U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS - Ecological Services

FWS Recovery Challenge Grants website at https://www.fws.gov/service/recovery-challenge-grants

F23AS00310 FY22/23 Recovery Challenge Fund
Fiscal Year: 2023
F23AS00310

Due Date for Applications: **11/15/2022**

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A. Program Description

Authority:
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022—Administrative Provisions (Pub. L. 117-103 [H.R. 2471—305])
For awards outside the US: Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. §1531 et. seq.

Assistance Listing Number:
15.657

Background, Purpose and Program Requirements:
The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is to conserve endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend, and to take appropriate steps to achieve the purposes of treaties and conventions set forth in the ESA. Section 2(a)(5) of the ESA authorizes the use of Federal financial assistance to encourage the States and other interested parties to develop and maintain conservation programs to safeguard the Nation's heritage in fish, wildlife and plants for the benefit of all citizens. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Ecological Services Program provides Federal financial assistance on a competitive basis to states, other Federal agencies, landowners, educators, non-profit organizations, researchers, and other potential partners to secure information about endangered or threatened species, to aid in the recovery of these species under the ESA, and to help conserve the ecosystems upon which these species depend. The Recovery Challenge funding opportunity specifically provides a unique financial assistance opportunity for eligible, non-Federal longstanding and new partners working on high priority recovery actions as identified by the Service for ESA endangered and threatened species.

Recovery Challenge Congressional Appropriations Language
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022—Administrative Provisions (Pub. L. 117-103 [H.R. 2471—305]) authorizes funding for the Recovery Challenge funding opportunity. The overall goal of Recovery Challenge is to enhance and increase partnerships with agencies and organizations implementing high priority recovery actions, in particular for genetically-sound breeding, rearing, and reintroduction programs, as well as to develop or update recovery plans. This opportunity also addresses the Presidential priority articulated in *Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* by supporting biodiversity efforts.

Funding limitations are subject to change based on the final FY2023 budget appropriations.

Recovery Challenge matching grants must implement high priority recovery actions as prescribed in recovery plans.

See *Section C. Eligibility Information*

B. Federal Award Information

B1. Total Funding

Estimated Total Funding
$9,500,000

B2. Expected Award Amount

Maximum Award
$1,700,000
Minimum Award
$1,000

B3. Expected Award Funding and Anticipated Dates

Expected Award Funding
$4,800,000
Expected Award Date
January 01, 2023

B4. Number of Awards

Expected Number of Awards
23
Approximately $4.8 million of the FY2022 & 2023 Recovery Challenge funds will be allocated to FY2020 and FY2021 projects that received incremental funding (grant funds obligated in annual increments over the indicated project period). Approximately $1 million will be awarded to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, consistent with expected appropriations language. The remaining funds ($1.7M from 2022 and $3.1M for 2023) will be awarded to new FY2022/2023 award cycle projects to ensure the Service's ability to fund new Recovery Challenge projects yearly while maintaining prior funding commitments for previously awarded incremental funding projects. The remaining FY2022 and FY2023 distribution for new projects is anticipated as follows:

- A maximum of $400,000 total to fund all projects proposing to update recovery plans, and a maximum of $4.4 million total to implement high priority recovery actions as prescribed in recovery plans.

- The amount of funding per Federal award in FY2021 ranged from $25,000 to $629,276 and the average award amount was approximately $185,000.

Available funding in FY 2023 is subject to change; funding is dependent on Congressional appropriations.

B5. Type of Award

Funding Instrument Type

G - Grant

CA - Cooperative Agreement

If funds are awarded through a cooperative agreement with the Service, the Service will be substantially involved in the project. Under cooperative agreements, substantial involvement by the Service should be expected and may include participating and collaborating jointly with the recipient or other personnel in carrying out the scope of work including training recipient personnel or detailing Federal personnel to work on the project effort; reviews and approves one stage of work before the next stage can begin; reviews and approves, prior to recipient action, proposed modifications or sub-awards; helps select project staff or trainees; directs or redirects the work because of interrelationships with other projects; has power to immediately halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met; and limits recipient discretion with respect to scope of work, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operations and other management processes, coupled with close monitoring or operational involvement during performance under the award. To submit a proposal for consideration as a cooperative agreement, provide a justification statement in the project proposal as to the type and duration of assistance requested by the Service and a rationale for why involvement of Service is needed to fulfill the project objectives.

C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants

99 – Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in the text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

Additional Information on Eligibility

Please see **Section C3. Other** for more information on eligibility criteria.

C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

Yes

Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

50

Percentage of Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement:

Refer to section C3-2 Eligible Partnerships for match requirements for Longstanding and new partnership

The amount of cost share required is based on the total project cost, not based on the grant amount requested. For example, if the project total is $1,000, the cost share must be at least 50% of that project total (i.e., $500.) To illustrate this example further, with a project total of $1,000, the grant amount (Federal) would be $500 and the cost share would be $500. (non-Federal), for a total project amount of $1,000.

Further cost share requirements for long-standing and new partnerships are outlined in section **C3 (2) Eligible Partnerships** of this NOFO.

