

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

FWS - International Conservation

<https://www.fws.gov/program/international-affairs>

Species Conservation Catalyst Fund

Fiscal Year: 2022

F22AS00253

Due Date for Applications: **05/09/2022**

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## A. Program Description

### **Authority:**

U. S. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-43)

15.679 - Combating Wildlife Trafficking

### **Assistance Listing Number:**

15.679

### **Background, Purpose and Program Requirements:**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) mission is to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The International Affairs Program delivers on this mission through its financial assistance programs by supporting strategic projects that deliver measurable conservation results for priority species and their habitats around the world.

Wildlife trafficking is estimated to be a multibillion-dollar business involving the unlawful harvest and trade of animals and plants (including timber). It has broad security implications, with corruption and sophisticated transnational crime syndicates at the center of some poaching and trafficking. Wildlife trafficking removes hundreds of thousands of animals and plants from wild populations each year and further increases the extinction risk for threatened and endangered species, which are often the target of wildlife crime because of their rarity and increased economic value.

### **Species Conservation Catalyst Fund**

The Service's Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program's Species Conservation Catalyst Fund (SCCF) is a new initiative that aims to reduce wildlife trafficking within complex social-ecological systems by supporting recipients to (1) provide a more empirical understanding of the contexts in which species are trafficked, and/or (2) develop, implement, and evaluate activities that reduce the threat of trafficking to species populations. The SCCF is designed to support capacity building among project partners to sustain conservation impact by attracting additional funding, attention, and other resources for the species. The first species supported through the SCCF are (1) saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica* and *Saiga borealis*) in Central Asia and Mongolia, and (2) cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) in the Horn of Africa.

This new fund is envisioned as a 'conservation accelerator' that will enable project teams to launch or grow projects, support opportunities for grantees to build skills relevant to their work, and develop networks of researchers and practitioners. Projects supported through the SCCF will help build a body of evidence to guide future conservation and counter-trafficking efforts. Funding levels and timelines will vary for each species based on conservation need, funding availability, and the receipt of suitable proposals, but in general for each species, approximately \$2-4 million is expected to be available and proposals will be invited through multiple funding opportunities over 3-5 years.

See below for more details on this funding opportunity. Please be sure to read this entire document and related attachments, as updated information has been added to Section D. Application and Submission Information and Section E. Criteria to clarify requirements, expectations, and funding criteria.

## **Funding Opportunities**

The purpose of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to support existing or launch new strategies to reduce poaching and trafficking of two identified taxa: (1) saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica* and *Saiga borealis*) in Central Asia and Mongolia, and (2) cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) in the Horn of Africa. This NOFO aligns with the missions of the Service and the Department of the Interior and reflects the priorities of the Biden-Harris Administration, including Administration policies articulated by Executive Orders 14008, 13985, and 14005.

### **1. SAIGA ANTELOPE**

The saiga (*Saiga tatarica* and *Saiga borealis*)\* is a Critically Endangered migratory antelope from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Russia, and Mongolia [1]. Many human-induced threats impact saiga populations, particularly consumption and trade. Locally, saiga is hunted for meat, hide, and sport, but it is most traded internationally for its horn [2,3]. The horn is used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) where it is often marketed as líng yáng, 羚羊 [4]. Poaching for saiga horn trade is a major threat to saiga survival [5].

International trade in saiga products is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In 1995 the species was added to Appendix II, and in 2019, its listing was amended to specify ‘zero quota’ for wild specimens traded for commercial purposes [3,6]. Additionally, a memorandum of understanding remains in place that was signed by all five extant saiga range states in 2005 [5]. All such states currently have domestic regulations prohibiting hunting, possession, and trade in saiga. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) also published a work program in 2021 outlining conservation priorities for the species [7]. Despite concerted conservation efforts at local, national, and international levels, saiga poaching and trafficking persist due to high consumer demand, the clandestine nature of the trafficking chain, challenges in coordinating range and distal consumer countries, and barriers to preventing poaching and trafficking at the local level.

This funding opportunity solicits projects to address poaching and trafficking of saiga with a focus on the desired outcomes outlined below.

Proposed projects should achieve one or more of the following desired outcomes:

#### **1. Saiga populations are protected and conserved in their native habitats.**

1.1 Empirical data on rates of poaching and/or underlying drivers of poacher behavior are collected, analyzed, and understood using robust, ethical, and culturally appropriate methods.

1.2 Local monitoring teams are strengthened or established to reduce poaching of saiga via evidence-based activities and relevant training and support.

1.3 Barriers to community buy-in are understood and strategically addressed to further local protection, monitoring, and conservation efforts.

## **2. Saiga horn stockpiles are quantified and managed transparently.**

2.1 Consumer countries are supported to understand (i) the distribution of saiga horn stockpiles (e.g., including when products are dispersed across non-government vendors' stock) and (ii) the quantity of saiga horn across these stockpiles.

2.2 Evidence-based strategies are implemented and maintained to support effective management of saiga horn stockpiles and reporting to CITES or CMS as appropriate.

## **3. Demand for saiga horn is understood and reduced across consumer countries.**

3.1 Empirical data on rates of consumption, underlying drivers of saiga horn consumer behavior, and/or on markets or policies affecting saiga horn consumption are collected, analyzed, and understood using robust, ethical, and culturally appropriate methods.

3.2 Strategic, evidence-based activities are implemented and evaluated to reduce consumer demand or product availability.

Project activities should take place in saiga range countries (including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia), and/or transit/consumer countries.

