

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

FWS - International Conservation

<https://www.fws.gov/program/mentor-fellowship>

F24AS00181 - MENTOR – HAWLT (Holistically Addressing WildLife Trafficking)

Fiscal Year: 2024

F24AS00181

**Due Date for Applications: 03/04/2024**

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## **A. Program Description**

### **A1. Authority**

Endangered Species Act—International cooperation (16 U.S.C. §1537)

Applications awarded under this announcement will be funded through a Participating Agency Program Agreement (PAPA) between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI). The Activity Title of the Agreement is Critical Capacity Partnership signed on August 17, 2021. Section 632(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), 22 U.S.C section 2392 (b).

### **A2. Assistance Listing Number**

15.679

### **A3. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service or USFWS) 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 Service’s International Affairs Program delivers on this mission through its financial and technical assistance programs by supporting strategic projects that deliver measurable conservation results for priority species and their habitats around the world.

A key priority of the International Affairs Program is to work with others to holistically address and, in turn, halt the trafficking of wildlife, a critical conservation concern and a threat to global security. Wildlife trafficking is estimated to be a multi billion-dollar business involving the unlawful harvest and trade of animals and plants. It has broad security implications, with corruption and sophisticated transnational crime syndicates at the center of many trafficking chains. 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 limited supply and increased economic value. Additionally, trafficking of wildlife can place stressed animals in unsanitary conditions, compromising their welfare and increasing the risks of disease spillover and spread.

The Service’s Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program is focused on the need for greater capacity to address this complex threat to wildlife and people. As such, this new funding opportunity, part of the Service’s fellowship program, Mentoring ENvironmental Training in Outreach and Resources conservation (MENTOR), seeks a partner to co-design the inaugural MENTOR-HAWLT (Holistically Addressing WildLife Trafficking) program, based in Kenya. The Service has a strong record of working closely with national governments, U.S. agencies, and a range of other partners to ensure a strategic, evidence-based approach to capacity development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This funding opportunity aligns with the

Service's mission, including the commitment to international cooperation and the conservation of endangered or threatened species in foreign countries as authorized and encouraged by the Endangered Species Act.

### ***USFWS MENTOR Model Description***

Since 2008, the Service has supported multi-year cooperative agreements to develop the capacity of conservationists through the series of USFWS [MENTOR](#) Fellowship programs (See Abu-Bakarr et al. 2022). These programs establish transdisciplinary teams of emerging conservation leaders, representing multiple disciplines and sectors, who work together to problem-solve on threats to wildlife, such as the unsustainable commercial wild meat trade and uncontrolled extractive industry exploitation, as well as species conservation focusing on pangolins, manatees, chimpanzees, and fish. For a given MENTOR program, a lead recipient organization works with the Service to co-design the program. Teams of eight to ten MENTOR Fellows are identified and assembled to participate in rigorous academic and field-based training that emphasizes technical conservation skills, as well as team building, conflict management, environmental governance, outreach, and leadership. Training occurs through a combination of virtual and in-person learning. Fellows learn adaptive management using the [Conservation Standards](#) to design pilot conservation projects, which they then work as a team to implement projects over an 8-12 month period. Fellows work with mentors who help them to expand critical thinking and problem-solving skills. At the end of the 18-month program, Fellows earn a post-graduate certificate, diploma, or degree from a national or regional university or college.

As the program has grown, international MENTOR Forums have served an important role of bringing together former Fellows from the series of MENTOR programs to network and focus on conservation leadership. The first MENTOR Forum, held in 2020 in Sierra Leone, included over 30 participants from the seven MENTOR programs. The Forum sought to share and evaluate the MENTOR programs implemented across Africa over the last decade. The three-day bilingual meeting provided an opportunity for mentoring, exchanging technical information, sharing approaches to address common threats to wildlife, examining experiences on species conservation, and synthesizing lessons on capacity development initiatives for conservation leadership. Having Fellows from different MENTOR programs meet in-person is critical for forging future collaboration and a support network vital to addressing today's complex conservation challenges. Hosting regular MENTOR Forums is a key component of the MENTOR Model.

