ASX Announcement 10 August 2026

# U.S. Government Launches Funding Program

## Initiative represents international recognition of the Gasaat Project and the growing strategic importance of phosphate to global food security

HIGHLIGHTS

- **U.S. Government has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) aiming to mobilise U.S. investment, commercial partnerships, and engineering expertise for PhosCo's Gasaat Phosphate Project**
- **Up to US$1.5M in potential funding is available for U.S. applicants, with proposed U.S. Government-backed activities including investor matchmaking and due diligence support and coordination with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).**
- **Any NOFO award will be made by the U.S. State Department to a third-party applicant(s); PhosCo's role would be as the counterparty asset for prospective U.S. investment and commercial engagement facilitated by that program. There is no guarantee that an any award will ultimately be finalised under the NOFO.**
- **PhosCo supports this initiative and encourages eligible applicants to apply.**

**PhosCo Managing Director, Taz Aldaoud said:**
*"This is a significant validation of Tunisia's mineral resource potential and the role PhosCo can play in global food security. Phosphate is a foundational input for fertiliser production, and demand for reliable, transparent supply chains has never been more acute. We welcome the U.S. Government's recognition of this opportunity and look forward to engaging constructively with the successful applicant and U.S. agencies as this process unfolds. On behalf of the Board of PhosCo, I would like to thank the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Tunis for creating this exceptional opportunity."*

PhosCo Ltd (**ASX: PHO**) ("**PhosCo**" or the "**Company**") is pleased to advise that the United States Department of State, through the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and U.S. Embassy Tunis, has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (Opportunity Number DFOP0019505) directed at accelerating U.S. private sector investment into the Company's Gasaat phosphate project in Tunisia. A copy of the NOFO is attached.

The NOFO identifies PhosCo Ltd as the target recipient for private equity investment, commercial partnerships, and engineering expertise to develop the Northern Phosphate Basin.

The NOFO provides an additional pathway through which the Gasaat Project may be introduced to a broader pool of U.S. strategic and financial investors, supported by a U.S. Government-backed commercial engagement process.

Up to US$1,536,511 in grant/cooperative agreement funding is available to a successful applicant (with the program contemplating up to two awards), tasked with mobilising U.S. private capital toward PhosCo.

The NOFO cites Gasaat's long mine-life and notes that over US$285 million in international development bank financing is already committed to regional rail and processing infrastructure.

Proposed U.S. Government-backed activities include investor matchmaking and due diligence support, coordination with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) on blended finance and risk mitigation, support for negotiating long-term off-take agreements, and technical assessment of downstream by-products.

Applications for the award close 2 September 2026, with an anticipated project start date of 1 October 2026 and an 18–24 month performance period.

There is no guarantee that an applicant will receive the award or that it will ultimately be finalised. PhosCo is not itself an applicant for, and will not directly receive, funds under the NOFO.

The award will be made by the U.S. State Department to a third-party applicant organisation; PhosCo's role would be as the counterparty asset for prospective U.S. investment and commercial engagement facilitated by that program.

Whether or not the program ultimately results in new U.S. investment or strategic partnerships, PhosCo believes the initiative represents valuable international recognition of the Gasaat Project, Tunisia's phosphate potential and the growing strategic importance of phosphate to the global economy and food security.

The NOFO provides an additional pathway through which the Gasaat Project may be introduced to a broader pool of U.S. strategic and financial investors, supported by a U.S. Government-backed commercial engagement process. PhosCo considers this initiative highly complementary to its existing strategy and ongoing engagement with potential investors and strategic partners, and will continue to advance these activities independently. Accordingly, the Company sees the initiative as providing meaningful potential upside for PhosCo and its shareholders, while requiring no material diversion of the Company's existing resources or strategy.

**This announcement is authorised for release to the market by the Board of Directors of PhosCo Ltd.**

**For further information, please contact:**

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Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

# Safeguarding U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains-Tunisia

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Embassy Tunis,

Department of State

Opportunity number: DFOP0019505

Application deadline: September 2, 2026

# Contents

**U.S. Department of State**
**Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and U.S. Embassy Tunis**
**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

# A. Basic Information

## *1. Overview*

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|---|---|
| **Funding Opportunity Title** | Safeguarding U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains-Tunisia |
| **Funding Opportunity Number** | DFOP0019505 |
| **Announcement Type** | Initial Announcement |
| **Deadline for Applications** | September 2, 2026, 11:59 PM ET |
| **Assistance Listing Number** | 19.600 |
| **Length of performance period** | 18-24 months |
| **Number of awards anticipated** | 1 |
| **Award amounts** | An award may range from a minimum of $1,000,000 to a maximum of $1,536,511 |
| **Total available funding** | $1,536,511 pending availability of funds |
| **Type of Funding** | Economic Support Funds under the Foreign Assistance Act |
| **Anticipated project start date** | October 1, 2026 |
| **Contact** | NEA-Grants@state.gov |