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\* CITES taxonomy recognizes two saiga species - *Saiga tatarica* and *Saiga borealis*. However, IUCN recognizes *Saiga tatarica* as the only species in the genus *Saiga* (with two recognized subspecies: *Saiga tatarica tatarica* and *Saiga tatarica mongolica*).

## **2. CHEETAH**

Historically widespread throughout non-forested areas of Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian Sub-continent, cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) are now found in only 9% of their historic range; 77% of their current distribution is outside protected areas and in human-dominated landscapes [8]. The cheetah is listed in Appendix I of both Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and is categorized as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species [9]. The global cheetah population is estimated at 7,100 individuals distributed between several highly fragmented populations, representing a 50% reduction in numbers from the 1960s [8]. Gaps in knowledge exist on the distribution and density of cheetah, particularly throughout their range in the Horn of Africa.

Cheetah population numbers have declined markedly as a result of persecution by humans primarily due to conflict with livestock and the illegal wildlife trade, as well as from changes in land management, a deterioration of their habitat, and declines in their prey population [10-13]. The illegal trade in cheetah is likely having the most dramatic impact on populations in eastern Africa and the Horn, from where an estimated 300 or more cheetahs are smuggled each year primarily to supply the pet trade for wealthy buyers in the Middle East [10,11]. Live cheetah are also traded for zoo and wildlife park attractions globally, but particularly in eastern and southeast

Asia [10]. The illicit trade represents an annual loss of over 4% of the total cheetah population. More than 4,000 wild cheetahs have been recorded in illegal trade incidents since 2010, 87% of which were live animals [11]. Shifts in modes of transport during the COVID-19 pandemic may have further escalated trade as evidenced by a 58% increase from the Horn into Yemen between March 2020 and February 2021 as compared to the year prior [10].

This funding opportunity solicits projects to address cheetah trafficking from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East with a focus on the desired outcomes outlined below.

Proposed projects should achieve one or more of the following desired outcomes:

**1. Population monitoring data for cheetah in the Horn of Africa are used to inform conservation action plans.**

- 1.1 Robust population/distribution data for cheetah are collected and used to inform anti-trafficking and conservation efforts.
- 1.2 Capacity is developed for national wildlife authorities or in-country research teams to sustain survey/monitoring work long-term.
- 1.3 National conservation action plans are developed and/or implemented in coordination with local and national authorities and in consultation with communities living with cheetah.

**2. The capacity of law enforcement and/or cheetah monitoring networks are strengthened in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.**

- 2.1 Law enforcement needs (e.g., resources, training, etc.) are identified and addressed to strengthen capacity to combat illegal trade in cheetah and other species.
- 2.2 Communication between national/regional/international law enforcement agencies is established and maintained.
- 2.3 Mechanisms for collecting and managing confiscation, arrests, prosecution, and sentencing data for cheetah and other wildlife are established, standardized, and maintained.
- 2.4 Local monitoring teams are established or strengthened to reduce poaching of cheetah via evidence-based activities and relevant training and support.

**3. Drivers for cheetah poaching in the Horn of Africa are understood and addressed.**

- 3.1 Baseline data on the social, cultural, economic, political, and situational factors that drive human-cheetah conflict are collected, analyzed, and understood using robust, ethical, and culturally appropriate social science methods.
- 3.2 Strategic, evidence-based activities, including those that address livelihoods, human wildlife conflict, and compliance with laws, are implemented and evaluated to reduce poaching of cheetah.

**4. Demand for cheetah in consumer countries is understood and addressed.**

4.1 Baseline data on rates of consumption and/or the social, cultural, economic, political, and situational factors that drive demand for cheetah are collected, analyzed, and understood using robust, ethical, and culturally appropriate social science methods.

4.2 Strategic partnerships and networks in demand countries are established for regional support on demand reduction activities.

4.3 Strategic, evidence-based activities are implemented and evaluated to reduce consumer demand or availability of wild cheetah.

Project activities should take place in cheetah range, transit, and/or consumer countries with a focus on those countries where illicit trade presents a high level of threat to cheetah populations.

## LITERATURE CITED

Links to the following documents are provided to applicants as reference only. The inclusion of these documents should not be viewed as an official endorsement of a particular approach or strategy in responding to this NOFO.

1. Mallon DP (2008). Saiga tatarica. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2008.
2. Kuhl A, Balinova N, Bykova E, Arylov YN, Esipov A, Lushchekina AA, Milner-Gulland EJ (2009). The role of saiga poaching in rural communities: Linkages between attitudes, socio-economic circumstances and behaviour. *Biological Conservation* 142:1442-1449.
3. CITES (2018). Saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*): Report of the Secretariat. Seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee. Rosa Khutor, Sochi (Russian Federation).
4. Doughty H, Veríssimo D, Tan RCQ, Lee JSH, Carrasco LR, Oliver K, Milner-Gulland EJ (2019) Saiga horn user characteristics, motivations, and purchasing behaviour in Singapore. *PLOS ONE* 14(9).
5. CMS (2017). Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope. Available from <http://www.cms.int/en/legalinstrument/saiga-antelope>.
6. CITES (2019). Saiga antelope (*Saiga spp.*): Summary Record of the Tenth Session for Committee. Eighteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Geneva (Switzerland).
7. CMS (2021). The Fourth Meeting of Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (*Saiga spp.*). Medium-term International Work Programme for the Saiga Antelope (2021- 2025). Online (Russian Federation).
8. Durant, S.M., Mitchell, N., Groom, R. et al. (2017). The global decline of cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* and what it means for conservation. *PNAS*. 114(3): 528-533.
9. Durant, S., Mitchell, N., Ipavec, A. & Groom, R. (2015). *Acinonyx jubatus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2015: e.T219A50649567. Accessed on 13 December 2021.