### **Funding Opportunity**

#### ***MENTOR – HAWLT (Holistically Addressing WildLife Trafficking)***

##### **Introduction**

The Service is soliciting proposals for the first iteration of MENTOR-HAWLT, a conservation fellowship program focused on holistically addressing wildlife trafficking, with an emphasis on integrating robust social science to understand and address the human dimensions of the issue. Under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), the Service expects to issue one award for up to \$1,000,000. The anticipated period of performance is July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2027.

Globally, thousands of wildlife species are threatened by wildlife trafficking, which, in turn, negatively impacts biodiversity and human well-being. Wildlife trafficking occurs in varied

social-ecological contexts and includes numerous and diverse actors along the source-transit-destination trade chain. The illicit and often covert human behaviors at the center of this issue are driven by interacting social, economic, cultural, and political factors. Given this complexity, holistic approaches based on understanding the complex systems in which trafficking occurs are needed. Such approaches require cross-disciplinary collaboration that integrates expertise from relevant fields. **The goal of the MENTOR-HAWLT program is to develop capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate holistic approaches to reduce wildlife trafficking that include evidence-based interventions designed to address the complex human dimensions of the issue.**

By strengthening the cross-disciplinary capacity of the team of MENTOR-HAWLT Fellows, the proposed program will holistically address poaching and trafficking of wild plants and animals of conservation concern in Kenya with a focus on: (1) developing an empirical understanding of the contexts in which species are poached and trafficked, (2) integrating robust social science information to understand and address the human dimensions within the complex systems in which poaching and trafficking occur, and (3) developing, implementing, and evaluating activities that reduce the threat of poaching and trafficking to species populations. With this approach, the proposed MENTOR-HAWLT program should identify and address the drivers of poaching and trafficking of selected species, including social, economic, and cultural factors.

### **Geographic Scope - Kenya**

This inaugural MENTOR-HAWLT program will take place in Kenya, a land rich in biodiversity and characterized by varied landscapes and thousands of wild plant and animal species, most living outside protected areas and many classified as vulnerable or endangered (Weru 2016). Despite concerted conservation efforts at local, national, and international levels, many of these threatened species are the targets of poaching and trafficking, including elephants, rhinos, big cats (e.g., lion, cheetah), reptiles (e.g., chameleons, tortoises), pangolins, sandalwood, and aloe (Weru 2016).

In addition to aligning with the Service mission, this funding opportunity aligns with the Government of Kenya's National Wildlife Strategy 2030, which calls for the active participation of Kenyans in wildlife conservation with the recognition that wildlife provides a range of essential benefits and is a key component of the nation's environmental, social, economic, and cultural development (GoK 2018). The strategy also recognizes poaching and the illegal wildlife trade as key pressures on Kenya's wildlife and prioritizes collaboration and cross-sectoral coordination to address these and other pressures.

Project activities will take place in Kenya but should also identify destination countries where wildlife is trafficked from Kenya and provide recommendations for research and interventions focused on the consumer end of the illicit trade chain. Consideration may be given to projects that include Fellows and organizations from key source, transit, and destination countries immediately bordering Kenya, with sufficient justification related to project goals and demonstrated feasibility in terms of logistics, cost, and other factors.

### **Program Design and Evaluation**

Proposals should be tailored around the following phases of program design and evaluation. Additional information on proposal requirements is provided in subsequent sections of this document, including section D2. *Content and Form of Application Submission* that includes a

table of measurable objectives, indicators, and expected outputs. Additionally, sections *B5. Type of Award* provides details on the Service’s substantial involved in co-design and implementation, and section *E1. Criteria* describes the criteria for meeting minimum programmatic requirements for this funding opportunity.

## **Program Phases**

### **Phase I – Program Co-Design**

Following the review and selection of the proposal, the Service will work with the recipient of the award to further refine goals and objectives, select Fellow, Mentors and Lecturers, and identify topics to be covered in the curriculum (see section *B5. Type of Award* below). Post-fellowship, and as resources allow, the Service will monitor an additional objective related to positive changes in Fellows’ career trajectory and any accomplishments that stem from the Fellowship program.

