

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Region 4 Science Applications**

Adaptive Science  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.670

**Notice of Funding Opportunity**

**I. Description of Funding Opportunity**

This financial assistance opportunity is being issued through a cooperative agreement. This award is made under the authority of: Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, 87 Stat. 884); Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911; 94 Stat. 1322.

This funding opportunity will address advancement of specific Department of the Interior conservation priorities through projects that support targeted science. Project proposals will identify the specific approaches and outcomes that will advance those Departmental priorities and objectives as described below.

The overarching objective of this funding opportunity is to advance the DOI and Fish and Wildlife Service priorities in support of the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS, <http://secassoutheast.org/>). SECAS, a southeast state fish and wildlife association initiative, provides a more comprehensive and collective vision for conservation in the southeast United States by identifying the most important lands and waters that will meet the needs of fish and wildlife for future generations while supporting human health through outdoor recreation opportunities and economic growth. The unique role of SECAS is to identify and support the steps necessary to regionally plan, implement, and evaluate actions that sustain habitat, mitigate threats, and adapt to future conditions. Guided by a conservation blueprint that represents the landscape conservation priorities of the conservation community, SECAS provides the comprehensive vision for a desired future conservation landscape that will inform and help align decision making to generate more robust conservation outcomes between now and 2060 in the Southeast United States.

In the past, Science Applications has received over \$2 million dollars annually to support landscape conservation throughout the southeast U.S., including the U.S. Caribbean. Depending on the level of funding available this year, we will support up to 15 projects addressing the themes listed below. Any single project will be capped at \$650,000; however, most projects will be between \$30,000 and \$75,000. The SECAS framework supports the following Department of Interior's Priorities and all proposed projects are expected to explicitly explain how the projects will advance these objectives:

*Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt*

- a. Utilize science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment;
- b. Examine land use planning processes and land use designations that govern public use and access;
- c. Revise and streamline the environmental and regulatory review process while maintaining environmental standards.

- e. Foster relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands;

*Restoring trust with local communities*

- b. Expand the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife offices, water authorities, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities.

*Striking a regulatory balance*

- a. Reduce the administrative and regulatory burden imposed on U.S. industry and the public;
- b. Ensure that Endangered Species Act decisions are based on strong science and thorough analysis.

We are seeking science projects that address the following five theme areas (and explicitly advance the DOI objectives above):

I. Streamlining regulations through the development of conservation Blueprints

At present the entire SECAS effort is being developed by integrating landscape conservation designs (LCDs), or conservation blueprints, across the southeast. LCDs, or more commonly, Blueprints are strategic planning and prioritization tools to more efficiently and effectively guide conservation implementation. Existing blueprints highlight the most important conservation areas, while conversely also depict less important areas where stringent regulations may not be needed. We seek projects that will (1) continue to develop conservation blueprints across the southeast, and (2) help develop the capacity of blueprints to reduce regulatory burden. On this latter topic, we need projects that will test the appropriateness and effectiveness of current blueprints to facilitate permitting and maintaining environmental integrity. We are especially interested in supporting the on-going effort in Florida as well as understanding the regulatory permeability across the southeast.

II. Support at-risk species conservation and State Wildlife Action Plan implementation

Species conservation, especially through habitat protection and restoration is the foundation of SECAS with an emphasis on working with partner state agencies to reduce the need to list species. State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) and the At-Risk species report identify species and critical habitats that have been petitioned but not yet listed or are likely to be petitioned in the near future. The intent of identifying these species and critical habitats are to focus work to enhance our knowledge of these species and/or provide early interventions and management to prevent the need for listing. Many of these species are in need of basic distribution and population sustainability data, while others are in need of threat assessments. We encourage projects that address suites of species. In particular we are looking for projects that will model the distribution and population sustainability of at-risk species to support State Wildlife Action Plans in the Southeast; identify Conservation Opportunity Areas for State Wildlife Action Plans, utilize advanced survey techniques (e.g. acoustic surveys) to support landscape scale modeling efforts of species to determine occupancy and areas where regulations can be relaxed; projects that evaluate future scenarios on the sustainability of at-risk species; and databases and portals that pool together information to

support decision-making under ESA, as well as infrastructure NEPA permitting. We also seek projects that evaluate management actions on working lands and private property to support sustainability of at risk species