10. Tricorache, P. & Stiles, D. (2021). Live cheetahs. Global initiative against transnational organized crime. Black market brief. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/live-cheetahs/>
11. Triocarche, P., Yashphe, S., Marker, L. (2021). Global dataset for seized and non-intercepted illegal cheetah trade (*Acinonyx jubatus*) 2010 – 2019. Data in brief. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33644272>
12. Marker, L. (2019). Cheetahs Race for Survival: Ecology and Conservation, In M. Ferretti (Ed.). Wildlife Population Monitoring. IntechOpen, doi: 10.5772/intechopen.82255. Available from: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/67071>
13. Marker, L. (2018). Cheetahs: biology and conservation. Academic Press, London.
14. Gilson, L., Biggs, H., Smit, I.P.J., Virah-Sawmy, M., Rogers, K. (2019). Finding a Common Ground between Adaptive Management and Evidence-based Approaches to Biodiversity Conservation. Trends in Ecology & Evolution. 34(1): 31-44.

## **B. Federal Award Information**

### **B1. Total Funding**

#### **Estimated Total Funding**

\$3,500,000

### **B2. Expected Award Amount**

#### **Maximum Award**

\$1,000,000

#### **Minimum Award**

\$100,000

Proposals should be two to five-year projects with a range of \$50,000 to \$200,000 per year for no more than \$1,000,000 total over five years. The amount of funding requested must be clearly justified by the scope of the activities, anticipated results, and length of the project period. For multi-year projects, budgets and activities should be clearly articulated by year.

The Service may obligate all funds upfront, or the funds may be obligated in incremental funding year-by-year. Support for subsequent years will be contingent upon satisfactory project performance, reporting, financial management, and availability of program funds.

The Service may issue future and non-competitive renewal funding for the projects funded from this NOFO. Requests for renewal funding will be solicited by the Service and will be based on satisfactory project performance, reporting, financial management, and availability of program funds.

The Service reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and will determine the resulting level of funding for the award.



### **B3. Expected Award Funding and Anticipated Dates**

#### **Expected Award Funding**

\$100,000

#### **Expected Award Date**

September 23, 2022

The expected award funding will range from \$100,000 - \$1,000,000. The standard period of performance for projects is two to five years. The proposal, budget, and timetable should describe activities for the entire proposed period of performance. The period of performance for projects starts on the date the award is signed by the Service and may be one or more years duration. If the applicant wishes to request a shorter or longer period of performance, it should be noted and the proposal, budget, and timetable should describe activities for the entire proposed period of performance. For multi-year projects, budgets and activities should be clearly articulated by year. Support for subsequent years will be contingent upon satisfactory project performance, reporting, financial management, and availability of program funds. The Service reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted and will determine the resulting level of funding for the award.

### **B4. Number of Awards**

#### **Expected Number of Awards**

10

The total anticipated number of awards is six to ten. The Service expects three to five awards each for saiga antelope and cheetah.

### **B5. Type of Award**

#### **Funding Instrument Type**

G - Grant

CA - Cooperative Agreement

#### ***Grants***

A grant agreement is a legal instrument of financial assistance and is distinguished from a cooperative agreement in that it does not provide for substantial involvement from Service in carrying out the activities contemplated by the award.

#### ***Cooperative Agreements***

To submit a proposal for consideration as a cooperative agreement, provide a justification statement in the project proposal as to the type and duration of assistance requested by the Service and a rationale for why involvement of Service is needed to fulfill the project objectives. If the Service determines that its involvement could contribute significant value to a project, the Service Program Officer will approach the recipient following proposal review to discuss whether a cooperative agreement would be mutually beneficial. Under cooperative

agreements, substantial involvement by the Service should be expected and could include one or more of the following: participating and collaborating jointly with the recipient or other personnel in refining and carrying out the scope of work, including training recipient personnel or detailing Federal personnel to work on the project effort; reviewing and approving one stage of work before the next stage can begin; reviewing and approving, prior to recipient action, proposed modifications or sub-awards; helping select project staff or trainees; and directing or redirecting the work because of interrelationships with other projects.

## **C. Eligibility Information**

### **C1. Eligible Applicants**

#### **Eligible Applicants**

25 – Others (see text field entitled “Additional Information on Eligibility” for clarification)

#### **Additional Information on Eligibility**

Applicants can be individuals, multi-national secretariats, foreign, national, and local government agencies, non-profit non-governmental organizations, for-profit organizations, and public and private institutions of higher education.

### **C2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

#### **Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement**

No

#### **Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement**

Cost sharing is the portion of program costs not borne by the Service. Under this program, cost share is not required but may be committed voluntarily. Voluntary Committed Cost Share (See [2 CFR 200.1](#)) is not an eligibility factor, and contributions will not result in a more favorable competitive ranking. Cost share should be necessary and reasonable to accomplish project objectives, and allowable in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles](#). Applicants may consider all types of cost sharing, including in-kind and public-private partnerships. Examples include the use of office space owned by other entities; donated or borrowed supplies and equipment; (non-federal) sponsored travel costs; waived indirect costs; and program activities, translations, or consultations conducted by qualified volunteers. Assign a monetary value in U.S. dollars to each in-kind contribution. The values of offered cost-share should be included in the detailed budget and explanations of contributions should be included in the Budget Narrative whether cash or in-kind.

If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify other funding sources and the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources. In addition, it is recommended that the Budget Narrative address the overall cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including leveraging institutional or other resources.