### **Phase II – Fellow Selection**

Proposals should address the proposed composition of the team of MENTOR-HAWLT Fellows and what disciplines and work experiences will be represented. Candidates should be recruited from multiple disciplines (e.g., social sciences, biological sciences, marketing, education, legal systems, business, etc.) to inform a holistic approach to wildlife trafficking. Ideally, candidates should be recruited at a critical point in which investment in their capacity can change the trajectory of their conservation careers, as opposed to candidates who have not yet demonstrated potential or, conversely, candidates who are already well established in career positions. After the award is issued, the Service will work with the selected applicant on the co-development of the evaluation rubrics for Fellow, Mentor, and Lecturer selection; recruitment processes; and the identification of competencies necessary to advance national and local counter-wildlife trafficking priorities.

### **Phase III – Delivery of Training and Mentoring Program**

Proposals should describe the proposed MENTOR-HAWLT curriculum, including any key topics. Training should emphasize technical conservation skills, as well as team building, conflict management, environmental governance, human rights and social safeguards, outreach, leadership and adaptive management. The Service will work with the selected applicant to further refine the curriculum and training plans.

As part of the MENTOR-HAWLT program, Fellows will design and implement **pilot conservation projects** over an 8–12-month period. While much attention has been focused on elephant and rhino poaching, the trafficking of many other species, including plant species, needs more attention. Therefore, applicants should propose potential Fellow pilot projects that address poaching and trafficking of species receiving less international and national attention and take a holistic approach to understanding and addressing these issues within complex socio-ecological systems. Based on the needs of the selected species, projects must include two or more (at least one must include a behavior change intervention) of the following interrelated focal areas:

- Demand for wildlife
  - Conduct a preliminary assessment of local, national, and international demand for the selected species.

- Behavior change
  - Review existing social science data to understand drivers of target audience behavior. Where needed, collect new robust, ethical, and culturally-sensitive baseline data. Use findings to develop and pilot small-scale behavior-change interventions via the most appropriate behavior-change approach(es), including social marketing, education/outreach, choice architecture, and incentives and/or deterrents.
- Governance structures
  - Synthesize national and international policy related to wildlife poaching and trafficking, and conservation, in general (see Weru 2016, p. 33). Identify opportunities and gaps.
  - Assess local, national, international governance structures. This could include comparing poaching/trafficking under different governance structures (see [IUCN Green List](#)), impact of governance on attitudes and behaviors (see Bennett et al. 2019)
- Community-led resource management and conservancies
  - Determine the effectiveness of community-based conservation efforts and/or conservancies that focus on reducing poaching and trafficking, identifying characteristics of successful efforts as well as potential barriers to success. Based on findings design community-based interventions (e.g., benefits sharing, community-based monitoring teams, alternative/sustainable livelihoods).
- Collaborative conservation
  - Multisectoral – identify current/needed sectors involved and their roles (government, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, international/local, business/tourism, private/communities, etc.)
  - Partnerships – identify existing/needed partnerships.
  - Cross-border evidence exchange and cooperation – assess current levels of information exchange (e.g., biological and prosecutorial information).
- Wildlife population monitoring
  - Examine existing and collect current population and distribution data, documenting the biological status of the poached and trafficked species.
  - Clear understanding of population status of underrepresented species
- Poaching levels and drivers
  - Collect baseline data on the social, cultural, economic, political, and situational factors that drive poaching and trafficking. This may include cost-benefit analysis of living with wildlife, levels and drivers of human-wildlife conflict, etc.

#### **Phase IV – Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals should describe a monitoring and evaluation plan for MENTOR-HAWLT, including and building upon the objectives, indicators, and outcomes listed in the *Example project evaluation table* in Section D2. *Content and Form of Application Submission*. Post-fellowship, and as resources allow, the Service will monitor positive changes in Fellows' career trajectory and any accomplishments that stem from the Fellowship program. The results of this inaugural

MENTOR-HAWLT program will inform how the program may be replicated in other regions around the world.