### III. Support Gulf coast restoration

The Gulf coast is a critical region of the SECAS initiative and more importantly a critical ecosystem of the southern US. We are interested in projects that support the Gulf of Mexico Alliance's Gulf Star program. Gulf Star is a public-private partnership advancing strategic conservation to achieve measurable results around priority issues that are common to all five states of the Gulf of Mexico region, including sustainable seafood, loss of critical habitats, coastal resilience, water quality and quantity, living marine resources, and data and monitoring.

### IV. Strategic investments

SECAS is widely known for its spatial prioritization of conservation objectives and needs, but SECAS is also a developing business model. The business model needs to expand to explicitly show return on investment to demonstrate the wise use of investments from various sectors (e.g., private donations, state and federal tax-payer dollars). We seek projects that 1) refine the conservation objectives of SECAS by developing and /or synthesizing biological objectives for sustainability of federal and state trust species especially those listed under the Endangered Species Act or within the State Wildlife Action Plans, 2) promote partnerships with private landowners as well as privately owned companies that contribute to the conservation objectives of SECAS, and 3) develop user-friendly tools that allow users to select among strategies to determine those that will maximize the return investment.

### V. Balancing human and ecological water needs

An important underpinning of SECAS is the recognition that the entire southeast, including the US Caribbean, is a socio-ecological system where the human influence profoundly influences all ecosystem components and processes and equally important is that human societies depend on the services provided by fully functioning and sustainable ecosystems. Clean and widely available water for all human uses is a prime example, and one that is in peril due to overuse and pollution. We seek projects that will estimate the benefits of water broadly, but in particular to support working forests as well as science to support environmental flows policy to protect the aquatic species and the habitats that support them as well as the habitats that provide clean water, i.e. wetlands.

## II. Award Information

In the past, Science Applications has received over \$2 million dollars annually to support landscape conservation throughout the southeast U.S., including the U.S. Caribbean. Depending on the level of funding available this year, we will support up to 15 projects addressing the listed themes. Any single project will be capped at \$650,000; however, most projects will be between \$30,000 and \$75,000. Matching funds and/or leveraging of other funds and/or past work are

highly encouraged but not required. Demonstrations of how the current project builds off of past federal investments and fills voids in existing LCDs, Blueprints, or other management plans toward DOI and FWS that supports SECAS goals is critical. We will utilize the most appropriate funding mechanism for each situation, e.g. grants, contracts, or cooperative agreement. For cooperative agreements the Service will be substantially involved in projects under this funding opportunity. Substantial involvement by the Service will be established on a case by case basis. Contracts and/or agreements need to be finalized by September 30, 2018 and project start dates should begin shortly thereafter, but in accordance with the individual project needs and goals. Awards are intended to be complete within a single fiscal year, but exceptions can be made for projects whose scope addresses the above goals, but require a longer project period to assure success. Renewals and/or extensions are not guaranteed and are dependent on subsequent year's appropriations from Congress.

### **III. Basic Eligibility Requirements**

#### **Eligible Applicants:**

There are no restrictions on eligibility all potential applicants are eligible.

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

#### **A. DUNS Registration**

Request a DUNS number at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. For technical difficulties, contact Dun & Bradstreet by email at: [govt@dnb.com](mailto:govt@dnb.com), or by calling the Government Customer Resource Center at voice phone: 866-705-5711 or TTY line: 877-807-1679 (hearing impaired customers only). Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

#### **B. Entity Registration in SAM**

Register in SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

Note: The official U.S. government website address for SAM is [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). There is NO COST to register in or access SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who charge a fee in exchange for registering entities in SAM; please be aware that you can register to do business with the U.S. government FOR FREE directly in SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### **C. Excluded Entities**

Applicant entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program. The Service conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award.

