



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Instructions and Guidelines

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS & TRADE

Invasive Species Program

July 2026

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I. BASIC INFORMATION

Executive Summary. The Forest Service’s International Programs and Trade (IPT) Invasive Species program protects U.S. forests, grasslands, and agricultural lands by supporting projects that improve prevention and management of invasive species impacting U.S. lands. The goal of the program is to improve management of invasive pests and to prevent or minimize new infestations in the U.S. Addressing invasive species requires international cooperation, and most projects the program supports include international collaborators, such as from the native range of invasive species currently impacting the U.S., from countries also trying to manage the same invasive pests we have in the U.S., and/or countries with whom we can share information on emerging pests and prevention strategies.

Invasive pests introduced through trade cost the United States \$26 billion annually, threatening ecosystem health, biodiversity, and economic stability. Maintaining healthy, resilient forests across the U.S. is essential for the Forest Service to deliver on the President’s [Executive Order \(EO\) 14225](#) “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production” and on USDA [Secretary’s Memo \(SM\) 1078-006](#) “Increasing Timber Production and Designating an Emergency Situation on National Forest System Lands”. This work also supports the Forest Service’s efforts to deliver on [EO 14223](#) “Addressing the Threat to National Security from Imports of Timber” by limiting the spread of invasive species that might impact expanding timber harvests. It is also crucial to carrying out the President’s and USDA Secretary’s [National Farm Security Action Plan](#), specifically to minimize biosecurity threats, safeguard plant health, and improve the resilience of America’s agriculture. USDA Secretary Brook Rollins is also prioritizing invasive species research, naming “Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species” as one of the agency’s [top research priorities for 2026](#).

Through this NOFO, IPT’s Invasive Species program aims to support projects that advance tangible improvements in invasive species prevention by utilizing existing research knowledge on invasive species risks and pathways to produce actionable outcomes that protect American agriculture from invasive species. For example, past and current research has built important pre-invasion knowledge of problematic pests, such as through horizon scanning and monitoring ex-patria sentinel trees. We invite proposals that build upon and directly link this type of invasive species scientific knowledge to make improvements in regulatory frameworks, policies, and actions that will decrease new arrivals and establishment of invasive pests. Projects should bridge the gap between current research knowledge and concrete actions that will improve how the U.S. prevents the introduction and establishment of new invasive species.

- **Funding Opportunity Title:** International Programs & Trade, Invasive Species Program Funding Opportunity
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** USDA-FS-IPT-INVASIVE-SPECIES-2026
- **Assistance Listing Number(s):** 10.684 – International Forestry Programs
- **Funding:**
 - **Estimated Total Program Funding:** Up to \$500,000
 - **Expected Number of Awards:** Up to 3
 - **Individual Award Funding:** Up to \$250,000. The Agency reserves the right to award an applicant less than the funding requested based on funding availability, project eligibility,

and proposed project activities. Final grant funding levels will be subject to the availability of funds.

- **Key Dates:**
 - **Application Due Date:** September 30, 2026 by 11:59pm EDT
 - **Anticipated Award Date:** November 2026
 - **Expected Time to Process Application and Notify Applicant:** All applicants will be notified in November 2026 of the outcome of their application.
- **Agency Contact Information:** Assistant Director Beth Lebow. Applicants may contact Beth to discuss project ideas. At least one live Q&A session will be scheduled; date(s) and time(s) will be posted on grants.gov. Elizabeth.lebow@usda.gov
- **New Program, One-Time Initiative, or Annual Grant Announcements associated with an existing program:** New Program

II. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

- **Entity Types:**
 - **Nonprofit Organizations:** Non-governmental and private nonprofit entities.
 - **Educational Institutions:** Universities and colleges.
 - **Government Entities:** Local, State, and tribal governments.
 - **International Organizations:** Foreign non-governmental organizations. (Note: International applicants must generally be legally registered and from countries not sanctioned by the U.S. State Department).
 - **For-Profit Organizations:** Commercial businesses and corporations.
- **Restrictions:** Individuals are not eligible to apply.
- **Disqualifying Criteria:** Applicants that do not meet the eligibility definition will be deemed ineligible and removed from competition without further consideration.
- **Factors Disqualifying an Application:** Applications submitted without an active SAM.gov registration, without the required 20% cost share, and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- **Limit on Allowable Application Submissions:** Only one application per organization will be considered.