The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) of the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy Tunis announce an open competition for organizations to submit an application for innovative foreign assistance programs benefitting partner countries that also advance U.S. commercial diplomacy and place American interests first. Applications must demonstrate how projects will leverage U.S. foreign assistance as a tool of statecraft to advance U.S. economic, security, and diplomatic objectives. Programming should promote trade over aid by leveraging assistance resources to champion American enterprise and infrastructure and catalyze private capital through market principles. NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis may decide to grant up to two awards, or no awards, subject to funding availability and proposal viability.

**Funding Instrument Type:** Grant, fixed amount award (FAA), or cooperative agreement. Awards issued under this funding opportunity may include substantial involvement of the U.S. government. Examples of substantial involvement are included in section C below.

**Project Performance Period**: Proposed projects should be completed in 18-24 months. The Department of State will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the initial budget period on a non-competitive basis subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the program, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

**Application Submission Process:** Proposals are required to be submitted via the Department of State's MyGrants system. Applicants using MyGrants for the first time will need to register with MyGrants by navigating to https://MyGrants.servicenowservices.com. [Click "Create an

Account" under "New User?" On the pop-up, select "Create a MyGrants Applicant/Grantee Account" and complete all required fields.] Once finished, an email will be sent to verify the account creation followed by an Okta account set-up, which will require the use of a smartphone for multi-factor authentication. If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of account creation, please contact the helpdesk at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the self-service online portal that can be accessed from ILMS Self Service Portal. Customer support is available 24/7.

**This notice is subject to availability of funding.**

***2. Executive Summary***

U.S. Embassy Tunis and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination (NEA/AC) seek applications for the "Safeguarding U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains-Tunisia" program, a commercial diplomacy initiative to support transparent, private-sector-led investment in phosphate development, optimize downstream mineral processing to meet international standards, and strengthen trade and investment links between trusted partners and Tunisia, advancing Tunisia's economic development and export capacity.

## B. Eligibility

***1. Eligible Applicants***

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- U.S. and U.S.-aligned for-profit companies and organizations, such as corporations and commercial firms
- U.S. and U.S.-aligned not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations
- Public and private educational institutions
- Public International Organizations and Governmental institutions

***2. Selection Preference***

Preference will be given to applicants whose overall approach demonstrates how U.S. and U.S.-aligned companies position high-quality U.S. and U.S.-aligned investors to secure an equity stake in PhosCo Ltd phosphate development. Projects should catalyze transparent and predictable market conditions that generate durable economic benefit, advance Tunisian development and economic growth objectives, and expand opportunities for mutually beneficial commercial engagement with high-quality U.S. and U.S.-aligned companies.

***3. Cost Sharing or Matching***

Cost sharing is favorably considered, but not required, as part of the merit review. In the event that two or more applications receive equivalent scores, cost-share contributions may be used as a secondary tie-breaking factor. Per 2 CFR §200.306, items that are proposed for cost share must be allowable per 2 CFR §200, Subpart E—Costs Principles.

### *4. Other Eligibility Requirements*

All organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued via SAM.gov as well as a valid registration in SAM.gov. Please see Section E.3 for more information. Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization as prime. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization as prime, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov and/or has a current debt to the U.S. government is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension."

Additionally, no entity or person listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the Excluded Parties List System in SAM.gov to ensure that no ineligible entity or person is included in their application.

Applicants must also demonstrate prior experience managing U.S. government-funded programs and coordinating with private sector partners on commercial diplomacy or technology deployment initiatives, including:

- Critical minerals & private capital mobilization experience: Applicants may form consortia or submit joint proposals that collectively meet the technical and financial requirements described above. Applicants must demonstrate at least five years of experience in facilitating international mining transactions, private equity matchmaking, or structuring multi-million-dollar project finance deals within the critical minerals or extractive industries sectors; equivalent experience across a consortium will be considered.
- Commercial diplomacy & legal framework development: Applicants must possess a proven track record of coordinating with U.S. government agencies (e.g., State Department, DFC, Commerce) and foreign governments to establish binding off-take agreements, joint-venture frameworks, or supply chain security protocols.
- Technical standards & procurement alignment: Applicants must demonstrate technical capability in embedding U.S. equipment standards (e.g., heavy machinery and specialized extraction technology) into foreign industrial project specifications to successfully drive U.S. export generation and/or incorporate high-quality, internationally recognized standards that include competitive U.S. technologies and standards.
- North African/Tunisian contextual expertise: Preference will be given to organizations with an established operational presence or demonstrated experience navigating the regulatory, legal, and investment landscape in North Africa, specifically regarding infrastructure and natural resources management.