Funds provided by another U.S. Federal Government agency or another Service award cannot be reported as cost share but contributions should be noted and explained in detail in the Budget Narrative.

If cost share is included in the budget, written records must be maintained to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit.

### C3. Other

#### **Foreign Entities or Projects:**

**State Sponsors of Terrorism:** This program will not fund projects in [countries determined by the U.S. Department of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism](#) and therefore are subject to sanctions restricting receipt of U.S. foreign assistance and other financial transactions.

**Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions:** This program will not fund projects in countries subject to [comprehensive sanction programs administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Control](#) without proper licenses.

**In-Country Licenses, Permits, or Approvals:** Entities conducting activities outside the U.S. are responsible for coordinating with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities as necessary to obtain all required licenses, permits, or approvals before undertaking project activities. The Service does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, or procedures of the foreign country in which they are conducting work.

#### **Excluded Parties:**

The DOI conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The DOI cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

### D. Application and Submission Information

#### **D1. Address to Request Application Package**

This funding opportunity contains all information, attachments, and links for all forms needed to apply. To request paper copies of materials, please contact [cwt@fws.gov](mailto:cwt@fws.gov).

#### **Program Website Link**

<https://www.fws.gov/program/international-affairs>

#### **D2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

##### **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance**

All applicants must submit the Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. This form is available with the announcement on Grants.gov and in GrantSolutions. The form must be complete and signed by an Authorized Representative. For all applicants except private citizens, the Authorized Representative's signature on a standard application form submitted to the Service represents their certification that the entity's financial management system meets [2 CFR](#)

[§200.302](#) financial management requirements. The non-Federal entity's financial management system must be sufficient to:

1. Permit the preparation of required reports;
2. Trace funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that the entity has used such funds per Federal statutes, regulations, and terms and conditions of the Federal award;
3. Provide for the requirements in [2 CFR §200.302\(b\)](#); and
4. Comply with [§200.334](#) Retention requirements for records, [§200.335](#) Requests for transfer of records, [§200.336](#) Methods for collection, transmission, and storage of information, and [§200.337](#) Access to records.

When completing the SF-424 Application form, enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in Box 18a, Estimated Federal Funding. Include any other Federal sources of funding in Box 18e. Estimated Other Funding and identify any such sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below). For individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), do NOT include your Social Security Number on this or any other document to be submitted with your application! When completing the SF-424 Application form, individuals must enter in Box 8b. Employee/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN) the substitute number "444-44-4444" and in Box 8c. For organizational DUNS substitute number "123456789". For UEI substitute the number "000123456789".

#### **Project Abstract Summary (OMB Number 4040-0019)**

Applicants must complete and submit the Project Abstract Summary form. The Project Abstract Summary form must provide a brief award description. The description must be in plain language that the public can understand without viewing the full application proposal. It should include a brief, simple description of the project purpose, activities to be performed, deliverables and expected outcomes, intended beneficiaries, and subrecipient activities, if known at the time of submission.

Do not include personally identifiable, sensitive, or proprietary information in the award description as this is available to the public. Use only English characters, numbers, punctuation, and standard symbols. Use of non-English, non-standard characters (also referred to as special or extended ASCII characters) will result in the award description failing to be reported correctly to USASpending.gov. Award descriptions are limited to 4,000 characters or less. Applicants should check the length of the award description and proofread for proper grammar and spelling.

For applicants applying through Grants.gov: Applicants must download and complete the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form from the full text announcement. To submit the Grants.gov "Project Abstract Summary" form with the application, applicants must add the form as an attachment to the Grants.gov "Attachments" form that is included in the application package.

For applicants applying through GrantSolutions-Grants Management Module (GS-GMM): Applicants must enter the information in the Project Abstract Summary screen. Do not upload a document in place of entering the information directly into GS-GMM Project Abstract Screen.

## **Project Narrative**

Project narratives should be ten pages or fewer and pages should be numbered. Project figures, data tables, maps, curriculum vitae, additional detailed information, financial materials and required standard forms do not count toward the ten-page limit.

Proposed projects are expected to reflect systematic strategic planning, be context-specific, and take an adaptive management (AM) approach. Proposals must show relevant best-practices for research and implementation methods.

**Detailed guidance and examples for completing the Project Narrative are provided in the attachment titled *PROJECT NARRATIVE FULL TEXT SCCF NOFO F22AS00253*.**

The following sections must be included in your Project Narrative:

1. Project Title
2. Statement of Need
3. Project Goal, Objectives, Activities, and Methods
4. Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Development
5. Project Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptation
6. Project Learning and Sharing
7. Ethics Approval
8. Project Timetable
9. Description of Entities Undertaking the Project
10. Sustainability
11. Literature Cited (include as an addendum)
12. Project Location
13. Government Letter of Endorsement

## **SF-424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**

Applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A Budget Information form for Non-Construction Programs or Projects. All required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov or in GrantSolutions. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 200. Applicants must show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In “Section A – Budget Summary” on the SF-424A form enter the funding requested from this Federal program in the first row. Identify any other Federal funding sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below).

## **SF-424C, Budget Information for Construction Program**

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424C Budget Information form for Construction Programs or Projects. All required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov and in GrantSolutions. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200. Applicants must show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. Identify any other Federal funding sources and amounts in the required Budget Narrative (see below).

## **Budget Narrative**

Applicants must include a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the SF-424 Budget Information, “Object Class

Category” totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe any proposed [items of cost that require prior approval](#) under the [Federal award cost principles](#), including any anticipated subawarding, transferring, or contracting out of any work under the award. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, identify the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See [2 CFR §200.306](#) for more information.

