A costs are not allowable.

Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs.

Indirect F&A costs means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefited without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. By statute, indirect costs for cost reimbursable agreements cannot exceed 10% of direct costs.

Other Submission Requirements

All applications must be submitted electronically as indicated above.

**E. Application Review Information
Application Evaluation Criteria**

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by 31 U.S.C. 3321 and 41 U.S.C. 2313 to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore application evaluation criteria may include the following risk based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and

findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

Technical Expertise and Experience (40 points)

Mentor must have appropriate technical background to provide the desired, advanced training. If necessary, other appropriate collaborating scientists should be identified to meet any of the objectives which the mentor cannot address. Mentor's experience and knowledge of relevant agricultural conditions within the Fellow's country or a similar location will be considered as appropriate. The trainer's experience with international training and adult-education will also be considered.

Overall Program (35 points)

The overall program plan and design should be relevant to the Fellow's objectives background. The program plan should be thorough, and it should help achieve the desired post-program deliverables and the Fellow's research goals and objectives. Relevant agricultural practices within the region of the university will be considered as appropriate. Relevant university resources should be identified. Additional resources/organizations should be identified as appropriate. Site visits and meetings should be meaningful to the content of the program, if included.

Budget (25 points)

The proposed budget should be appropriate for the number of Fellows and length of the program. The budget should include appropriate cost savings where available and narrative should accompany each line item.

Review and Selection Process

In all cases, the Program Manager will ensure application is submitted on time as specified in this announcement. Also, the Program Manager will ensure the organization is capable of delivering the program/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative.

Qualified applications will be referred to a panel of 2-3 program staff and/or technical experts, and adjudicated among the criteria described above. In general, the highest-rated proposal will be selected, however, FAS may occasionally select out of score order for policy reasons, such as geographic distribution, incorporation of minority-serving institutions, past experience, etc.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Technical and cost proposals submitted under this funding opportunity will be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. FAS may use one or more support contractors in the logistical processing of proposals. However, funding recommendations and final award decisions are solely the responsibility of FAS personnel.

FAS screens all technical reviewers for potential conflicts of interest. To determine possible conflicts of interest, FAS requires potential reviewers to complete and sign conflicts of interest and nondisclosure forms. FAS will keep the names of submitting institutions and individuals as well as the substance of the applications confidential except to reviewers and FAS staff involved

in the award process. FAS will destroy any unsuccessful applications after three years following the funding decision.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Notice of Award

Notice of award will be given to the institution via email. This email is not an authorization to begin performance. The notice of Federal award signed by the grants officer (or equivalent) is the authorizing document through electronic means. It should also indicate if there are any pass-through obligations that successful applicants are required to meet upon receiving award funds, including specific timeline requirements.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions for Federal Assistance Awards, which are on the FAS website at:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants-and-cooperative-agreements-administrative-general-terms-and-conditions>

The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award the Recipient should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

Federal Financial Reporting Requirements

The Federal Financial Reporting Form (FFR), as known as the SF-425, must be submitted semi-annually, within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, and a final report within 90 days of the end of the agreement. The required form is available online at:
<https://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/download/149786>

Program Performance Reporting Requirements

Performance Progress Reporting must be filed semi-annually, within 30 days after the end of each reporting period, and a final report must be filed within 90 days of the end of the agreement and should include details the activities undertaken and progress made.

Performance Expectations

- Ensures that Fellow completes the Borlaug Fellowship Program Evaluation.
- A brief Fellow final report before the Fellow departs the U.S. (Template will be provided).

- The Principal Investigator or Mentor will submit a final report to USDA/FAS within 30 days after the Mentor visit. (Template will be provided).
- The Principal Investigator or Mentor will submit semi-annual progress reports.
- Reports should include the following:
 - Summary of activities, accomplishments, and any problems encountered or overcome
 - Photographs, when possible
 - Completed program evaluations and action plan
- An invoice/claim cannot be paid if a progress report is past due and will not be paid until the required report has been received.

Monitoring

FAS through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, FAS will review recipients' files related to the funded program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, recipients must permit FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their program.

Close Out Reporting Requirements.

Within 90 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance.

After these reports have been reviewed and approved by OCBD, a close-out notice will be completed to close out the grant. The notice will indicate the period of performance as closed, list any remaining funds that will be de-obligated, and address the requirement of maintaining the grant records for three years from the date of the final FFR.

The recipient is responsible for returning any funds that have been drawn down but remain as unliquidated on recipient financial records.

**G. Awarding Agency Contact Information
Contact and Resource Information**

For all general questions, contact:

Ben Bocian; Scientific Exchanges Acting Branch Chief

Hours of operation: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

Telephone: (202) 756-7103

E-mail address: Benjamin.Bocian@usda.gov

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 3226-S; Stop 1031

Washington, DC 20250-1031

H. Additional Information

1. Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed. Applicants may request a no-cost extension in order to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to approval.

2. Pre-Award Costs

The Recipient shall not request reimbursement for costs incurred pertaining to the operation of the project, program, or activities prior to the approved project period.

3. Budget Revisions

a. Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this Award require prior written approval.

b. The Recipient shall obtain prior written approval for any budget revision that would result in the need for additional resources/funds.

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

4. Post-award program income

In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, as part of their request for guidance and/or approval. The Program Manager will review approval requests for program income on a case-by-case basis; approval is not automatic. Consistent with the policy and processes outlined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, pertinent guidance and options, as determined by the type of recipient and circumstances involved, may be approved by the Grant Officer. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note.