### **D. Cost Sharing or Matching:**

Matching funds and/or leveraging of other funds and/or past work are highly encouraged but not required. Demonstrations of how the current project builds off of past federal investments and fills voids in existing LCDs, Blueprints, or other management plans toward DOI and SECAS goals is critical. Applicants may attribute some or all of their allowable indirect costs as voluntary committed cost-share/match. When including matching funds or in-kind support from partners, please include supporting letters of supporting indicating the level of commitment.

## **IV. Application Requirements**

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain:

- A.** A completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form. All applicants are required to submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF) 424. Individuals applying on their own (unrelated to any business or non-profit organization s/he may own or operate in her/his own name) must use the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual form (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-individual-family.html#sortby=1>). All other applicants to discretionary programs and for single source awards must use the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance form (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>).
- B.** Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the “Federal” funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the “Federal” funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the “Other” box.

### **B. Project Summary**

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project. Goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, anticipated outputs and outcomes should also be included in this section.

### **C. Project Narrative**

- 1. Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) that are relevant to the proposed work. Explain the successes or failures of past efforts and how your proposed project builds on them. If you have received funding previously (from the Service or any other entity) for this specific project work or site, provide a summary of the funding, associated activities and products/outcomes.

- 2. Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the program/project. State the objectives of the project. Objectives are the specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project's proposed project period). It is important to clearly describe how the proposed project will advance SECAS and the linkages to the DOI and FWS priorities.
- 3. Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** List the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the activities and the proposed project costs. For projects being conducted within the United States or colonies, the narrative must provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For projects being conducted on the high seas, the narrative should provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity. Provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the project narrative (do not include as separate attachments). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.
- 4. Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:** As applicable, describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities.
- 5. Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** Detail the monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Building on the stated project objectives, which must be specific and measurable, identify what you will measure (i.e., quantitative/quantifiable indicators) and how you will measure (e.g., methods, sample size, survey tools). Reference the stated project timetable (i.e., process indicators) and budget information (i.e., input indicators). Identify the products/services to be delivered and how/to whom they will be delivered (i.e., output indicators). Detail the expected direct effect(s) of the project on beneficiaries (i.e., outcome indicators). Describe the resources and organizational structure available for gathering, analyzing and reporting monitoring and evaluation data. If applicable, describe how project participants and beneficiaries will participate in monitoring and evaluation activities. Describe how findings will be fed back into decision making and project activities throughout the project period.
- 6. Description of Entities Undertaking the Project:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of

the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis. If eligibility for funding is based in whole or in part on the qualifications of key personnel, provide for each key person a brief (**1-2 pages**) but descriptive overview of their education, experience and other skills that make them qualified to carry out the proposed project. To prevent unnecessary transmission of Personally Identifiable Information, **do not include Social Security numbers, the names of family members, or any other personal or sensitive information including marital status, religion or physical characteristics on the description of key personnel qualifications.**

7. **Sustainability:** As applicable, describe which project activities will continue beyond the proposed project period, who will continue the work or act on the results achieved, and how and at what level you expect these future activities will be funded.

**8. Literature Cited**

9. **Map of Project Area:** Map should clearly delineate the project area and be large enough to be legible. Label any sites referenced in the project narrative.

**D. Budget Form**

Complete the Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A) or Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF 424C) form. Use the SF 424A if your project does not include construction and the SF 424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available on the Internet at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to the Federal cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, as applicable to the recipient organization type. Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

**Note on Multiple Federal Funding Sources:** If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program on the budget form *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding. Enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form, and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

**E. Budget Justification**

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as

percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost.

If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment, including the Federal funding source.