## 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.

Abu-Bakarr, I., Bakarr, M., Gelman, N., Johnny, J., Kamanda, P., Killian, D., . . . Wadsworth, R. (2022). [“Capacity and leadership development for wildlife conservation in sub-Saharan Africa: Assessment of a programme linking training and mentorship.”](#) *Oryx*, 1-9. doi:10.1017/S0030605321000855.

Bennett, N.J. Di Franco, A, Calò, Nethery, E., Niccolini, F, Milazzo, M., Guidetti, P. (2019). Local support for conservation is associated with perceptions of good governance, social impacts, and ecological effectiveness. *Conservation Letters* doi: 10.1111/conl.12640.

Browne, C., Ronis, E., Miller, J., Gibbs, S., Kapetanacos, Y., Hendrix, T., Carlson, D. (2021). Systems approaches to combating wildlife trafficking: Expanding existing frameworks to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration. *Frontiers in Conservation Science* 2 doi: 10.3389/fcsc.2021.698666.

Government of Kenya (2018). *National Wildlife Strategy 2030*. Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife.

Weru, S. (2016). *Wildlife protection and trafficking assessment in Kenya: Drivers and trends of transnational wildlife crime in Kenya and its role as a transit point for trafficked species in East Africa*. TRAFFIC.

## A4. Funding Opportunity Goals

The goal of the MENTOR-HAWLT (Holistically Addressing WildLife Trafficking) program is to develop capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate holistic approaches to reduce wildlife trafficking that include evidence-based interventions designed to address the complex human dimensions of the issue.

## B. Federal Award Information

### B1. Total Funding

#### Estimated Total Funding

\$1,000,000

This funding opportunity will solicit a single award with an expected period of performance of two to three years and a range of \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 for the entire period of performance.

### B2. Expected Award Amount

#### Maximum Award

\$1,000,000



**Minimum Award**

\$800,000

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**

\$1,000,000

**Expected Award Date**

July 01, 2024

**B4. Number of Awards****Expected Number of Awards**

1

**B5. Type of Award****Funding Instrument Type**

CA - Cooperative Agreement

This cooperative agreement requires substantial involvement by the Service during the program design and implementation of this award to ensure the achievement of the program objectives. Service involvement will include:

- **Co-design and implementation:** Following the review and selection of the proposal, the Service will work with the award recipient to further refine goals and objectives and identify topics to be covered in the training program. The Service will work with the recipient to apply the USFWS MENTOR model, refine the geographic scope, determine combating wildlife trafficking priorities, and discuss potential pilot team project ideas. The Service will meet regularly with the recipient on program design and implementation. This includes regular phone calls (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) and in-person site visits.
- **Fellow selection process:** The Service will be substantially involved in the Fellow selection process, including the co-development of the evaluation rubric for selection, candidate recruitment, and identifying the competencies considered necessary to advance national conservation and counter-trafficking priorities.
- **Staff selection:** The Service may help select project staff, including Mentors and Lecturers.
- **Curriculum design:** The Service will work with the recipient to identify topics to be covered in the MENTOR-HAWLT curriculum.
- **Training:** As applicable, the Service will conduct virtual and in-person teaching to the MENTOR-HAWLT Fellows in disciplines where Service staff have specific and relevant expertise (e.g., social science methods, combating wildlife trafficking, etc). The Service

will also help facilitate training on adaptive management, conservation planning, conservation leadership, and project design.

- **Partnership-building and networking:** The Service will support partnership-building with other MENTOR programs (including via the international MENTOR Forum) and other relevant conservation organizations. The Service will also increase awareness of MENTOR-HAWLT by amplifying the program with external audiences as well as other U.S. Government agencies and donors.

## 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, 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

0

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 on a voluntary basis (Voluntary Committed Cost Share). Voluntary Committed Cost Share (See [2 CFR 200.1](#)). If cost share is included, it 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 the Budget Narrative. 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**

Funds provided under this program may not be used for assistance to governments, parts of government, or government employees in countries that USAID notifies the Service to be ineligible for assistance.