The applicant may satisfy the cost share requirement with either:

- CASH – for example, funds contributed from private sources or state and local governments such as a portion of someone's salary, or
- IN-KIND services – for example, services or goods donated by the applicant organization or other entities such as a volunteer, or donated food.

Note: Funds from other Federal sources may not be used to meet the cost share requirement. Funds or in-kind resources used as cost share must be directly related to the project goals and objectives. **Any cost share sources from other non-Federal partners should be clearly indicated within any applicable documentation including the completed SF424 and Budget Narrative.**

Further, recipients or subrecipients must maintain records which clearly show the source, the amount, and the timing of all cost share contributions.

Lastly, sources of cost share are restricted to the same requirements as funds allocated under the Federal program and must be documented in the same manner as Federal program funds, including financial and programmatic reports.

C3. Other

Applicants are expected to have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the biology of the involved listed species and its ecosystem, including preferably having worked with the species in the past. In addition, they must demonstrate that:

1. The proposal does not include funding for the salary of a Service employee.
2. The proposal does not seek funding for land acquisition or conservation easements, even if such activities are identified as a high priority recovery action for the species.
3. The proposal does not seek funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the ESA, including complying with a biological opinion under Section 7 of the Act or fulfilling commitments of a Habitat Conservation Plan under section 10 of the Act, or for projects that serve to satisfy other Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for Federal permits).
4. The applicant will provide a letter indicating they have consulted with the affected State, unless the affected State is a partner on the project.

Additional Information on Eligibility

To qualify for Recovery Challenge funds applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria in regards to (1) project types and (2) partnerships.

(1) Eligible project types are those that either:

1. Directly address high priority recovery actions for ESA listed species (under the trusteeship of the Service), specified by the Service as either:

- High priority action(s) of an approved draft or final recovery plan, or activities in a Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS) for the species tiered from an identified high priority recovery action.
    - If the project addresses Priority 2 or 3 actions, you will need to explain why these actions are being addressed instead of any existing Priority 1 actions.

2. Update an existing draft or final recovery plan where the species' lead Service Field Office has prioritized the need for updating the current plan.
3. Develop a recovery plan for a species that does not have a draft or final recovery plan, where the species is currently on the national recovery plan workplan. Link to the workplan: https://fws.gov/project/national-recovery-workplans

For projects that propose to update or develop a draft/final recovery plan, there are additional eligibility requirements:

4. The proposal cannot request incremental funding (see **Section D2** for the definition of incremental funding).

5. The period of performance must not exceed 2.5 years for developing or updating a recovery plan (where the draft recovery plan must be produced within 1 year of the start of the period of performance and the final recovery plan must be produced by the end of the period of performance). The proposal will be reviewed by the species lead verifying that the proposal meets the basic eligibility in relation to the FWS goals for that species.

Please note that land acquisition and conservation easement activities are not eligible for funding through Recovery Challenge, even if such activities are identified as a high priority recovery action for the species.

(2) Eligible partnerships include one of the following:

- A *longstanding partnership* is defined as:
    - The partner has a history of working with the Service on recovery efforts for the species addressed in the proposal for at least the past 5 years;
    - The partner must provide the same percentage of cost share (direct and/or in-kind contributions) provided over the past 5 years or 50% of the total project cost (as stated in section C2 of this NOFO), whichever is greater .
    - The partner provides the following supporting documentation:
        - Funding and in-kind contribution amounts and a brief description of the sources of these contributions for each of the previous 5 years,
        - The yearly and total percentage partner contribution over the past 5 years, and
        - The ability and commitment to continue to fund the cost share percent each year over the duration of the project.

- If the partner submits multi-year project proposals, they can only have a project duration of up to five years (if applicable).

- A *new partnership*, is defined as:
  - The partner has not yet worked with the Service on recovery efforts for the species addressed in the proposal; or the partner has worked with the Service on the species addressed in the proposal for less than 5 years;
  - The partner must provide 50 percent of the total project cost (non-Federal direct or in-kind contributions);
  - The partner provides the following documentation:
    - Funding and in-kind contribution amounts and a brief description of the sources of these contributions, and
    - The ability and commitment to provide 50 percent cost share for the total project cost each year over the duration of the project.
  - If the partner submits multi-year project proposals, they can only have a project duration of up to three years (if applicable).

Note: Requirements for Previous Award Cycle Incremental Funding Recipients Note: Requirements for Previous Award Cycle Incremental Funding Recipients Incremental funding recipients from prior award years (e.g., FY2021, FY2020) do not need to apply to this year's Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs). However, prior year awarded recipients must submit their request for incremental funding through their Notice of Award via a GrantSolutions Amendment by June 1st of each Fiscal Year .

Eligible proposals must be submitted as described in ***Section D Application and Submission Information***.

It is the applicant's responsibility to confirm that their project meets the eligibility criteria, described above, prior to submitting a proposal. The Service will not consider proposals that do not clearly meet eligibility requirements.

Identifying High Priority Recovery Actions

Eligible actions will vary by species, and may include, but are not limited to, genetically-sound breeding, rearing, and reintroduction actions, securing scientific information about endangered or threatened species and their habitat, implementing restoration actions that will lead to delisting or downlisting of a species, help prevent extinction of a species, or aid in the recovery of a species.