Cost Sharing

- **Required Cost Sharing:** Applicants must contribute matching funds equal to at least 20% of the Forest Service requested funds. For example, if the requested Federal amount is \$100,000, the applicant match must be at least \$20,000 or more. Applications that do not include this match will be deemed ineligible.

- **Cost Sharing Calculations:** Match must be met using eligible and allowable costs and is subject to match requirements in Federal regulations. Allowable expenses are those that are directly allocable to specific implementation of the proposed project and agreement. For information about Federal cost principles and related topics, see [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#). Applicant match may include cash or in-kind contributions.
- **Cost Sharing Restrictions:** All matching funds must be directly related to the proposed project and must come from non-Federal sources.
- **Cost Sharing Commitment Requirements:** Applicants must submit letters of support from third-party organizations confirming the amount of cash or in-kind services to be provided, up to the minimum required match. Additional funds beyond the matching requirement can be shown as leverage. Letters of financial commitment are not required for leveraged funding. Applicants who show a match beyond the required match are legally obligated to meet the match amount listed in the grant. No points or preference are given to proposals matching beyond the required contribution.
- **Indirect Costs:** Applicants may request reimbursement for indirect costs using their established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA, if applicable) or the de minimis rate of 15% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) per [2 CFR § 200.414\(f\)](#).
 - MTDC are calculated as defined in 2 CFR 200.1 “[Modified Total Direct Cost \(MTDC\)](#)”.
 - If applying using a NICRA, a copy of the NICRA letter is required as an attachment to the application.
 - Only entities with an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) are eligible to use waived unrecovered Federal indirect costs as match.

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- **Funding Purpose:** The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support projects that translate existing scientific knowledge of invasive species risks and pathways into actionable strategies that improve the U.S. ability to prevent and detect new invasive species before they damage American agriculture and ecosystems.
- **Funding Priorities:** Preference will be given to proposals that:
 - Utilize scientific knowledge to accelerate tangible improvements in invasive species prevention and detection efforts in the U.S.
 - Include international partners as collaborators
 - Support the Executive Orders and Secretarial memos noted in the [Executive Summary](#) section above and the Program Citations section below.
- **Program Goals and Objectives:**
 - Protect American agriculture and ecosystems from invasive species by supporting research and projects that improve management, prevention, and detection of invasive species impacting forests and grasslands in the U.S.
 - Engage international collaborators to share knowledge and experiences
- **Award Goals and Objectives:**

- Improve U.S. prevention and/or detection methods for new invasive species by making the latest scientific knowledge more actionable
- **Expected Achievements:**
 - Each award will result in the development of one or more new strategies that improve invasive species prevention or detection in the U.S.
- **Performance Measures:**
 - Number of specific, science-based recommendations for improvements in regulatory frameworks, policies, or operational procedures developed and formally shared with relevant governing bodies or agencies.
 - Number of new or revised prevention tools, protocols, methodologies, or best practice guides developed and ready for piloting or implementation.
 - Number of formal engagements (consultations, presentations, workshops, advisory roles, etc.) conducted with policymakers, regulators, or industry leaders to discuss project findings and proposed actions.
- **Federal Role:** The Invasive Species program will oversee project performance and communicate results and outcomes within the Forest Service and to broader USDA.
- **Unallowable Costs:** Unallowable costs are defined in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#).
- **Program Citations:** The Grants under this announcement will support the [International Forestry Cooperation Act of 1990, section §4501](#). Forestry and related natural resource assistance section (b) of this authority for International Forestry activities covers activities on prevention and control of insects, diseases, and other damaging agents. The program also supports the President’s [Executive Order \(EO\) 14225](#) “Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production”, the [USDA Secretary’s Memo \(SM\) 1078-006](#) “Increasing Timber Production and Designating an Emergency Situation on National Forest System Lands”, [EO 14223](#) “Addressing the Threat to National Security from Imports of Timber”, the President’s and [USDA Secretary’s National Farm Security Action Plan](#), and the [USDA Secretary’s research priorities for 2026](#).