Some countries may not be eligible depending on the restrictions associated with each fiscal year of funding under this NOFO and based on policy circumstances. Awards are contingent on funding eligibility and policy circumstances in each country and may be subject to special coordination or communication with USAID and/or its partners. The Service has confirmed with USAID that this project may be implemented in Kenya. As such, the Service may request that applicants remove certain activities or other countries from the project to meet funding or policy requirements.

#### **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 everything needed to apply. To request paper copies of the materials, please contact [cwt@fws.gov](mailto:cwt@fws.gov).

## **Program Website Link**

<https://www.fws.gov/program/mentor-fellowship>

## **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 individuals and commercial entities, 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.

If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature on or submission of the SF-424 form in GrantSolutions also represents their certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying.

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." Individuals may register in SAM.gov but are not required to have a SAM.gov registration. For individuals without a SAM.gov registration enter in Box 8c, the substitute Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) "KA5HQCLKUVW1".

### **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 or fewer pages and pages should be numbered. Project summary, figures, data tables, maps, curriculum vitae, additional detailed information, partner organization or government letters of endorsement, financial materials, and required standard forms do not count toward the ten-page limit.**

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. Relevant Party Engagement
5. Support for Protected Areas
6. Project Monitoring and Evaluation
7. Project Learning and Sharing
8. Ethics Standards
9. Project Timetable
10. Description of Entities Undertaking the Project
11. Sustainability

Include as an addendum (not included in 10-page limit):

12. Literature Cited
13. Project Location
14. Partner Organization or Government Letter of Endorsement

Project narrative information added to Attachment: Full Announcement

### **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). In the SF-424A “Contractual” category total, do not combine estimated subawards and contractual costs. Use the “Contractual” category to reflect estimated contractual costs only. Enter estimated subaward costs in the SF-424A “Other” category. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs in the required Budget Narrative (see below).

Applicants may include an itemized Budget Table following the table format below. If your Budget Table requires more than one page, verify that the column headings and row titles appear on all pages. For multi-year or multi-phase projects, please include a separate budget table and narrative for each year/phase with subtotals.

If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify leveraged funds and other resources available and/or needed to accomplish the desired objectives (leveraged funds are funds that run parallel to or outside of the proposed SERVICE project budget). Include the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources and the relevant activities they will contribute to. In addition, it is recommended that the Budget Narrative address the overall cost-effectiveness and feasibility of the proposal, including leveraging institutional or other resources.

The itemized budget should provide enough information for reviewers to be able to understand the cost basis and calculation at a glance. For example, a \$3,300 charge for lodging should include the formula for how the cost was calculated (e.g., *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 (e.g., *50% time on project*).

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 Narrative (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.

**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. Justify 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).

### **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.

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.

Category/Budget Item	Units	Cost per Unit (\$)	No. of Units	Total	USFWS	Recipient
<b>Personnel</b>						
Trainer	month	\$xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	\$XXX
Project Director	month	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx		\$ xxx
Project Coordinator	month	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx		\$ xxx
<i><b>Personnel Subtotal</b></i>					\$xxx	\$ xxx
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>						
% rate	lump	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	\$XXX
<i><b>Fringe Benefits Subtotal</b></i>					\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b>Travel</b>						
Vehicle day-use (with driver)	Day	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx		
Vehicle maintenance and repair	lump	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
Domestic Flights (Coordination at Transit Points)	Each	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
Meals (4 day Training 30 ppl)	Day	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
Accommodation (4 day Training 20ppl)	Day	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
<i><b>Travel Subtotal</b></i>						
<b>Equipment</b>						
xxx	Each	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
xxx	Each	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
<i><b>Equipment Subtotal</b></i>					\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b>Supplies</b>						
xxx	Each	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	