Approved species recovery planning documents are available on the Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) website at https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/. To locate a species, enter a species name into the "Search for a Listed species by name:" box. Alternatively, view the Species with Recovery Plans report at https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/species-with-recovery-plans and search for a species name in the Search box. Select the species' name to view the profile page or select the recovery plan from this list.

On the species profile page, scroll down to the Recovery section of the profile to determine if the species has an approved draft or final recovery plan or recovery outline. There are separate web links for the recovery plan, the plan's implementation schedule, and its recovery outline, if available. Applicants should refer to the most recently approved document.

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

Contact the Service to request a paper application package if you do not have access to the internet to download the application package forms (Please see Regional Contacts in **G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)**).

Please see regional contact list in Section G3

Program Website Link

FWS Recovery Challenge Grants website at https://www.fws.gov/service/recovery-challenge-grants

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 "

SF 424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may own or operate, and entities waived from the SAM.gov registration requirements by the funding bureau or office must submit the signed and dated SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs form. All required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov and in GrantSolutions. All other financial assistance applicants must complete the "Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations" as part of their SAM.gov entity record.

All Recovery Challenge proposals must include the following sections (or documents) to be considered a full proposal. Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the merit review

criteria provided in **Section E. Application Review Information, E1. Criteria.**
Project Synopsis (250 word max) A brief project summary (similar to a scientific abstract) including applicant/partners, species, general location, project goals and objectives, and how they relate to Service identified high priority recovery actions for the species.
Project Summary (2 page max)
Project proposals must include a project summary succinctly outlining:

- **Project title**
- **Applicant name**
- **Benefited Specie(s)** (common and scientific name(s))
- **Partnership Type** (longstanding or new)

Longstanding partners must provide a table outlining the total project cost and cost share (direct and/or in-kind partner contributions) for the past 5 years (see example 1 below). Cost share is calculated by dividing the total cost share into the total project cost (i.e., $ partner match/total project cost)

Example 1: Longstanding Partner Past Cost Share

Fiscal Year	Total Project Cost	Amount Provided by Recovery Challenge	Amount Provided by Partner as Cost Share	Partner Pct Cost Share
FY 2021	$900,000	$300,000	$600,000	67%
FY2020	$950,000	$450,000	$500,000	53%
FY2019	$595,000	$120,000	$475,000	80%
FY2018	$125,000	$50,000	$75,000	60%
FY2017	$565,000	$265,000	$300,000	53%
Totals	**$3,135,000**	**$1,185,000**	**$1,950,000**	**63%**

Based on this example, the partner must contribute at least 63% of the total project cost for each year of their proposed project.

- **Project Duration** (clearly indicate how many years it will take for the project to be completed)
- **Type of Funding Request** (incremental or upfront (full) project funding)
    - *Incremental funding* – Project funded in yearly monetary increments obligated over the indicated project period.
        - Please be aware that subsequent year funding for incremental funding projects (2-5 for longstanding partnerships, or 2-3 for new partnerships) is dependent on the availability of funding designated through future, yearly Congressional appropriations. However, if successfully funded,

incremental funding recipients would not need to apply to subsequent year NOFOs to receive future years' funding.

- *Upfront (full) funding* – Total project amount funded within the fiscal year applied.

- **Recovery Actions Addressed**

Include a concise list of the high priority recovery action(s) to be addressed by the project per species, referencing the Service or other public document they were taken from and their priority number, if applicable (e.g., priority 1, priority 2, or priority 3, *see hypothetical example below*).

Example 2: The following Priority 1 and Priority 2 recovery actions listed in the third revision of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan (1996) for the California condor are addressed in this project:

112 Operate existing breeding facilities according to management protocols (Priority 1)
12 Manage the captive flock (Priority 1)
221 Develop criteria for selecting release sites (Priority 2)
222 Select release sites (Priority 1)
23 Conduct releases in California of California condors into selected habitats (Priority 1)

Budget Overview Table (*see example below*)

- *Longstanding partners* must demonstrate how each fiscal year they will be meeting their cost share requirement of equal to or greater than their contribution percentages averaged over the past 5 years.
- *New partners* must demonstrate how each fiscal year they will be meeting their 50% cost share requirement.

	Example 3: Partner Cost Share Commitment for This Award			
Fiscal Year	**Total Project Cost**	**Amount Requested from Recovery Challenge**	**Amount Provided by Partner as Cost Share**	**Partner Pct Cost Share**
FY 2022	$875,000	$300,000	$575,000	66%
FY 2023	$800,000	$290,000	$510,000	64%
FY 2024	$815,000	$295,000	$525,000	64%
FY 2025	$187,000	$62,000	$125,000	67%

FY 2026	$700,000	$250,000	$450,000	64%
Totals	**$3,382,000**	**$1,197,000**	**$2,185,000**	**65%**

In this example, this table is for the same longstanding partner as above (example 1), which shows that they have committed to a past partner match of at least 63% per year. This example (example 3) illustrates that the Partner share (65%) under this proposal is based on the Total Project Cost and would be higher than the past cost share (63%).