## C. Program Description

### *1. Goals and Objectives*

**Background:**
Tunisia occupies a pivotal position in the global competition for critical minerals. The country's Northwest Mineral Basin holds a 50-year, 146-million-ton deposit of phosphate rock, critical to global agricultural production and chemical supply chains. For Tunisia, responsible development of this asset represents a significant economic opportunity. Phosphate is central to Tunisia's export economy, yet declining production and underutilized reserves have constrained export revenues and economic growth. Reducing this vulnerability requires building durable commercial partnerships with trusted partners in mineral-rich regions. Transparent, high-standard investment in the Northwest Mineral Basin can generate sustained royalty revenues, create skilled local employment, catalyze broader infrastructure development in underserved regions, and facilitate technology transfer. By attracting private investment governed by internationally recognized environmental, social, and governance frameworks, the program supports Tunisia's broader economic development goals and strengthens the regulatory and commercial foundations of its extractive sector, while diversifying U.S. access to strategic critical minerals.

A time-sensitive opportunity now exists in Tunisia. PhosCo Ltd, an Australian firm holding development rights to the basin, is actively seeking trusted private equity investment, commercial partnerships, and engineering expertise to develop this asset — creating a direct and actionable opening for U.S. commercial diplomacy. Over $285 million in international development bank financing is already committed to regional rail and processing infrastructure, validating the project's commercial viability and meaningfully reducing the risk profile for prospective investors. The window for U.S. commercial partners to act is narrow. This program is designed to advance both U.S. commercial interests and Tunisia's development priorities – outcomes that are mutually reinforcing, not competing.

**Program Goal:**
Mobilize over $100 million in U.S. private capital to secure a 30-40% American equity stake in PhosCo Ltd, generate $15-25 million in U.S. equipment exports, support 75-125 U.S. manufacturing jobs, and establish a compliant, long-term supply chain for phosphate inputs – eliminating technical barriers to international market access while advancing Tunisia’s economic development and preventing entry by non-market state-owned enterprises.

**Objectives and Activities:**
The Safeguarding U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains- Tunisia program will execute through three core, concurrent lines of effort:

- Objective 1- Private capital mobilization: This program will identify, vet, and match qualified private equity firms, institutional financiers, and strategic investors to partner with or invest directly in PhosCo Ltd phosphate development. To facilitate deal-making, this program may include but is not limited to activities such as structuring secure transaction deal rooms, coordinating investor pitch sessions, and supporting transparent due diligence processes related to PhosCo Ltd's phosphate development. This program will also coordinate with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and other development finance institutions to explore blended finance solutions, debt financing options, and risk mitigation tools that accelerate financial close and reduce barriers to U.S. private sector participation.

- Objective 2- Supply chain agreements and commercial frameworks: The program will provide specialized legal and commercial advisory support to assist in drafting and structuring joint venture agreements and long-term commercial frameworks that meet international standards. This includes supporting the negotiation of multi-decade, binding off-take contracts that provide reliable and commercially viable access to trusted global off-takers. By establishing transparent, bankable commercial agreements and resolving downstream regulatory bottlenecks, the program will increase Tunisian exports, strengthen U.S. agricultural supply chains, protect project governance from non-market influence, and anchor long-term economic stability in the region.

- Objective 3- Downstream byproduct technical assessment: The program will execute a comprehensive technical analysis to explore byproduct use and economic viability to include supply chains for cadmium and other elements discovered, as applicable.

**Exit Strategy**
U.S. government support concludes at 18-24 months, once American capital is anchored in PhosCo Ltd, U.S. technical standards are embedded in project procurement specifications, and initial off-take agreements are executed.

**Measurement of Results:**
Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) is central to this program's success. Applicants must clearly articulate a method to monitor and evaluate progress, utilize data for adaptive management, and ensure activities are implemented in a timely manner. This approach should be reflected in the Results Monitoring Plan (RMP), which flows directly from the Logic Model by translating the program's theory of change into measurable indicators and data collection methods. RMP, Logic Model, and Theory of Change requirements are described in Section D.