Category/Budget Item	Units	Cost per Unit (\$)	No. of Units	Total	USFWS	Recipient
xxx	Each	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
<b><i>Supplies Subtotal</i></b>					\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b>Contractual</b>						
xxx	lump	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
xxx	month	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
<b><i>Contractual Subtotal</i></b>					\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b>Other</b>						
xxx	lump	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
xxx	month	\$ xxx	xx	\$ xxx	\$xxx	
<b><i>Other Subtotal</i></b>				\$ xxx	\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b><i>TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES</i></b>				\$ xxx	\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b><i>INDIRECT CHARGES</i></b>				\$ xxx	\$ xxx	\$ xxx
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>					<b>\$xxx</b>	<b>\$xxx</b>

### 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. Provide a separate description and total estimated costs for both contractual and subaward costs. 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. Please note the prohibitions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment in [2 CFR 200.216](#). The Department of the Interior’s [Unmanned Aircraft web page](#) provides a list of approved unmanned aircraft and related equipment and software.

### 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 as a financial assistance recipient in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#). 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. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). Entities already registered in SAM.gov should review their registration to confirm that they are registered as a financial assistance recipient, which requires completion of the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations”. See the “Submission Requirements” section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration.

Applicants can register on the [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**

03/04/2024

##### **Application Due Date Explanation**

Applications must be submitted electronically through GrantSolutions by no later than 11:59 PM **ET on March 4, 2024**. Applications must be submitted in English. **Late applications will not be accepted.** 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, contact [cwt@fws.gov](mailto:cwt@fws.gov). **DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION MORE THAN ONCE. Duplicate applications will be discarded. Please see more information about submission requirements in section D7. Other Submission Requirements. Applicants must have an active registration in SAM to apply.**

#### **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) indirect cost rate agreement we must charge the capped indirect cost rate to the same base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand we must request prior approval from the awarding program to use the [2 CFR 200.1 Modified Total Direct Costs](#) (MTDC) base instead of our approved base and that we must submit such requests with our application, including a calculation showing how use of the MTDC base results in an overall reduction in the total indirect costs recovered. 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. If we have never negotiated a rate, we understand we must use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC.
- 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:

- Pilot projects within protected areas
- Pilot projects that include interventions that present potential environmental risks (e.g., invasive procedures with endangered or protected animals, land improvement/watershed management).
- 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
- Provision of salary support to government officials

## **D7. Other Submission Requirements**

The Service uses the GrantSolutions system to manage financial assistance applications and awards. Applicants must register in and conduct any subsequent award business with the Service in GrantSolutions. To apply, your organization and organization officials must be established in GrantSolutions. To register your organization in GrantSolutions, send an email to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov) with the following information:

Subject: New Organization Request

- Organization/Individual Name
- Point of Contact first and last name, email, and phone number
- Organization Type
- SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals or Service-waived entities)
- Organization Employer Identification Number (Applicants that are INDIVIDUALS DO NOT include your social security number)
- Address



Organizational details should match those in the organization's SAM.gov registration. To establish organization official accounts and user role(s), complete a Recipient User Account Request Form for each official and email it to [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov). The GrantSolutions entity user roles are: Authorizing Official (ADO); Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD); Support Specialist (GSS); Financial Officer (FO); and Financial Support Staff (FSS). All roles can do the following: enter applications, amendments, and reports, view awards, and view and create notes. The ADO and the PI/PD roles can also submit applications, amendments, and reports. The FO role can also submit reports. At a minimum, registered organizations must assign someone to the ADO and PI/PD roles. For more information, see the GrantSolutions Recipient Training and FAQs web page. For GrantSolutions registration, submission, and other assistance contact their Customer Support by telephone at 1-866-577-0771 or by email at [help@grantsolutions.gov](mailto:help@grantsolutions.gov).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Applicants must have an active registration in SAM before attempting to register in GrantSolutions. The Service recommends applicants begin the initiation process for SAM at least 30 days before the submission deadline. If you experience problems registering or submitting an application in GrantSolutions, you may be granted a waiver. If you wish to seek a waiver, you must submit supporting documentation to demonstrate the issues you are experiencing. Documentation may include computer screenshots showing error messages or email communication with the GrantSolutions Help Desk attempting to resolve the issue. The request must be submitted at least **three** days before the submission deadline. Please send your waiver request to [DIC\\_GRANTS@fws.gov](mailto:DIC_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 the program's Funding Priorities, as described in A. *Program Description*. Proposed project goals should specify clearly in the body of the proposal how the objectives described above will be achieved. Proposals that do not address the desired objectives described above will not move forward in the review process. Proposals that meet minimum programmatic requirements will be evaluated based on the criteria below.