Although not a requirement, the Service has funding available to support the following types of activities:

- Open-access publication charges, for institutions/organizations that cannot cover costs otherwise.
- Skills and professional development training. Applicants are encouraged budget up to \$20,000 per year for skills and professional development training opportunities for project staff. If specific sessions are not named, we request applicants to identify the general skill(s) they aim to develop. We encourage applicants to consider building skills in fundraising, strategic planning, adaptive management, social and behavioral science research and application, and other relevant topics consistent with the approach of the SCCF and that will help sustain the project goals and team growth in the long-term.
- Costs associated with convening and coordinating partners and any other collaborative processes such as meetings (space, lodging, travel), web and print communications, stakeholder outreach activities, strategic planning, and conservation prioritization.
- Dedicated staffing or other activities (e.g., workshops, meetings) to strengthen conservation outcomes and enable the work to continue beyond the period of performance, such as monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, communications and storytelling, and strategic planning and adaptive management.

**Applicants must include an itemized Budget Table following the example shown in the attachment titled *BUDGET TABLE EXAMPLE NOFO F22AS00253*.**

Every budget line included in the Budget Table should be explained in the Budget Narrative. If your Budget Table requires more than one page, verify that the column headings and row titles appear on all pages.

The itemized budget should provide enough information for reviewers to quickly understand the cost basis and calculation. For example, a \$3,300 charge for lodging should include the formula for how the cost was calculated: Lodging for 20 nights x 11 people x \$15/night = \$3,300. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time.

For any salaries, staff time, or contractors for which Service funds are requested, the person should be identified, and their qualifications described in the Project Details (Description of

Entities Undertaking the Project). For any training, a description of the training should be included in the Methods section. For any meetings, a description of participants, a draft agenda, and desired outputs should be provided.

Expenses listed as “Miscellaneous” or “etc.” are unallowable. Unless conditions listed under [200.433 Contingency provisions](#) are applicable, “contingencies” are unallowable. Expenses listed as “Other” must be clearly identified and described in the Budget Narrative. Applicants should be aware of and comply with requirements of [200.216 Prohibition on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment](#).

All budget items listed (as shown in the example table) will compose the direct costs. Indirect cost rate (e.g., for organizational overhead) depends on whether the submitting organization has, or plans to apply for, a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). Without a NICRA the organization can claim up to a 10% de minimis rate. To calculate indirect costs with de minimis, you must first calculate modified total direct costs (MTDC) and then multiply that by 10%. For example, if a project proposed \$450,000 in direct costs, the MTDC would be the total remaining after items listed as ‘excluded’ are subtracted. If \$2,000 was subtracted for workshop participant costs and \$40,000 for student tuition, the MTDC would be \$408,000. The indirect costs would then be \$408,000 multiplied by 10%, i.e. \$40,800. And the total award amount would then be \$490,800.

*Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC):* all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

*Identify any cash or in-kind contributions* that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See 2 CFR 200.306 “Cost sharing or matching” for more information.

*Equipment:* Equipment is defined as an item with a per-unit cost of \$5,000 or more and a service life of more than one year. If the item meets these criteria, all federal procurement policies and procedures must be followed. If an item does not meet these criteria, it should be considered a supply and listed under cost category E. Provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental in the budget narrative. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. For expensive items or large single purchases, provide detailed technical specifications or a pro forma invoice.

*Supplies:* List items separately using unit costs and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the award for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: \$50/month x 50% = \$25/month x 12 months).

*Participant support costs:* Direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances, and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not



employees) in connection with conferences, or training projects.

*Contractual:*

1. Subawards: For each subaward, provide a detailed line-item breakdown explaining specific services in a separate tab in the Budget Table and Narrative. Subaward budgets should include the same level of detail for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, and indirect costs required of the direct applicant. If indirect costs are charged on a subaward budget, include the subrecipient's NICRA. A subaward means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

2. Consultant Fees: For example, lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for outside speakers or independent evaluators: list number of people and rates per day (e.g., 2 x \$150/day x 2 days). Consultant/outside expert fees/honoraria should be consistent with the level of experience and based on a fair market value.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.112](#), applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

a. *Applicability.*

1. This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
2. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in [2 CFR§200.318](#) apply.

b. *Notification.*

1. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass- through entity in accordance with [2 CFR §200.112](#).
2. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

c. *Restrictions on lobbying.* Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to [43 CFR §18](#) and [31 USC §1352](#).



- d. *Review procedures.* The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also [2 CFR §180](#)).

### **Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

All U.S. states, local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#), in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A](#).

### **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities"](#) form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

### **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel". If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this

proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regard to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with “We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing.”

### **D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

#### **Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration:**

This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) which will replace Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Applicants registering in SAM.gov prior to April 2022 may still be required to obtain a DUNS number prior to completing the registration process within SAM.gov. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). See the “Submission Requirements” section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration. **There is no cost to register with Dun & Bradstreet or SAM.gov.** There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with Dun & Bradstreet and SAM.gov; **please be aware you can register and request help for free.**

#### **Obtain a DUNS Number**

In April 2022, the Federal Government will stop requiring DUNS numbers. At that point, entities doing business with the government will use the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) created in SAM.gov in place of a DUNS number. A UEI will be assigned to entities upon registering with SAM.