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 Narrative (20 page max)

Project proposals must also include a project narrative providing additional detail on the following:

- **Project Title**
- **Description of organizations/entities undertaking the project**, providing a brief description of the applicant organization and all other participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing.
- **Information on key project personnel per organization/entity**, including the principal investigator or recipient project lead. Provide complete contact information for the

individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis.

- **Project Duration**, explicitly indicating on how many years it will take to complete the project.

- **Project Location**, including a description of where the project work will be conducted and a map of the project area. The map should clearly delineate the project area, be large enough to be legible, include approximate GPS coordinates of where work will be conducted, and label any sites referenced in the project narrative (*if applicable*).
    - Submitting a GIS shapefile of the project area is encouraged but not required.

- **Statement of Need**, clearly identifying the conservation issue that will be addressed, providing evidence to demonstrate that the need for the project is real and not perceived, and including the negative consequences if this project is not selected for funding. It should be clear why this project is necessary (significance/value) for species recovery, how it fulfills the purposes of the Recovery Challenge funding opportunity and provides supporting information. The statement of need should also articulate how the project will contribute to achieve any of the species' recovery criteria and/or contribute to down or delisting of the species.
    - If the applicant has received previous funding (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.
    - If the proposal includes a continuation of previous or ongoing work funded through this program, a justification describing the importance of the continuation of the work must be included in the project description in order to receive full consideration. The justification must describe if the proposal will address new aspects of the task, how it will be additive to or different from previous work and indicate if the task will be completed with this funding. While proposals for ongoing work may be selected for funding, it will be awarded as a new grant with discrete deliverables.

- **Goal(s) and objectives**, stating the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the project (what it hopes to achieve) and the objective(s) (specific, measurable, and realistic steps or strategies) to be implemented to attain the goal(s) within the proposed project period. Proposals should include clearly identify (directly reference) the specific high priority recovery actions that the project will achieve and reference the Service document they are captured in.
    - If the project is focused on a priority 2 or 3 actions, applicant should provide a brief explanation of why priority 1 tasks are not being addressed**.**
    - The proposal should be able to articulate how the project will contribute to species recovery without Service reviewers needing to directly reference the species' draft or final Recovery Plan or RIS.
    - If the proposed project can achieve any species' recovery criteria for down or delisting, the proposal should specifically state which criteria will be met following successful project implementation and how the project will achieve that criteria.

- **Activities and Methods/Approach**, list the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated project objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). In addition, applicants should provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity.

- **Timetable and milestones**, provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts (such as a Gantt chart) 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 over the entire proposed project period. See example timetable in Attachment A.

- **Required project monitoring and evaluation plan**, including an adaptive management plan if applicable, and description of assessment tools to be used. 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). Include any available questionnaires, surveys, curricula, exams/tests or other assessment tools to be used for project evaluation. 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.
- **Description of stakeholder coordination or involvement**, describing, as applicable, how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and details of if and how they will be involved in implementing project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities.
- **Description of coordination with Service staff** on the proposal, including contact information and dates contacted.
    - Applicants are **highly encouraged** to coordinate with Service Field Offices and Regional Offices prior to submitting a proposal for consideration to ensure their project proposals adequately support high priority recovery actions for listed species or that the Service has prioritized the target species (see ***Section G*** for Regional Recovery Challenge Coordinator contacts).

- **Documentation of consultation with the affected State**, or confirmation that the affected State is a partner on the project.
- **Information to support environmental compliance review requirements** – the Service has the responsibility for making the final determination regarding compliance with Federal laws.

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NEPA.
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with the ESA.
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NHPA, such as locations of historic or cultural properties.
- Other Permits – list and provide the current status of any other required Federal permits
- Information on any ground disturbing activities that are part of this project.

- **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.
- **Literature Cited**

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).

Budget narratives should be 1-4 pages and clearly articulate how the project is cost effective. This includes demonstrating a clear connection between the project activities (identified in the **Project Narrative**) and their proposed implementation costs. The applicant must include a clear description of the amount of Recovery Challenge funding they are requesting per year (if a

multi-year project) and demonstrate they are meeting the appropriate yearly partner cost share requirement dependent on their partnership type (see **Eligibility Requirements**). Applicants must also clearly indicate sources of their cost share funds and ensure they meet eligibility requirements. Lastly, Budget Narratives must directly match the totals submitted on the SF-424 Budget Information, Object Class Category form, as SF-424 form numbers will be used for allocation.

- It is highly encouraged to provide Budget Narrative information in tables (*when appropriate*) for clear dissemination to reviewers. See attachment A for sample budget tables.

Additional eligibility criteria required for Recovery Challenge proposals:
Multi-year Project Criteria
Applicants must be explicit in their project summary and narrative whether their project is to be considered multi-year (period of performance > 1 year) or single year (period of performance = 1 year). Budget submissions (SF-424 and Budget Narratives) for multi-year projects must clearly indicate total project costs in addition to a yearly break down of the Recovery Challenge funds requested per calendar year and yearly cost share amounts (and corresponding percentages) over the indicated project duration.

Incremental vs. Upfront (Full) Funding Criteria for Multi-year Projects
Applicants submitting multi-year projects can either request:

- Incremental funding - Project funded in yearly monetary increments obligated over the indicated project period, or
- Upfront (full) funding - Total project amount funded within the fiscal year applied.