IV. APPLICATION CONTENTS AND FORMAT

Required Contents:

- Project Narrative, no longer than 5 pages single-spaced at 11 point font, not including references, and including:
 - Project Title
 - Brief Background
 - Succinctly summarize what the project is about and the approach to the project goals and objectives stated above
 - Clearly define the specific issue, challenge, or gap the project will address
 - Project Goals and Objectives
 - List goals and objectives in bullet format

- Goals should identify the outcomes you want to achieve based on the project need. Objectives are the measurable steps needed to accomplish goals
 - Describe how the project responds to this funding opportunity
- Project Description
 - Describe the specific activities or tasks that will be carried out to accomplish the goals and objectives
- Project Outcomes and Impacts
 - Describe how progress will be measured. Provide measurable outcomes.
 - Describe how the project will improve invasive species prevention and/or detection in the U.S.
- Project Timeline
 - Typical award is for 2 or 3 years, though projects of great complexity may be awarded for a longer period, not to exceed 5 years
- Qualification of Teams and Partners
 - List key personnel and their role in the project.
 - CVs may be included as appendices to demonstrate qualifications and experience relevant to the proposed project
- Project Budget
 - Itemized budget broken down by federal budget categories in the [SF-424A](#)
 - Itemized match funding including in-kind contributions
 - Submitted in Excel format with formulas/calculations included
- **Requirements After Notification of Intent:** If application is successful, partner will be asked to complete the full suite of forms required for federal financial assistance awards, including the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and FS1500-35.

V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

- **Application Materials:** This announcement contains all the information needed to apply.

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

- Each Entity Applicant Must:
 - Register in SAM.gov before applying. This process can take some time so early registration is highly recommended.
 - The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is a government-wide registry for organizations doing business with the Federal government. There is no fee for registering with SAM.gov.
 - The entity name and business address registered in SAM must exactly match the applicant's name and address provided on the application.

- Provide the valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov
- Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM.gov with current information at all times, particularly through any active Federal award, or while an application is under consideration by a Federal agency.

Submission Instructions

- **Actions Prior to Applying:** An online Grants.gov account is required to view, create, and submit a grant application package. The point of contact for an application will need to create an account using the same email address as used in the SAM.gov registration. An applicant's Unique Entity ID (UEI) obtained during the SAM registration must be added to the Grants.gov profile.
- **Application Submission Methods:** Applicants must apply for this funding opportunity at www.grants.gov. No emailed, mailed, or faxed applications will be accepted.

Submission Dates and Times

- **Application Deadline:** Applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by **11:59PM Eastern Standard Time (EDT), September 30, 2026**, with NO EXCEPTIONS.

Intergovernmental Review

- **Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs:** This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW

Responsiveness Review

- **Responsiveness Review Process:** All submissions will be screened for completion, adherence to application requirements, and alignment with program goals.
- **Disqualifying Criteria:** Incomplete submissions and/or submissions without the required cost-share will disqualify an application from the review process. Late or emailed, faxed, or mailed proposals will not be accepted.

Review Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated based on its ability to meet the following criteria. Each proposal can earn a maximum of 100 total points.

- ***Project Goals and Objectives (20 points total)***
 - Does the proposal explicitly state how its goals and objectives directly contribute to the broader Invasive Species Program Goals and Objectives outlined in [Section III](#).
 - Are the project's goals clearly articulated and measurable?
 - Is the proposed project directly relevant to improving invasive species prevention and/or detection?
- ***Project Description (30 points total)***

- Is the project's scope clearly articulated?
 - Does the proposed project clearly describe how the project will be executed?
 - Are the methods appropriate for achieving the stated goals?
 - Are there clear milestones?
 - Is the proposed timeline realistic given the scope of work, resources, and complexity?
- ***Project Outcomes and Impacts (35 points total)***
 - Are the tangible products or results clearly identified, specific, and measurable?
 - Does the proposal describe the expected changes or results from the project's activities?
 - Is there a clear and logical link between the project activities and the expected deliverables and outcomes?
 - Are the proposed deliverables and outcomes realistic given the funding amount, and does the project promise a significant return on investment relative to the cost?
 - Is the percentage of budget allocated to administrative costs justified and relatively low, allowing more funding for project activities?
 - Is the larger, long-term impact or contribution of this project to the field of invasive species management well-defined?
 - Does the proposal attempt to quantify the expected impact?
 - Could the project's methods or results be scaled up to amplify impact?
 - Does the proposal articulate how the project will realistically contribute to preventing new invasive species or improving early detection of existing ones?
 - ***Qualifications of Staff, Organization, and Partners (15 points)***
 - Do the qualifications and experience of the key personnel align with the technical requirements of the proposed project?
 - Is there evidence of successful completion of similar projects, or demonstrated capabilities in the proposed activities?
 - Does the lead organization possess the necessary infrastructure, resources, and institutional support to successfully execute the project?
 - If other partners are involved, are their roles clearly defined and do their qualifications strengthen the overall project team?