If an entity is applying for federal financial assistance prior to April 2022, a DUNS number may still be required as part of the SAM registration process. A DUNS Number can be requested through the Dun & Bradstreet website. The official website address is <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. For technical difficulties, go to [www.dnb.com/govtduns](http://www.dnb.com/govtduns). Please ensure that you are able to receive emails from [SAMHelp@dnb.com](mailto:SAMHelp@dnb.com). The Grants.gov “Obtain a DUNS Number” webpage also provides detailed instructions. Once assigned a DUNS number, your organization must maintain up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must enter their DUNS number in the “Organizational DUNS” field on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form (version 3).

## **Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)**

Applicants can register on the [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) website. The “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov “[Register with SAM](#)” page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity’s IRS information. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

## **D4. Submission Dates and Times**

### **Due Date for Applications**

05/09/2022

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

### **Application Due Date Explanation**

This opportunity is open from 10 March, 2022 to 09 May, 2022. Electronically submitted applications may be submitted after 11 April, 2022 until 11:59 PM EDT, Monday 09 May, 2022.

**Late applications will not be accepted.** Applications must be submitted in English. A confirmation email containing an assigned application number beginning with "FWS-" will be sent to applicants upon submission. If you do not receive this email within five days of the opportunity closing date, please contact [cwt@fws.gov](mailto:cwt@fws.gov). The only exception is the government letter of endorsement which must be received before an award is issued. Duplicate applications will be discarded.

## **D5. Intergovernmental Review**

An intergovernmental review may be required for applications submissions from a U.S. state or local government prior to submission. Applicants must contact their State’s Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with the state’s process under [Executive Order 12372](#). The State Single Point of Contact list is available on the [OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website](#).

## **D6. Funding Restrictions**

### **Indirect Costs: Individuals**

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, you must not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

### **Indirect Costs: Organizations**

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your

organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior (DOI) is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center (IBC) will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the IBC by phone 916-930-3803 or using the [IBC Email Submission Form](#). See the [IBC Website](#) for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients may not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

**Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted by Organization:**

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding** must include the following statement in their application and attach a copy of their most recently negotiated rate agreement:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. Attached is a copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement/certification.

**U.S. state or local government entities receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding** must include the applicable statement from this list:

- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR 200, Appendix VII. Our current indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award].
- We are a U.S. state or local government entity receiving \$35 million or less in direct Federal funding. We have not prepared an indirect cost rate proposal and documentation per 2 CFR §200, Appendix VII and elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until we choose to establish a rate per 2 CFR §200. We understand we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

**All other organizations** must include the applicable statement from this list and any related documentation in their application. Please note, an organization with a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may not elect to charge the 10% de minimis rate of Modified Total Direct Costs during the period covered by their current negotiated rate.

- We are an organization with a current negotiated indirect cost rate. In the event we receive an award, we will charge indirect costs per our current negotiated rate agreement. Attached is a copy of our current rate agreement.

- We are an organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate that has expired. Attached is copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that has never negotiated an indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate. In the event an award is made, we elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until such time as we negotiate a different rate with our cognizant agency. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if during the award period we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs to the award. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
- We are an organization submitting a [insert either “Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program” or “Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network”] project proposal, which has an indirect cost rate cap of [insert rate; CRU is currently 15%; CESU is currently 17.5%]. In the event we receive an award, we understand that if we have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate we must charge the program’s capped indirect cost rate to the same base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, per 2 CFR §1402.414. If we do not have current negotiated (including provisional) rate, we understand we must charge the capped indirect cost rate against Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR §200.1.
- We are an organization that will charge all costs directly.

The Service will not fund:

- the purchase of firearms or ammunition;
- gathering information by persons who conceal their true identity;
- buying or purchasing of intelligence, evidence or information or paying informants;
- law enforcement operations that, to arrest suspects, prompt them to carry out illegal activities (entrapment); and
- any activity that would circumvent sanctions, laws, or regulations of either the U.S. or the country of the proposed activity.

The following cost elements **are not allowable** under this program:

- Publication of materials for distribution within the United States that are not related to the program

- Pre-award Costs - Expenses incurred before the specified dates of award period of performance (unless prior written approval is received.)
- Programs designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction
- Entertainment and/or alcoholic beverages
- Purchase of Land
- Direct support or the appearance of direct support for individual or single-party electoral campaigns
- Duplication of services immediately available through municipal, provincial, or national government

## **D7. Other Submission Requirements**

The Service requests applicants to apply electronically using GrantSolutions. To apply electronically the Applicant Organization and Organization Officials must be established in GrantSolutions. If your Organization and/or Organization Officials do not currently exist in GrantSolutions follow the instructions below.

### New Organization Request

Send an email requesting a new organization to be with the following information to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov):

- Organization/Individual Name
- POC first and last name
- POC email
- POC phone number
- Organization Type
- DUNS # (unless exempt)
- EIN (Applicants that are INDIVIDUALS SHOULD NOT include their social security number)
- Address

If your Organization is new or you do not have the appropriate officials in GrantSolutions you must also establish an individual account for each of the Organization Officials and assign the appropriate role. At a minimum the Authorizing Official and Principal Investigator/Program Director roles must be assigned. Individual Organization Official accounts may be requested by completing the [Recipient User Account Request Form](#) and emailing the completed form to at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov).

If your organization already exists in GrantSolutions please verify that the correct Organization Officials have an individual GrantSolutions account.

If your Organization and Organization Officials already exists in GrantSolutions, please login using your existing username and password. If you do not remember your account information, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at (866) 577-0771 or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov)

For more information on how to apply please see [GrantSolutions Help](#) for instructions and videos.