If incremental funding is selected by the applicant, please be aware that Recovery Challenge funding will only provide year one funds during the current (FY2023) award cycle, with subsequent year funding (2-5 for longstanding partnerships, or 2-3 for new partnerships) being awarded in subsequent award cycles and dependent on the availability of funding designated through future, yearly Congressional appropriations. Projects requesting incremental funding also cannot request funding amounts in subsequent years (e.g., years 2-5) that are higher than the funding amount requested in year 1 (FY2023).

Cost Share and Partnership Documentation
Applicants must describe matching funding amounts, specifying dollar amounts and value of any in-kind services, their source(s), and a brief statement indicating the status of any commitments towards the match from other partners (e.g., letter of commitment received).

Longstanding partner cost share documentation: Describe previous work with the Service on recovery activities for the listed species addressed in the proposal; this work must have occurred for at least the past 5 years AND proposed contributions must at least be equal to or greater than the average of past contributions and greater than a 50:50 match to qualify. Note: work on a different species' recovery activities, or for less than 5 years on recovery activities for the species addressed by the proposal does not count towards meeting the criteria for the Longstanding Partnership. Include the following in your documentation:

- List the annual funding and in-kind partner contributions (and other non-Federal partners, as applicable) for each of those years; and
- Calculate the 5-year percentage from past partner contributions.
- Justification of partnership type must also be provided demonstrating how partnership eligibility qualifications are met (*see Eligibility Requirements section above*)

New partner cost share documentation: Demonstrate that the proposed funding and in-kind partner contributions would be at least a 50:50 match (i.e., the partner will contribute as much or more funding/in-kind contributions to the project than they are requesting in Recovery Challenge funds).

Incremental funding project cost share documentation: For project proposals requesting incremental funding, each yearly non-Federal cost-share must at least be equal to or greater than the average of past contributions and greater than a 50:50 cost share (for longstanding partners) or at the 50:50 cost share (for new partners). For example, if the average non-Federal cost share has been 60%, each year of a 3-year proposal must include a commitment to at least 60% non-Federal cost share per year. The proposal would be ineligible if they propose less than 60% in any project year.

Budget Narrative

Applicants must include a budget narrative that describes and justifies requested budget items and costs. In your budget narrative, describe how the SF-424 Budget Information, "Object Class Category" totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, generally describe how estimates were determined by identifying what type of staff will support the project and how much time they will contribute to the project (in hours or workdays). Describe any proposed items of cost that require prior approval under the Federal award cost principles, including any anticipated subawarding, transferring, or contracting out of any work under the award. If equipment previously purchased with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any third-party cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, identify the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See 2 CFR §200.306 for more information.

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) which replaced the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. 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

11/15/2022

Application Due Date Explanation

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

D5. Intergovernmental Review

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

D6. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs: Individuals

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

Indirect Costs: Organizations

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

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

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted by Organization:

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

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

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

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

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

- We are an organization with a current negotiated indirect cost rate. In the event we receive an award, we will charge indirect costs per our current negotiated rate agreement. Attached is a copy of our current rate agreement.
- We are an organization with a negotiated indirect cost rate that has expired. Attached is copy of our most recently negotiated rate agreement. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.
- We are an organization that has never negotiated an indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate], which is charged against [insert a complete description of the direct cost base used to distribute indirect costs to the award]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date. We understand we must provide the Service a copy of our approved rate agreement before charging indirect costs to the Federal award.

- We are an organization that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate. In the event an award is made, we elect to charge the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.1. We understand we must use this methodology consistently for all Federal awards until such time as we negotiate a different rate with our cognizant agency. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if during the award period we establish a rate that changes the methodology used to charge indirect costs to the award. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.
- We are an organization submitting a [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"] project proposal, which has an indirect cost rate cap of [insert rate; CRU is currently 15%; CESU is currently 17.5%]. In the event we receive an award, we understand that if we have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate we must charge the program's capped indirect cost rate to the same base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, per 2 CFR §1402.414. If we do not have current negotiated (including provisional) rate, we understand we must charge the capped indirect cost rate against Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) as defined in 2 CFR §200.1.
- We are an organization that will charge all costs directly.

Recovery Challenge funds cannot be used for land or easement acquisition. In addition, pre-award costs consisting of grant-related costs incurred prior to the start date of the grant's period of performance are allowable only to the extent they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the funding award and must comply with 2 CFR Part 200.458. Prior written approval from the awarding Service Region is required. Documentation of these pre-award costs and their approval must be retained as part of the award file.

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 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. 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.

E. Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

Merit Review Criteria for Proposals Contributing to High Priority Recovery Actions **Maximum Points:** 100

1. Magnitude of Species Benefit: Contribution to Population Viability (30 points maximum)

Reviewers will consider how the proposed project will maintain or improve the population viability of each species proposed to benefit from the project in terms of population resiliency, species redundancy, and species representation (3R framework). Applicants are not required to address all 3 R's per species but should address as many R's per species that will benefit from the project, in order to score the maximum number of points under this criterion.