*Performance Indicators*
Below is a list of standard foreign assistance (F) and NEA indicators for measuring and reporting related program results. Not all indicators will be applicable to the proposed project, though the applicant is encouraged to use them where relevant in the development of the Logic Model and associated RMP. Additionally, applicants are also welcome to propose custom indicators that accurately measure specific project milestones, market dynamics, and local development benefits alongside the standard F indicators. Embassy Tunis and NEA/AC's MEL team will work with

the successful applicant on finalizing indicators as part of an RMP that will be utilized for the negotiated award.

- Number of critical mineral supply agreements secured through assistance
- Number of U.S. firms that benefit from new commercial opportunities
- Number of private sector enterprises with improved participation in the local economy as a result of USG assistance.
- Number of direct contract awards and procurement selections resulting from USG assistance
- Amount (in USD) of direct contract awards and procurement selections resulting from USG assistance
- Number of U.S. technology exports facilitated by assistance programs
- Amount (in USD) of U.S. technology exports facilitated by assistance programs
- Number of policies, regulations and administrative procedures related to water and natural resources in development, passed, or being implemented as a result of USG assistance
- Number of people educated on tools, approaches, and/or methods for critical mineral extraction best practices as a result of USG assistance
- Number of U.S. investors matched to mining opportunities.
- Amount (in USD) of private capital mobilized
- Number of U.S. and Tunisian jobs created and retained

*Baseline Data*
Baseline data must be collected during project start-up. Where baseline data does not exist, recipients must include a start-up plan to generate it early in implementation. Applicants should also provide a brief description of the methodology used to establish these baselines, ensuring data quality and reliability.

*Targets*
Applicants must propose annual and life-of-project targets for each major output and outcome indicator. Targets should be realistic, tied to program scale, supported by clear implementation plans, and demonstrate steady progress over time.

*Data Collection Methods*
Applicants must describe the methods of data collection and verification, the collection frequency, the responsible parties, and how findings will improve implementation during the award period.

### *2. Substantial Involvement*

This award will be issued as a Cooperative Agreement. The U.S. government will be substantially involved in program implementation in the following ways:

- Review and approve key work plans, implementation milestones, and major programmatic changes.
- Participate in and approve the selection of U.S. investors, financial institutions, technical advisors, and commercial participants.

- Review and provide written approval of technical specifications, procurement-alignment materials, and legal/commercial framework documents before they are advanced to Tunisian counterparts or project partners.
- Facilitate strategic engagement with DFC and other relevant U.S. government partners to support financing, political risk mitigation, and commercial diplomacy objectives.
- Approve the design and format of investor convenings, transaction workshops, and Technical Industry Days, including introductions between U.S. firms and relevant Tunisian stakeholders.

## D. Application Contents and Format

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible and will not move forward to the Merit Review Panel (MRP).

**Content of Application**
Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to fit 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are **required**:

***1. Mandatory application forms***

- SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) (note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals, organizations exempt from registration, and for organizations not required to fully register in SAM.gov)
- Mandatory application forms are available at: https://www.grants.gov/forms/forms-repository/sf-424-mandatory-family

***2. Summary Page (One page maximum)***

Cover sheet stating the applicant's name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program.

***3. Proposal (10 pages maximum)***

The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Proposal Summary:** Short narrative that outlines the proposed project, including project objectives and anticipated impact.
- **Introduction to the Organization**: A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the State Department and/or U.S. government agencies.
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed
- **Project Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable.
- **Project Activities**: Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives.
- **Project Methods and Design**: A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Refer to the logic model and theory of change per instructions in #6 of this section.
- **Proposed Project Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events.
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program?
- **Project Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees, if applicable.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Describe how the RMP, detailed in a separate document per #6 below, will be utilized to monitor activities for timeliness, effectiveness, and adaptive management. Describe if and how the project will be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant.
- **Future Funding or Sustainability:** Applicant’s plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable.

### *4. Budget and Budget Justification Narrative (No page limit)*

After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to submit a detailed budget and a budget narrative that describes each of the budget expenses in detail. The budget submission must include a summary budget, detailed budget, and a budget narrative that describes each line-item in detail. All proposed costs should be reflected in the detailed budget tab and not require further breakdown in a separate tab, unless it is for a proposed subaward(s). A suggested detailed budget template is provided (Appendix 1). Please note that all budgets should be in U.S. dollars and rounded to the nearest dollar. See section *I. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.