- *Show systematic understanding:* 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.
- *Build on prior evidence:* Demonstrate how the project is context specific, reflects a thoughtful and adaptive conservation strategy grounded in best available evidence, and 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 and how it will be piloted. Address how the project ultimately will build the evidence base for effective interventions.

- *Adhere to ethical standards:* Demonstrate that project activities will adhere to accepted ethical standards and best practices established by pertinent local, national, or international policies and norms by considering and mitigating potential risks posed by project activities. This includes ethical considerations for research and interventions involving people and wildlife, assessing potential (and unintentional) positive or negative impacts of proposed activities, and defining measures to manage risks and maximize positive impacts. As relevant, integrate culturally appropriate approaches into work, such as developing tailored approaches based on the cultural attributes and wellbeing of engaged groups and including key personnel with relevant lived experience and expertise.
- *Include relevant parties and partners:* Demonstrate that activities will be developed and implemented in coordination, collaboration and/or consultation with local, national and international authorities, members of communities who will be affected by or engaged in activities and other relevant parties and partners.
- *Participate in collaboration and partnerships:* 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.
- *Show capacity for implementation:* 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. Proposals should highlight the applicant's expertise in (1) systems thinking, (2) holistic approaches to conservation that include people-centered solutions based on social/behavioral science, (3) establishing global networks, and (4) organizing training programs and developing capacity.
- *Show a monitoring and evaluation plan:* Demonstrate robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation and invest in contributing to the evidence base for conservation.
- *Show sustainability and amplification:* Describe a vision for project sustainability including (but not limited to) whether projects develop and foster lasting in-country capacity

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.

Prior to award, the program will conduct and document a review of the proposed budget to



ensure figures are calculated correctly, proposed costs are clearly linked to the project narrative and seem necessary and reasonable, no obviously unallowable costs are included, costs requiring prior approval are identified and described, indirect cost are applied correctly, and any program match or cost share requirements are addressed.

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 *EI. Criteria*. 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 among 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.

**Co-design with Service for final proposal development:** Following review, the highest ranked project will be requested to work with the Service on the co-development of the final proposal. 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 June 30, 2024.

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

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

### **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.

#### **Buy America Provision for Infrastructure: Required Use of American Iron, Steel, Manufactured Products, and Construction Materials.**

As required by Section 70914 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. 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 the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. Recipients conducting infrastructure projects under the award must include related requirements all subawards, including all contracts and purchase orders for infrastructure work or products under this program. For the full text term applicable to infrastructure and related waiver request standards and procedures, see the Service’s General Award Terms and Conditions.

Special terms and conditions exceeded character count, and are added in the Full Announcement attachment

### **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.

#### **Non-Construction 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.

#### **Construction Performance Reports**

For construction awards, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress for construction. Additional performance reports for construction activities may be required only when considered necessary. However, awards that include both construction and non-construction activities require performance reporting for the non-construction activities. See [2 CFR§200.329](#) for more information. The USFWS will describe all performance reporting requirements 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**

Per 2 CFR §1402.112, non-Federal entities and their employees must take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the provisions in [2 CFR §200.318](#) apply. 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](#). 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 Service Project Officer identified in their notice of award in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that reported by subrecipients. The Service will examine each disclosure to determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, work with the applicant or recipient to develop an appropriate resolution. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for 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:

Christine Browne, Senior Social Scientist

Telephone:

+1 703-407-8023

Email:

Christine\_Browne@fws.gov

## **G2. Program Administration**

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:

Tatiana Hendrix, Program Officer

Telephone:

+1 571-581-7347

Email:

Tatiana\_Hendrix@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:Info_Coll@fws.gov).