- **Resiliency** – Project will improve the ability of populations to withstand stochastic events. Measured by the size and growth rate of each population, resiliency gauges the probability that the populations comprising a species are able to withstand or bounce back from environment or demographic stochastic events (e.g., improving abundance, survival, reproduction, and/or fecundity of a population).
- **Redundancy** – Project will improve the ability of a species to withstand catastrophic events. Measured by the number of populations, their resiliency and their distribution (and connectivity), redundancy gauges the probability that the species has a margin of safety to withstand or to bounce back from catastrophic events (e.g., improving the number and distribution of populations of a species).
- **Representation** – Project will improve the ability of a species to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Measured by the breadth of genetic or environmental diversity within and among populations of a species, representation gauges the probability that a species is capable of adapting to environmental changes (e.g., improving the adaptive capacity of a species through increasing or maintaining: habitat/ecotypes, genetic diversity, behavioral diversity, and/or morphological diversity).

Score: Applications will be prioritized based on the degree to which the project will improve species viability in relationship to the 3Rs. Applications should support their rationale with literature citations as appropriate.

- **0 points:** Application fails to establish a connection between the project and species viability and/or does not address any R for each species.
- **10 points:** Application provides sound rationale demonstrating connection between the project and **maintenance** of current species viability in terms of the 3Rs (one or more Rs can be used to demonstrate maintenance). *Maintenance of viability will be based on the project's proposed methodology and effectiveness of proposed techniques, where the proposed techniques will maintain the current condition of the targeted species.*
- **20 points:** Application provides sound rationale demonstrating connection between the project and **potential improvement** of species viability in terms of the 3Rs (one or more Rs can be used to demonstrate potential improvement). *Potential improvement will be based on the project's proposed methodology and effectiveness of proposed techniques, where the proposed techniques have not been shown to result in actual/successful improvement to the targeted species viability, but the techniques are scientifically valid for similar/surrogate species.*
- **30 points:** Application provides sound rationale demonstrating connection between the project and **improvement** of species viability in terms of the 3Rs (one or more Rs can be used to demonstrate improvement). *Improvement will be based on the project's proposed methodology and effectiveness of proposed techniques, where the techniques have been shown to result in actual/successful improvement to the targeted species viability.*

2. Magnitude of Species Benefit: Contribution to Recovery (20 points maximum)
Under this criterion, consideration will be evaluated based on how the proposed project implements priority recovery actions and/or contributes towards down or delisting criteria as identified in the species' most recently approved recovery planning document (draft or final recovery plan).

Score: Extent to which the proposed project contributes to listed species' recovery goals. Additive, up to 20 points. Proposals addressing more than one species can receive points for each species' actions or recovery criteria that are addressed. Proposals addressing more than one priority action can receive points for each action being addressed. Proposals cannot receive more than 20 points under this criterion.

- Proposed project will achieve a downlist or delist criteria (**10 pts** for each criterion)
- Proposed project will implement a priority 1 recovery action (**10 pts** for each recovery action)
- Proposed project will implement a priority 2 recovery action (**5 pts** for each recovery action)
- Proposed project will implement a priority action identified in the interim recovery strategy of a recovery outline (**5 pts** for each priority action)

- Proposed project will implement a priority 3 recovery action (**3 pts** for each recovery action)

3. Performance: Likelihood of Success (10 points)
Reviewers will consider the information provided in the proposal (project methodology, implementation schedule, permits, etc.) to determine the likelihood of project success during the proposed period of performance.

Score: The likelihood of success in implementing the project within the proposed period of performance (0 to 10 points)

- **0 points**: The proposal does not contain an implementation schedule or otherwise explain how the proposal would be completed within the proposed period of performance.
- **5 points**: The proposal includes basic information that suggests the proposed activities would be completed within the proposed period of performance, but lacks sufficient detail (e.g., implementation schedule, appropriate permits have been secured, project protocols are proven, appropriate analyses to assess success have been developed, key assumptions underlying the proposal have been articulated, etc.) that clearly indicates the likelihood of success.
- **10 points**: The proposal includes sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate how all of the proposed work is likely to be completed within the proposed period of performance.

The following additional criteria (4 and 5) are only considered during National Merit Review:

4. Program Priorities for Federal Financial Assistance (20 points)

Reviewers will determine whether the proposal is likely to achieve at least one of the following: 1) contribute to the recovery of a federally listed (i.e., threatened or endangered) species; 2) reduce or eliminate threats to listed species; or (3) result in a down- or delisting decision for a federally listed.

Score: The degree to which implementing the project will result in meeting Program Priorities for Federal Financial Assistance.

- **0 points**: The proposal is not relevant to any of the above priorities (i.e., the proposal does not contribute to the recovery of a federally listed threatened or endangered species).
- **10 points**: The proposal is likely to make a significant contribution to recovery of a threatened or an endangered species, as described above in one or more of the priorities.
- **20 points**: The proposal is likely to lead to delisting or downlisting, as described above in two or more of the priorities.

5. Enhancing Partnerships (20 points)

Reviewers will determine how the proposed project will enhance or increase Partnerships with the Service. Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant presenting information that demonstrates increased or new funding, how the project will build upon prior work resulting from that Partnership, and how the project will leverage the Partnership to move species closer to recovery.

Score: The degree to which the proposed project will enhance Partnerships with the Service.