### *5. Logic Model and Theory of Change (Three pages maximum)*

Applicants shall provide a Logic Model and Theory of Change statement to demonstrate how the proposed project (including activities, the project design, and the surrounding context) will achieve the stated objectives, with particular attention to how your approach will reach the target audience relevant to your specific context. A Theory of Change statement describes how and why a program is expected to achieve its stated outcomes using if-then-because language. A logic model is a tabular depiction of the theory of change that connects needs, inputs, outputs, outcomes, and objectives to the overall project goal. The Logic Model and Theory of Change statements can be generated using the template in **Appendix 2**. **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.

### ***6. Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) (No page limit)***

Applicants shall provide an illustrative RMP to describe how the proposed project will capture and measure data that demonstrates progress toward achieving the specific objectives of the proposed project. This includes any disaggregation of indicators relevant to the specific sub-populations you intend to serve. The RMP may also include project-specific sub-objectives. Recipients must also note any planned evaluations in the RMP. The RMP can be generated using the template in Appendix 3. **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. The RMP shall be submitted as a **separate document and has no page limit. NOTE: If successful, the applicant will be required to submit using the completed template.** Successful applicants will work with the designated NEA MEL and program team to finalize the RMP as part of the award negotiation process.

### 7. ***Security, Risk Mitigation and Contingency Planning Summary (Five pages maximum)***

Applicants must provide a Security, Risk Mitigation, & Contingency Plan demonstrating their approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks associated with project implementation. This section may not exceed five pages. At a minimum, this plan should address the following:

- Operating Environment Overview: In the context of the proposed programming, provide an overview of the current security, political, and institutional environment in the project locations in Tunisia, including an analysis of how local actors, armed groups, sanctioned entities, and governmental authorities may affect program activities.
- Risk Assessment: Describe how your organization will routinely identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks throughout the project period. The assessment must address context-specific operational, compliance, fiduciary, access, and security risks, including the risk of this project benefiting and/or the diversion of funds and/or assistance to sanctioned groups or Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) as applicable.
- Security Measures: Describe the security measures in place to protect project staff, and partners.
- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Strategies: Describe how your organization prevents, detects, reports, and responds to fraud, waste, and abuse within this program. Explain the safeguards and oversight mechanisms your organization uses to ensure funds and resources are used appropriately.
- (As applicable) Staff Screening: Detail the specific measures in place to screen beneficiaries, staff, partners, vendors, and other relevant parties against U.S. Government and United Nations lists of designated terrorist organizations and individuals.

Applicant Counterterrorism (CT) Namecheck Vetting as a Condition of Award

Applicants are advised that successful passing of CT namecheck vetting to mitigate the risk that funds and/or assistance may benefit terrorists, their members, and/ or their supporters may be a condition of this award. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass CT namecheck vetting, may be grounds for rejecting an application for award.

**8. *Attachments***

- One-page Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
- Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
- If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
- Official permission letters, if required for program activities.

## E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

### *1. Address to Request Application Package*

Application forms and other materials necessary to apply are available on the MyGrants and Embassy Tunis website.

### *2. Department of State Contacts*

All questions must be submitted in writing to NEA-Grants@state.gov. Please reference the Opportunity Number (DFOP0019505) in the email subject line.

Questions and Answers or FAQ can be submitted up to August 18, 2026. NEA/AC will create a document of submitted questions with answers and share via the MyGrants funding opportunity within one week after the FAQ submission deadline.

### *3. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)*

**Required Registrations**

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration in SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards. An applicant must maintain an active registration while it has a proposal under review by the Department and must continue to keep the registration active for the entire duration of the period of performance of any Federal award that results from this NOFO.

The 2 CFR 200 requires subrecipients to obtain a UEI. Please note the UEI for subrecipients is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a subrecipient.

***Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. <u>Please begin your registration as early as possible</u>.***

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI prior to registering in SAM.gov.

- **Organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove an NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain an NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:
https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx
NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):
NCAGE Code Request Tool (nato.int)

**Exemptions**
An exemption from the UEI and SAM.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis. See 2 CFR 25.110 for a full list of exemptions.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.

4. ***Submission Dates and Times***

Applications will be accepted on MyGrants under the announcement title Safeguarding U.S. Critical Minerals Supply Chains- Tunisia, funding opportunity number DFOP0019505.