Please contact GrantSolutions Help Desk if you have any questions regarding your account or GrantSolution issues at (866) 577-0771 or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov)

If you wish to seek a waiver from GrantSolutions.gov, you must demonstrate that you have attempted to resolve issues you experienced. This may include computer screen shots, email correspondence or other information obtained at the time of submission, before the stated deadline, that would support a waiver. Please send your waiver request to **DIC [GRANTS@fws.gov](mailto:GRANTS@fws.gov)**.

## **E. Application Review Information**

### **E1. Criteria**

The minimum programmatic requirements for this funding opportunity are that (1) the proposal follows basic proposal content and formatting requirements as described in D2. Content and Form of Application Submission, and (2) the proposal addresses one of the program's two Funding Priorities, as described in A. Program Description. Proposed project goals should specify clearly in the body of the proposal which desired outcome(s) will be achieved by the project. Proposals that do not address the desired outcomes described above will not move forward in the review process. Proposals that meet minimum programmatic requirements will be evaluated based on the criteria below.

Priority will be given to projects that address the threat of wildlife trafficking for saiga and cheetah through sound, realistic, and evidence-based project designs. Project proposals that receive higher scores in the merit reviews will:

- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the social-ecological context of wildlife trafficking in the project system, including identifying the social, cultural, economic, and political factors driving the issue, and identifying where and how in this context the project will engage.
- Be context specific, reflect a thoughtful and adaptive conservation strategy grounded in best available evidence, and demonstrate how and why the proposed activities are expected to work (e.g., through the development/presentation of a theory of change or proven prior success of this or similar work). If there is a lack of evidence, the proposal should provide a strong rationale for the proposed approach, how the project will be piloted, and how the project ultimately will build evidence.
- Demonstrate capacity to implement the proposed project, such as key personnel with system-specific expertise, including (but not limited to) knowledge and prior experience relevant to the country, species, proposed activities, and/or relevant research methods, theory, and evidence.
- Demonstrate robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, and invest in contributing to the evidence base for conservation.



- Establish new or maintain existing partnerships, networks, or communities of practice to support collaboration, leveraging resources, and shared learning to improve both short- and long-term, local and global conservation goals.
- Include substantial engagement with key stakeholders such as host country governments, local civil society organizations, and impacted communities.
- Describe a vision for project sustainability including (but not limited to), whether projects (1) develop and foster lasting in-country capacity; and/or (2) develop communications strategies to generate additional support and attention to counter trafficking of the target species.

Positive past performance with other Service awards (if applicable) is also a primary review criterion. Reviewers may consider the following sub-factors to break ties and further distinguish between applications with equivalent scores: financial need; geographical and project diversity in the Service portfolio; and proportion of proposal budget dedicated to administration, salaries, and travel.

## **E2. Review and Selection Process**

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the FWS may choose not to fund the selected project.

The program may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Bureau is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the program will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in [2 CFR §200.206](#). Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the Bureau is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Bureau will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Bureau uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in [2 CFR §200.208](#) should be applied to the award.

The Service's International Affairs program evaluates proposals by scoring how well each proposal addresses the program priorities and the requested elements listed in the E1. Criteria section above. Programs MUST ensure that: (1) applications are reviewed and evaluated by qualified reviewers; (2) applications are scored and selected based on announced criteria; (3) consideration is given to applicant risk and past performance; (4) competitive applications are ranked; and (5) funding determinations are made. Programs must establish an evaluation plan



comprised of five basic elements: (1) merit review factors and subfactors; (2) a rating system for competitive applications (e.g., adjectival, color coding, numerical, or ordinal); (3) evaluation standards or descriptions which explain the basis for assignment of the various rating system grades/scores; (4) program policy factors; and (5) the basis for selection.

The following describes the review and selection process:

**Recruitment of merit review panel:** Prior to convening a merit review panel, a Service Program Officer will identify, recruit, and receive approval for each reviewer on the merit review panel. A minimum of five U.S. Government employees are required for each panel: at least three merit reviewers, one panel chair, and one recorder. Only permanent U.S. Government staff may score proposals. Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the program office Point of Contact the “Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification” form. By signing this form, the reviewer agrees to recuse themselves from scoring or commenting on proposals for which they have a conflict of interest or appearance thereof. This form must be signed and filed before a reviewer can participate in the merit review panel. For a copy of this form, contact the Service Point of Contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

**Initial Program Officer review for minimum programmatic requirements:** After submission, each proposal will be reviewed by the relevant Program Officer to ensure that the proposal meets minimum programmatic requirements before advancing to the merit review. The minimum programmatic requirements are listed in Section E1. Criteria. The Program Officer will share with the merit review panel any proposals that did not meet minimum programmatic requirements and the reasons why, and the panel will have an opportunity to discuss.

**Merit review to evaluate and select proposals for funding:** Applications that meet minimum programmatic requirements will then be reviewed by the approved merit review panel with specific subject area and/or regional expertise. The Service may also solicit technical advice from qualified U.S. Government experts to provide additional information during the panel review and/or discuss your proposal with known past and present partners who are relevant technical experts to verify project feasibility and to encourage coordination and collaboration among projects on the ground.

After reading proposals, reviewers will individually assign a 1-3 score to each application, based on the degree to which the application meets the criteria described in Section E1. Criteria. The scoring system is as follows:

- Category 1: Excellent, highest priority to fund: Excellent proposal with no issues or minor revisions needed. Important, critical, compelling, high-priority project and proposal meets all program requirements. Minor revisions are allowed before funding is finalized.
- Category 2: Acceptable, lower priority to fund: Acceptable to fund if additional funds become available. Proposal meets program requirements but is not the highest conservation priority. Concerns and conditions for the proposal should be described in detail by the reviewers.