- **0 points**: Not at all.
- **5 points**: To a small degree. The partnership is a longstanding partnership and will fundamentally remain at status quo (e.g., the proposal will continue similar levels of on-going activities with the partner, with no or minimal involvement by new entities or additional participating partners).
- **10 points**: To a moderate degree. The partnership will leverage new funding and in-kind contributions from the partner and/or other non-federal partners to substantially increase (longstanding partnerships) or establish (new partnerships) the capacity to continue implementation of the high priority recovery actions related to the listed species in the proposal.
- **20 points**: To a maximum degree. The new or longstanding partnership will leverage new funding and in-kind contributions as described above, and establishment or enhancement of the partnership will result in:

  - The implementation of additional high priority recovery actions that were previously unimplemented; OR
  - An important innovation towards achieving recovery for this species.

Merit Review Criteria for Proposals Updating or Developing Recovery Plans **Maximum Points:** 80

1. Timeliness of the proposed project or the prioritization of the species (20 points)
Reviewers will assess the benefit of the project in relation to the amount of time that has passed since the species has been listed, since the last plan update, or based upon the species' recovery priority number (RPN).. If the project proposes to update an existing recovery plan, go to **a.** If the project proposes to develop a recovery plan, go to **b**.

a. Recovery Outline Development: length of time species has been listed:
   - 0 points: > 2.5 years
   - 10 points: 1 year to 2.5 years
   - 20 points: <1 year

b. Recovery Plan Update: length of time since recovery plan was last updated:
   - 0 points: <10 years
   - 10 points: 10-30 years

- 20 points: >30 years

c. Recovery Plan Development: prioritization is based on the species' RPN:
   - 0 points: RPN of 13-18
   - 10 points: RPN of 7-12
   - 20 points: RPN of 1-6

2. Performance: Likelihood of Success (20 points)
Reviewers will consider the information provided in the proposal (project methodology, implementation schedule, etc.) to determine the likelihood of project success during the proposed period of performance.

- **0 points**: The proposal does not contain an implementation schedule or otherwise explain how the proposal would be completed within the proposed period of performance.
- **10 points**: The proposal includes basic information that suggests the proposed activities would be completed within the proposed period of performance, but lacks sufficient detail (e.g., implementation schedule, appropriate permits have been secured, project protocols are proven, appropriate analyses to assess success have been developed, key assumptions underlying the proposal have been articulated, etc.) that clearly indicates the likelihood of success.
- **20 points**: The proposal includes sufficient detail to clearly demonstrate how all of the proposed work is likely to be completed within the proposed period of performance.

3. Qualification of the applicant (40 points)
Applicants should submit a resume or CV detailing their experience with the target species and/or the taxa of the target species as well as any experience with writing scientific papers and/or plans that are similar in scope to Service recovery plans or outlines (such as a state or local recovery plan, state action plan, or other documents). Points are additive up to 20 points possible.

a. 0 points: applicant(s) does not demonstrate expertise on the species or provide evidence of their ability to prepare plans that meet Service guidelines
b. 10 points: applicant(s) have experience working with the taxa but have not specifically completed research or studies on the target species
c. 10 points: applicant(s) have prepared research papers but do not demonstrate experience on preparing plans that meet Service guidelines
d. 40 points: applicant(s) are considered the species experts (worked with target species > 10 years) 40 points: applicant(s) provides evidence of their ability to prepare plans that will meet our standard for a recovery plan (such as preparing a state or local species recovery or action plan)

E2. Review and Selection Process

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

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

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

Proposals submitted for consideration for Recovery Challenge funds are reviewed by Service staff with appropriate subject matter expertise (e.g., species recovery, ESA policy and programs). All Service staff participating in any Recovery Challenge merit review are required to 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 **Section G. "Federal Award Agency Contacts**" below. Final Recovery Challenge proposal funding recommendations are based on the following review and allocation process:

1. **Technical Review –** Implemented by the Service to determine proposal eligibility based on **Section C. Eligibility Information** outlined in this NOFO (see additional information below).
2. **Regional Merit Review (RMR) –** Implemented by each Service Regional Office, Ecological Services Program, to evaluate and score how well eligible Recovery Challenge proposals from each region meet merit criteria 1-3 (above). The top 4 proposals from each Region are submitted to the Headquarters Ecological Services Program for National Merit Review.
3. **National Merit Review (NMR) –** Managed by the Service's Headquarters, Ecological Services Program and completed by a national review panel of Service Ecological Services Program staff, to evaluate and score how well RMR proposals meet merit criteria 1-5 (above). Proposals are ranked by the average score of the NMR reviewers, with the highest proposals typically getting recommended for selection.
4. **National Prioritization Review –** Implemented by Service's Headquarters, Ecological Services Program, Recovery Challenge administrators to assess which proposals should

be recommended for funding at the appropriate level of review based on NMR scores and additional considerations (see additional information below).

5. **Final Proposal Selection and Allocation –** High ranking proposals are recommended for funding at the appropriate level of review for final review and approval. An official memo of selected projects must be signed for the award cycle to start the allocation process.