Applications are due no later than *September 2, 2026, 11:59 PM ET.*

5. ***Funding Restrictions***

a. 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.

b. NEA/AC will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. Please refer to the link for Foreign Terrorist Organizations: https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/. Consistent with Department guidance on State Funding and the Risks of Terrorist Financing for all State Department funded programs and requirements, Department bureaus must assess the likelihood that the funds or Department funded activities, goods, services, training, expert advice or assistance, or other benefits to be provided, could inadvertently or incidentally benefit terrorist organizations or their members or supporters, and must put in place appropriate risk mitigation measures to mitigate such risk. In accordance with 14 FAM 247, and consistent with 2 FAM 050, Counterterrorism (CT) name-check vetting may be performed in countries and programs designated by the Department.

c. The Leahy Law prohibits Department foreign assistance funds from supporting foreign security force units if the Secretary of State has credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. Per 22 USC §2378d(a) (2017), "No assistance shall be furnished under [the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961] or the Arms Export Control Act [22 USC 2751 et seq.] to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights." Restrictions may apply to any proposed assistance to police or other law enforcement. Among these, pursuant to section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), no assistance provided through this funding opportunity may be furnished to any unit of the security forces of a foreign country when there is credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. In accordance with the requirements of section 620M of the FAA, also known as the Leahy law, project beneficiaries or participants from a foreign government's security forces may need to be vetted by the Department before the provision of any assistance. If a proposed grant or cooperative agreement will provide assistance to foreign security forces or personnel, compliance with the Leahy Law is required.

d. Funding Restrictions for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA): None of the funds awarded resulting from this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be made available for subawards, direct financial support, or otherwise used to provide any payment or transfer to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

e. Prohibition on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS): If your project involves the purchase or use of a UAS, see this link for requirements and information you must include in your application.

f. Certification Regarding Compliance with applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws: If the place of performance or delivery of any award made under this NOFO will be within the United States, applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award:
    - Its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code; and
    - It does not operate any programs promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws. A program promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion means a program whose purpose is to promote preferences based on race, color religion, sex, or national origins, such as in training or hiring.

g. Certification Regarding Compliance with 20 U.S.C. 1011f and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements. Applicants are advised that IHEs must certify the following at the time of award, and that this certification requirement must be included in any subaward agreements to IHEs:
    - Its compliance in all respects with section 101 1f of title 20, United States Code, and any other applicable foreign funding disclosure requirements is material for purposes of section 3729 of title 31, United States Code, and for receipt of appropriate Federal grant funds.

h. Certification of Trafficking in Persons Compliance and Compliance Plan: Applicants are advised that they will be required to certify the following at the time of award for awards where the estimated value of services to be performed outside the United States exceeds $500,000:
    - To the best of the recipient's knowledge, neither the recipient, nor any subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor of the recipient or any agent of the recipient or of such a subrecipient, contractor, or subcontractor, is engaged in any of the activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a);

- The recipient has implemented a Trafficking in Persons compliance plan to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175(a) and is compliant with this plan; and the compliance plan must follow the minimum requirements described in 2 CFR 175(b)(5); and
- That the recipient has and will implement procedures to prevent activities described in 2 CFR 175.105(a) and to monitor, detect, and terminate any subrecipient, contractor, subcontractor, or employee of the recipient engaging in these activities.

- Recipients do not need to submit a copy of the plan. However, they must provide it to the Grants Officer upon request, and as appropriate, must post the useful and relevant contents of the plan or related materials on their website and at the workplace. Recipients must re-certify on an annual basis for the entire award period of performance.

i. Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA): Applicants for foreign assistance awards should be aware of requirements in 2 CFR parts 602, 603, and 604.

These policies are referred to collectively as the Promoting Human Flourishing in Foreign Assistance (PHFFA) Policy.

602: The award term imposes certain abortion-related requirements on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, public international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

603: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to gender ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

604: The award term imposes certain requirements relating to discriminatory equity ideology on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United States NGOs, international organizations, foreign governments, and parastatals.

The Department recognizes there are costs associated with these policies. Potential one-time and recurring costs the Department identifies for recipients and grantees are for familiarization with the policy, development and delivery of organizational training and implementation guidance, routine compliance monitoring, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

### 6. *Other Submission Requirements*

All application materials must be submitted electronically through MyGrants. Applicants using MyGrants for the first time will need to register as a new organization. To register with MyGrants, navigate to https://MyGrants.servicenowservices.com and click "Create an Account" under "New User?" On the pop-up, select "Create a MyGrants Applicant/Grantee Account" and complete all required fields. Once finished, an email will be sent to verify the account creation followed by an Okta Account set-up, which will require the use of a smartphone for multi-factor authentication. If an applicant does not have accessibility to a smartphone during the time of account creation, please contact the helpdesk at +1 (888) 313-4567 (toll charges apply for international callers) or through the self-service online portal that can be accessed from **ILMS Self Service Portal**. Customer support is available 24/7.