- Category 3: Do not fund. Reject proposal. Project does not address a priority or is unlikely to achieve the desired impact, and/or proposal has other fundamental issues or problems that make it unsuitable for this program.

Each review panel submits their individual scores to the panel chair prior to the review. The panel chair will organize the scores to identify trends and areas of alignment amongst the reviewers. These trends and areas of alignment may be used to facilitate the panel discussion (i.e., the highest ranked proposals may get discussed first). During the review, the panel will briefly discuss each proposal and agree on a consensus score using the same 1-3 scoring system above. The panel recorder will document any pertinent discussion items that demonstrate how a panel reached consensus to provide sufficient support for the consensus score. Ultimately, it is the consensus score of the review panel that will determine whether the proposal is recommended for award. The Service will attempt to fund all projects in the highest ranked category (Category 1). If available funding is insufficient to fund them all, proposals within the highest ranked category will be further ranked, then funded in order of that ranking.

**Proposal revisions:** Following review, applicants whose proposals scored a Category 1 or a Category 2 in merit review may be asked to provide revisions to the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Applicants whose project is recommended for funding may be asked to demonstrate financial capabilities to manage Federal funds in accordance with standards set in [2 CFR 200.302 Financial management](#).

**Communication of funding decisions:** Once proposals have been selected and approved for funding, the Program Officer will reach out to applicants by email or via GrantSolutions to inform the applicant whether the proposal is recommended and approved for funding. Successful applicants will receive a notice as described below in F1. Federal Award Notice. If the proposal was not recommended for funding, the applicant can request feedback (via the Program Officer) from the merit review panel. Please note that while the time that it takes to review the proposals and communicate decisions is dependent on the number of proposals received, unsuccessful applicants will receive notice within 180 days, as indicated below.

### **E3. CFR – Regulatory Information**

See the [Service's General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

### **E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

Awards under this program are expected to be announced before September 30, 2022

## **F. Federal Award Administration Information**

### **F1. Federal Award Notices**

Successful applicants will receive a written Notice of Award document. Notices of Award are issued electronically by GrantSolutions via email. Successful applicants may also receive an additional email from the awarding program email address. Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by email, within 180 days of the final review decision. Applicants are not authorized to incur pre-award costs without prior written approval. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of award are incurred at the applicant's risk. The Service is not required to reimburse such costs if for any reason the applicant does not receive a Federal award or if the Federal award is less than anticipated and inadequate to cover such costs.

### **F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

See the [DOI Standard Terms and Conditions](#) for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

See the [Service's General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards.

As required by Section 70914 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), [P.L. 117-58](#), on or after May 14, 2022, none of the funds under a federal award that are part of a Federal financial assistance program for infrastructure may be obligated for a project unless all of the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. The requirements of this section must be included in all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products under this program.

#### **Data Availability**

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.315](#):

- a. All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.
- b. The Federal Government has the right to:
  1. Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and
  2. Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports,

conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

### **F3. Reporting**

#### **Financial Reports**

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

#### **Performance Reports**

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals was not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. **Final** reports are due no later than 120 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim performance** reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

#### **Significant Development Reports**

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

#### **Real Property Reports**

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required standard form or data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.

#### **Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may

have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award.

Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies for noncompliance described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), including termination of the award.

### **Other Mandatory Disclosures**

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies for noncompliance described in [2 CFR §200.339](#), including suspension or debarment.

### **Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance**

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the [System for Award Management](#) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System](#)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).

## **G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

### **G1. Program Technical Contact**

For programmatic technical assistance, contact:

First and Last Name:

For saiga: Tatiana Hendrix, Program Officer; for cheetah Yula Kapetanacos, Program Officer

Telephone:

+1 703 358 2655

Email:

cwt@fws.gov

## **G2. Program Administration**

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:

For saiga: Tatiana Hendrix, Program Officer; for cheetah Yula Kapetanacos, Program Officer;

Telephone:

+1 703 358 2655

Email:

[cwt@fws.gov](mailto:cwt@fws.gov)

## **G3. Application System Technical Support**

For **Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Numeric Input Field: 1-800-518-4726

[Support@grants.gov](mailto:Support@grants.gov)

For **GrantSolutions technical registration, submission, and other assistance contact:**

GrantSolutions Customer Support

1-866-577-0771

[Help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:Help@grantsolutions.gov)

## **H. Other Information**

### **Payments**

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

### **PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:**

#### **OMB Control Number: 1018-0100**

Per the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA; 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) collects information in accordance with program authorizing legislation to conduct a review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Privacy Act Statement:** This information collection is authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5701 et seq. The information provided will be used to administer all Service financial assistance programs and activities including to: (1) determine eligibility under the authorizing legislation and applicable program regulations; (2) determine allowability of major cost items under the Cost Principles at 2 CFR 200; (3) select those projects that will provide the highest return on the Federal investment; and (4) assist in compliance with laws, as applicable, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. This information may be shared in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the routine uses listed in INTERIOR/DOI-89, Grants and Cooperative Agreements: FBMS - 73 FR 43775 (July 28, 2008). Furnishing this information is voluntary; however, failure to provide all requested information may prevent the Service from awarding funds.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual times for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. Direct comments regarding the burden estimates or any other aspect of the specific forms to the Service Information Clearance Officer, USFWS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W), Falls Church, VA 22041-3803, or by email to Info [\\_Coll@fws.gov](mailto:Coll@fws.gov).