Additional Technical Review Information

During Technical Review, proposals are evaluated for adherence to eligibility requirements under **Section C. Eligibility Information** of this NOFO. Incomplete proposals will be returned to applicant to be corrected and **corrections must be submitted back to the Service within two weeks of the returned proposal**. Applicants that do not respond within two weeks with corrected materials will be disqualified. The Service, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. In addition, the Headquarters Ecological Services Program will review:

- All proposed activities for consistency with the purposes of the ESA,
- Eligibility with project activity requirements outlined above, and substantiality in character and design. Activities not eligible will be removed from consideration.
    - If there are any questions about the ability of the project to be completed in compliance with Federal laws and regulations, additional information may be requested from the applicant. A project may be disqualified if Service staff determine the project cannot meet Federal requirements.
- Partnership information to ensure the applicant has characterized themselves appropriately as a "new" or "longstanding" partner with appropriate supporting documentation and that their cost share amounts align with their partnership cost share requirements.
- The status of applicants' administration of other grants, including Single Audit submissions, past performance, financial strength and management capabilities, and procedures and methods for monitoring subrecipients or vendors.
    - Applicants in poor standing may not be considered for funding.

Additional National Prioritization Review Information

The top-scoring NMR proposals (based on the averaged NMR reviewer scores received from merit criteria assessment) will be recommended for funding by the Service's Headquarters Ecological Services Program, Recovery Challenge administrators, while also taking into account the following considerations (when applicable):

- Appropriations bill language
    - Longstanding partnerships, including for the northern aplomado falcon and California condor, should be funded at no less than their current levels and partner contributions should be no less than their current amounts and provide at least a 50:50 partner match. The remaining funds should be dedicated to other multi-year partnerships and should require at least a 50:50 partner match, which may include in- kind services.
- Availability of funding

- Partnerships with and/or participation of targeted groups
- Partner's ability to use partial funding
    - During the selection process, the Service may reach back out to applicants to inquire about their ability to accept partial funding if necessary.
- Balanced distribution of funds (where proposals are of sufficiently and/or comparable high quality) in relation to:
    - State or FWS Region,
    - Geography,
    - Research area,
    - Project types,
    - Species or species groups.
- Whether a project would be eligible for funding through a more appropriate Service grant program

Additional Selection Information
The Service may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify project objectives, work plans, or budgets should an activity be deemed ineligible, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration of each project proposed for funding will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and the Service.

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.

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 will be announced approximately 6 months after the closing date of this NOFO. The Service's goal is to obligate funds within 120 days of the award announcement.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal 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 and return the Notice of Award document. 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 120 days of the final review decision.

The following condition is specifically applicable to endangered species grants:
A permit from the Regional Director may be required if a project within a grant involves taking, transporting across State lines, introduction into an area beyond its historic range, or holding wildlife in captivity for more than 45 days. If you anticipate any of these activities, you should contact the Region to determine if you need to apply for a permit.

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.

Data Availability
Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

a. All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the

Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

b. The Federal Government has the right to:
    1. Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and
    2. Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

F3. Reporting

Financial Reports

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

Effective November 12, 2020, the 2 CFR 200 regulations now allow recipients 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance to liquidate all financial obligations incurred under the Federal award and submit all financial, performance, and other reports as required by the award terms and conditions (see 2 CFR 200.344 Closeout).

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 than120 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.

Effective November 12, 2020, the 2 CFR 200 regulations now allow recipients 120 calendar days after the end date of the period of performance to liquidate all financial obligations incurred under the Federal award and submit all financial, performance, and other reports as required by the award terms and conditions (see 2 CFR 200.344 Closeout).

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:
Patrick McKenney

Telephone:
719-651-7961

Email:

patrick_mckenney@fws.gov

G2. Program Administration

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First and Last Name:
Patrick McKenney

Telephone:
719-651-7961

Email:
fws_es_grants.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

For GrantSolutions technical registration, submission, and other assistance contact:
GrantSolutions Customer Support
1-866-577-0771
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.

States or Territory where the project will occur	**Regional Office Address**	**Regional Recovery Challenge Fund Contact, Phone Number, and Email**
Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Eastside Federal Complex 911 N.E. 11th Avenue Portland, OR 97232-4181	Sarah Hall (503) 231-6868 sarah_hall@fws.gov
Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 6018 Albuquerque, NM 87102	Vanessa Burge (505) 248-5420 Vanessa_burge@fws.gov
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services 5600 American Blvd. West Suite 990 Bloomington, Minnesota 55437-1458	Laura Ragan (612) 713-5157 laura_ragan@fws.gov

States or Territory where the project will occur	Regional Office Address	Regional Recovery Challenge Fund Contact, Phone Number, and Email
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 400 Atlanta, GA 30345	Carrie Straight (404) 679-7226 carrie_straight@fws.gov
Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035-9589	Abby Gelb (413) 253-8212 abby_gelb@fws.gov
Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 134 Union Blvd., Suite 645 Lakewood, CO 80228	Craig Hansen (303) 236-4749 craig_hansen@fws.gov
Alaska	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199	Erin Knoll (907) 786-3488 Erin_knoll@fws.gov
California and Nevada	Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606 Sacramento, CA 95825-1846	Karen "Kitti" Jensen (916) 414-6557 karen_jensen@fws.gov

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.