## F. Application Review Information

### *1. Review Criteria*

Each application will be evaluated and rated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below.

**Strategic Alignment and Program Impact – 30 points:** Reviewers will assess how clearly and convincingly the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the program's goals and articulates a feasible strategy to achieve them. A strong application will present a coherent, realistic approach to facilitating U.S. private sector participation in Tunisia's Northwest Mineral Basin, reflect familiarity with U.S. critical minerals policy – including the November 2025 Critical Minerals List and relevant Executive Orders – and demonstrate the ability to navigate the regulatory, legal, and commercial landscape in North Africa. Preference will be given to applicants whose overall approach demonstrates how U.S. and U.S.-aligned companies position high-quality U.S. and U.S.-aligned investors to secure an equity stake in PhosCo Ltd phosphate development. The proposal must not include any activities contrary to standing Executive Orders. For a full list, see https://www.federalregister.gov/.

**Commercial Diplomacy and Export Generation – 25 points:** Reviewers will assess the applicant's methodology for translating technical standards alignment into tangible U.S. commercial outcomes. Preference will be given to applicants who present a feasible plan to embed U.S. recognized engineering and equipment standards into early project specifications, demonstrate a credible pathway to generating $15-25 million in U.S. equipment and machinery exports within the performance period, and outline a sound approach to supporting the negotiation of long-term, binding off-take agreements that secure reliable access to phosphate for U.S. industries.

**Private Capital Mobilization and Financial Viability – 20 points:** Reviewers will assess the credibility and actionability of the applicant's plan to mobilize substantial U.S. private capital. A strong application will identify realistic pathways to vet and convene qualified private equity firms, institutional financiers, and strategic investors; demonstrate existing networks or relationships relevant to this transaction; and present a clear strategy for coordinating with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and other development finance institutions to structure blended finance solutions and risk mitigation tools that accelerate deal closure.

**Institutional Capacity and Key Personnel – 15 points:** Reviewers will assess whether the applicant possesses the specialized expertise required to execute a complex, multi-stakeholder critical minerals initiative. A strong application will demonstrate prior institutional experience managing U.S. government-funded programs involving commercial diplomacy, international mining transactions, or project finance; present the qualifications and relevant track records of proposed key personnel, including the Project Director, Senior Financial Advisor, and Lead Technical Standards Expert; and show demonstrated capability to manage a Cooperative Agreement that requires substantial U.S. government involvement from NEA/AC and Embassy Tunis. If sub-awards are proposed, the applicant must demonstrate experience managing subawards and briefly describe each partner's role and relevant experience.

**Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainability – 10 points:** Reviewers will assess the applicant's ability to measure program success and sustain program outcomes beyond the period of performance. A strong application will include a monitoring and evaluation plan with clearly defined output and outcome indicators, measurable milestones tied to the program's three lines of effort, and a description of how and when results will be tracked and reported. The application should also articulate how program outcomes – including anchored private investment, embedded technical standards, and executed commercial agreements – will continue to generate impact after U.S. government funding concludes, without requiring additional USG support. Ideally, the applicant will have an embedded team member specialized in MEL who can offer regular project updates to the USG team and assist with adaptively managing the project in response to monitoring and evaluation findings.

**Budget Compliance – pass/fail:** Reviewers will assess each application's budget for compliance with the funding restrictions and allowable cost categories described in this NOFO. The budget justification must be detailed, with costs that are reasonable and directly tied to proposed program activities. Budgets that include unallowable costs – including direct equity investments or capital injections into any commercial entity – or that lack sufficient narrative justification will be deemed non-compliant and will not be recommended for funding.

### *2. Indirect Costs*

If two or more applications receive equivalent scores based on the evaluation criteria outlined in this NOFO, preference will be given to the applicant with the lower indirect cost rate, as consistent with Executive Order 14332, Section 4(b)(iii). This preference will only be applied as a tie-breaking mechanism and does not supersede the primary evaluation criteria.

### *3. Review and Selection Process*

Process Overview and Timing:

A review committee will evaluate all eligible applications. All applications submitted will be reviewed according to a multi-step review process, including:

- Minimum Responsiveness Review
- Merit Review Panel (MRP) Evaluation
- Internal clearance and selection decision-making

Application Review and Selection:

All minimally responsive applications will be reviewed against the criteria listed above by an MRP. Applications are reviewed individually against the criteria and not against competing applications. Additionally, the MRP will evaluate whether each application meets the solicitation request, U.S. foreign policy goals, and U.S. Embassy Tunis overall priority needs.