**Required Indirect Cost Statement:** Recipients that do not have an approved indirect cost rate cannot charge indirect costs to their Federal award. All applicants except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate must include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

“We are:

1. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached.
2. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs.
3. A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: “A copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement is attached. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.” or “A copy of our current, approved rate agreement(s) is attached.”]
4. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.
5. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] of [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 220.68]. We understand that we must notify the

Service in writing immediately if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.

6. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing immediately if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point 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 such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
7. A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that the basis for direct costs will be the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, and that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR 200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.
8. A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting a flat *de minimis* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- 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 charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct project costs paid by any other Federal funding source or non-Federal partner.

- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>.

**Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior:** Entities that do not have a NICRA must first have an open, active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services

Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center

U.S. Department of the Interior

650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-400

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-930-3803

Email: Through <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/contactus/ibcfeedback> web form

Internet address: <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/services/finance/indirect-cost-services>

**F. Single Audit Reporting Statements:** As required in [Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F](#), all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System. All U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement regarding if your organization was/was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year and, if so, state if that report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted. Include these statements at the end of the Project Narrative in a section titled **"Single Audit Reporting Statements"**.

**G. Assurances:** Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. Use the **Assurances**

**for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** for all other projects. The form includes a statement that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program. Signing this form does not make you or your organization subject to laws that are otherwise not applicable to you or your organization. Changing, crossing out, or making notations on the form before signing has no impact on the applicability of law.

- H. Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this proposal AND the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.
- I. Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Applicants must notify the Service in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that are known at the time of application or that may arise during the life of this award, in the event an award is made. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the applicant, the applicant's employees, or the applicant's future subrecipients in the matter. Applicants must notify the Service in writing in their application if any key project personnel, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are known to be related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in or associated with the program to which you are applying for funding or who otherwise may be involved in the review and selection of the application. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service program, in consultation with their Ethics Counselor, will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the applicant to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in the project not being select for funding.

- J. Required Overlap/Duplication Statement:** Applicants must provide a statement that addresses if there is any overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated projects in terms of activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If any overlap exists, applicants must provide a description of the overlap in their application. Applicants must also state if the proposal submitted for consideration under this program is/is not in any way duplicative of any proposal that was/will be submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source (Federal or non-Federal). If such a circumstance exists, applicants must detail when the other duplicative proposal(s) were submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when funding decisions are expected to be announced. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be duplicative of the funding requested from the Service, applicants must notify the Service point of contact for this funding opportunity immediately.

### **Application Checklist**

- ☐ **Evidence of non-profit status:** If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- ☐ **SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance:** A complete, signed and dated SF 424, SF 424-Mandatory, or SF 424-Individual form.
- ☐ **Project summary**
- ☐ **Project narrative**
- ☐ **Timetable**
- ☐ **Description of key personnel qualifications**
- ☐ **Single Audit Reporting statement:** If a U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with Single Audit reporting requirements.
- ☐ **SF 424 budget form:** A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form.
- ☐ **Budget justification**
- ☐ **Federally-funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment.
- ☐ **Indirect cost statement**
- ☐ **NICRA:** When applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.
- ☐ **SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form.
- ☐ **SF LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.
- ☐ **Conflict of Interest disclosure,** when applicable.
- ☐ **Overlap/Duplication statement**

Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

## **V. Submission Instructions**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** August 15, 2018 (open 60 days)

**Intergovernmental Review:** Before submitting an application, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the following website ([https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants_spoc)) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 “Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs.” E.O. 12372 was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state’s designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by mail, by email, electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. Please select **ONE** of the submission options:

### ***To submit an application by mail:***

Number all pages of your printed application. Mail one, single-sided, unbound copy (do not staple or otherwise permanently bind pages) of your complete application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization’s authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text “Completed by Grants.gov upon submission” or “Completed on submission to Grants.gov”. Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

### ***To submit an application by e-mail:***

Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½” x 11”) paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. E-mail your application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization’s authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text “Completed by Grants.gov upon submission” or “Completed on submission to Grants.gov”. Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

**To submit an application through Grants.gov:**

Go to the Grants.gov Apply for Grants page (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>) for an overview of the process to apply through Grants.gov. You/your organization must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting an application through Grants.gov. Registration can take between three to five business days, or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

**Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names:** Please do not assign application attachments file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the Service's financial assistance management system.