For a fair review, all panelists will review the first page of the application up to the page limit and no further. The MRP may provide feedback in the form of conditions and/or recommendations on applications to enhance proposed projects, which must be addressed by the organizations, as possible, in the award negotiation process. To ensure effective use of limited funds, conditions and recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

NEA/AC and U.S. Embassy Tunis reserve the right to make a final determination regarding all funding matters, pending funding availability.

The panel is responsible for reviewing each application and recommending one of the following actions:

1. Application is not recommended for continued review – The concept is not responsive to the NOFO, the concept does not meet overall priority needs or foreign policy objectives.
2. Application is recommended for funding

**General Guidance**

The Department of State is committed to conducting a fair, transparent, and efficient review process. At the same time, applicants should anticipate that the full process (from application submission to potential award) may take a few months. Organizations are encouraged to plan accordingly and monitor official communications for updates.

***4. Risk Review***

i. Risk factors – must include

Under the merit review as required by 2 CFR 200.206, prior to making a Federal Award the Department will review and consider the following risk factors:

a. Financial stability
b. Management systems and standards
c. History of performance
d. Audit reports and findings
e. Ability to effectively implement requirements

ii. Responsibility/Qualification Information in SAM.gov

The Federal awarding agency, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the U.S. government designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. 2313);

An applicant can review and comment on any information in the responsibility/qualification records available in SAM.gov;

Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Department will consider any comments by the applicant, along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.

## G. Award Notices

The award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and counter-signature. The recipient may only start incurring project expenses beginning on the start date shown on the award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

**Unsuccessful applicants:** Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by October 1, 2026 through MyGrants.

**Payment Method:**

Payments under this award will be made through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS).

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each PMS payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

Or

Recipients will be required to request payments by completing form SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer.

Recipients may not draw down funds without the affirmative authorization of the Department of State. In addition, recipients must submit, with each SF-270 payment request, a detailed explanation justifying the request.

## H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

### *1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements*

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 89 FR 30046 on April 22, 2024, particularly on:
    - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an impartial process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
    - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
    - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
    - Terminating agreements pursuant to the U.S. Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, including, to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340). For the avoidance of doubt, the Department has sole discretion over the determination that an award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities, and this provision permits awards to be terminated at the Department's convenience, including when it determines that the award no longer advances the national interest.

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT

- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION

- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)

- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY

- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS
- Recipients must comply with all applicable Executive Orders. A searchable list can be found in the Federal Register: https://www.federalregister.gov/

### 2. *Reporting*

**Reporting Requirements:** Reporting is critical to effective project 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 Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report via MyGrants. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance, indicate the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award's tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement, and contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

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

**Foreign Assistance Data Review:** As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

Applicants should be aware of the post-award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

### 3. **Branding and Marking**

The Department of State, its programs, and U.S. government funding and assistance should be easily identifiable to the Department's global audiences.

Recipients of federal assistance awards must follow the branding guidance published at Guidance for Contracts and Grants - U.S. Department of State Brand System. Branding policy exceptions are outlined in the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual 10 FAM 416, Policy Exceptions.

For more information, visit: https://brand.america.gov/

4. **Post-Award MEL Actions**
The successful applicant will be responsible for collecting data against the indicators in the RMP – which will be monitored throughout the period of performance of the award and reported on a quarterly basis to gauge necessary modifications to the project's design – and assessing the results of the project's success in meeting expected outcomes.

A MEL Plan outlining the data collection plan and timeline will be required 30 days after issuance of award for review, feedback and approval. The MEL Plan will detail data collection instruments, responsibilities, quality assurance, data management, protection, and security protocols, as well as approaches to identify and mitigate monitoring limitations and risks. It should also describe how monitoring and learning link to risk management and safeguarding plans. The plan should also include a summary of staffing and budget for MEL activities, describe how learning will be integrated into project management and decision-making, and, where applicable, outline evaluation plans.

Successful applicants will dedicate at least 3% of their total budget to monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Selected applicants are required to have project information available for up to three years after the project closeout for Embassy Tunis and NEA/AC team to evaluate long-term outcomes. Award recipients may be subject and expected to respond to ad hoc data calls related to the project.

## I. Other Information

**Guidelines for Budget Justification**

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least $10,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than $10,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor.  Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories.  For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes.  All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs:  These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating.  If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA.  Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

"Cost Sharing" refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy.  It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers' time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.