**VI. Application Review Information**

Project proposals will be evaluated using the criteria listed below:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>CATEGORY 1: MANDATORY CRITERIA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                            |
| <b><i>Note: projects that do not meet all of the five criteria listed below will not be considered for funding</i></b>                                                                                                                          | <b>YES/NO</b>                              |
| 1. Project products must address a DOI priority and specifically 1) creating a conservation stewardship legacy, 2) restoring trust with local communities, and 3) striking a regulatory balance (see pages 1-2 above for details)               |                                            |
| 2. Proposals will advance the SECAS initiative by addressing one or more of the following five themes:                                                                                                                                          | <b>Yes/No<br/>CHECK ALL<br/>THAT APPLY</b> |
| a. Stream-lining regulations through the application and development of conservation Blueprints                                                                                                                                                 |                                            |
| b. Support at-risk species conservation and State Wildlife Action Plan implementation                                                                                                                                                           |                                            |
| c. Support Gulf coast restoration decision making                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                            |
| d. Strategic investments through better defining of biological objectives, promoting private partnerships, and development of decision tools that maximize return on investment                                                                 |                                            |
| e. Balancing human and ecological water needs                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>YES/NO</b>                              |
| 3. Provides clear guidance to a specifically identified management problem                                                                                                                                                                      |                                            |
| 4. There is a clear connection with FWS regional vision <i>"Together, we will connect lands and waters to sustain fish, wildlife and plants by being visionary leaders, bold innovators and trusted partners, working with and for people."</i> |                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>YES/NO</b>                              |
| 5. The project does not duplicate ongoing or previous work                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                            |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| <b>CATEGORY 2: TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                         |
| 1. The project products will have direct management application, i.e. address an important conservation and management decision.                                                                                                           | <b>MAX SCORE</b>        |
| a. There is clear demonstration of the management issue being addressed and how well the information from the project informs that management issue.                                                                                       | 25                      |
| b. The form or manner in which the project products will be made available for use by decision-makers or other intended users is clearly defined (e.g., technical reports, decision support tool, new or improved management technique(s)) | 25                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| 2. Technical Merit                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>MAX SCORE</b>        |
| a. Objectives are clearly stated, procedures are well designed, methods are a technically sound and feasible way to meet those objectives.                                                                                                 | 10                      |
| b. There is a clear statement of project objectives and explanation as to how the proposed approach and results are attainable,                                                                                                            | 10                      |
| c. Quantifiable estimates will be statistically reliable and comparable to other studies.                                                                                                                                                  | 10                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| 4. Project's scope has broad regional or national conservation relevance                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>SUGGESTED SCORES</b> |
| a. Higher scores will be given to projects that include an application of the information to a broader context (e.g., a tool or technique that can be used regionally or nationally).                                                      | 10                      |
| b. Lower scores will be given to projects that include an application of the information to a local context (e.g., a tool or technique that can be used locally).                                                                          | 5                       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| <b>CATEGORY 3: COST AND VALUE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>MAX SCORE</b>        |
| 1. Manpower and budget are reasonable for the work proposed                                                                                                                                                                                | 10                      |
| 2. There is partner technical and/or financial support for the project.                                                                                                                                                                    | 10                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| <b>CATEGORY 4: POTENTIAL SUCCESS AND TIMELY AND USEFUL RESULTS</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>MAX SCORE</b>        |
| 1. The research team has a demonstrated record of producing timely and useful results that may be easily adopted by the management community                                                                                               | 5                       |
| 2. Combination of education and experience uniquely qualify these investigators for this research                                                                                                                                          | 5                       |
| 3. PI and co-investigators are recognized as leaders in the field for this type of research                                                                                                                                                | 5                       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>130 MAX</b>          |

### Review and Selection Process:

A selection committee of three to eight Region 4 Science Applications staff will be formed to review proposals. Upon receipt proposals will be screened by the committee chair (a science coordinator) for eligibility and conformance to all provisions in this NOFO. The committee will independently evaluate invited full proposals against the evaluation criteria. Reviewers will

abstain from participating in any review where a conflict of interest exists or could be perceived. The compiled list of individual review evaluations and recommendations will be provided to the Region 4 Assistant Regional Director for Science Applications for approval and final decision.

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. For a copy of this form, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

Prior to award, the Service reviews the selected applicant’s statement regarding potential overlap or duplication in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel and makes a determination regarding Service funding. Depending on the circumstances, modification of the application, other pending applications, or an active award may be necessary, or the Service might choose to not fund the proposed project.

Each fiscal year, for every entity receiving one or more awards in that fiscal year, the Service conducts a risk assessment based on eight risk categories. The result of this risk assessment is used to establish a monitoring plan for all awards to the entity in that fiscal year. For a copy of the Service’s risk assessment form, go to <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>.

Prior to approving an award with a Federal funding amount that exceeds or is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as adjusted (see 2 CFR 200.88), the Service must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS; <https://www.fapiis.gov/fapiis/index.action>) to determine if, at a minimum, the information found in the system for the applicant demonstrates a satisfactory record of Federal award performance and integrity and business ethics (see 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2)). The Service must also report to FAPIIS if an applicant subject to this review is found not qualified for a particular award due to its prior record of integrity or performance under Federal awards (see 2 CFR 200.212).

## **VII. Award Administration**

**Award Notices:** Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). 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. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

**Domestic Recipient Payments:** Prior to award, the Service program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury’s Automated Standard Application for

Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

**Transmittal of Sensitive Data:** Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.

**Award Terms and Conditions:** Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Service's Standard Award Terms and Conditions are available on the Internet at <https://www.fws.gov/grants/atc.html>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.

**Special Award Terms and Conditions:**

- Draft data management plans need to be submitted as part of the proposal package and will be revised and finalized through consultation with the USFWS project lead.
- The project PI will deliver project data and data products in a useful format determined for each specific project in conjunction with the USFWS project lead.
- All appropriate components of project data and products will be preserved and made publically available for perpetuity in ScienceBase, or other reasonable and similar option.

**Recipient Reporting Requirements:**

**Financial and Performance Reports:**

**Final Reports:** Recipients are required to submit final financial and performance reports no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date, whichever comes first. For awards lasting 12 months or less, the final reports will be the only financial and performance reports required, except in unusual circumstances or if waived.

**Interim Reports:** For awards that last longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit interim financial and performance reports no less frequently than annually and no more frequently than quarterly, except in unusual circumstances or if waived. Requiring a higher frequency of reporting than annual reporting will be based on the Service's assessment of higher or other unusual circumstance. Quarterly and semiannual interim reports are due within 30

calendar days of the reporting period end date. Annual interim reports are due within 90 calendar days of the reporting period end date.

Recipients must use the Standard Form 425, Federal Financial Report for financial reporting, available on the Internet at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1>.

Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.

**Significant Developments Reports:** Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- 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.
- 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.

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Recipients are responsible for notifying the Service Project Officer in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient, the recipient's employees, or the recipient's subrecipients in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under this award and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the Recipient, the Recipient's employees, or the Recipient's subrecipients in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the Service Project Officer in consultation with their Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the Recipient, the Recipient's employee(s), or the Recipient's Subrecipient(s) that could reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of this 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 have received a Federal award including the term and condition 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 described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment. (See also 2 CFR Part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313.)

2 CFR Part 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters is applicable to awards with a total Federal share of more than \$500,000, except those to individuals and foreign public entities.

#### **VIII. Agency Contacts**

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