Review and Selection Process

- **Reviewers:** A review panel consisting of Forest Service and external invasive species experts will evaluate the proposals.
- **Reviewer Process:** Proposals will be scored based on review criteria described above. The number of top scoring proposals will be selected based on funding availability.

Risk Review

- **Risk Review Factors:**
 - In accordance with 2 CFR 200.206, before any funding is awarded, the USDA Forest Service will conduct a risk review considering the applicant's financial stability, history of performance, audit reports and findings, and ability to implement the project and meet grant

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

- Before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206, the Federal agency will consider any applicant comments along with information available in the responsibility/qualification records in SAM.gov.
- The Forest Service will also consider the following items when evaluating project risk:
 - Financial stability. The applicant's record of effectively managing financial risks, assets, and resources.
 - Management systems and standards. Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in this part.
 - History of performance. The applicant's record of managing previous and current Federal awards, including compliance with reporting requirements and conformance to the terms and conditions of Federal awards, if applicable.
 - Audit reports and findings. Reports and findings from audits performed under subpart F or the reports and findings of any other available audits, if applicable; and
 - Ability to effectively implement requirements. The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on recipients of Federal awards.

VII. AWARD NOTICES

- **Award Notification:** Award announcements are expected in October 2026. All applicants will be notified via email about the success of their application. The notification of award is not an authorization to begin project performance.
- **Pre-Award Costs:** Project costs and expenses incurred prior to the award announcement date will not be reimbursable with Forest Service funds and are not eligible for consideration as match. If pre-award costs are allowed, approval will be provided by Forest Service program staff, but beginning performance is done at the applicant's own risk.
- **Federal Award:** The completed and fully signed Federal award documentation is the authorizing document. This will be sent to the awardee by email once the award is executed.
- **Notifications to Applicants Not Awarded:** The Forest Service will notify applicants who were not selected for funding by email within two months of the application deadline.

VIII. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

- **Administrative and National Policy Requirements.** The [USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#) and the [Forest Service Federal Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions](#) apply to awards issued pursuant to this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- **General Terms and Conditions:** Recipients and subrecipients of Forest Service Federal financial assistance must comply with the [Forest Service](#) and [USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#). Applicants are strongly encouraged to review these terms and conditions. Additional agency and/or program conditions may also be included in awards.
- **Specific Terms and Conditions:** Any agreement that results in an acquisition of commercial

unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) technology must meet the requirements set forth in [M-26-02](#).

- **Reporting.** Financial reports (Form SF-425) and Performance reports are required for awarded projects. Performance reports should include reporting on the Performance Measures listed in the Program Description section above. Submission instructions and templates for submitting these reports will be provided as part of the execution of the grant agreement. Additional reporting requirements are included in [2 CFR § 180.335](#), [180.350](#), and [Appendix XII](#).

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

- **Confidentiality:**
 - Materials submitted to the Forest Service, such as funded grant applications and progress reports, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Upon request, the Forest Service may be obligated to disclose such records. However, documents or portions of documents will be protected if they satisfy the requirements of one or more [FOIA exemptions](#).
- In the event that the Forest Service receives a FOIA request seeking information provided by your organization, [Executive Order 12600](#) requires the Forest Service to consult with you regarding the potential release of this information. When assembling your application, you may wish to highlight any information that constitutes a trade secret, whose release would cause you competitive harm, or whose release would impact personal privacy. For more information about the FOIA and its exemptions, please consult the [Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act](#).
- **Contacts for Assistance:**
 - **SAM.gov entity registration:**
 - SAM Help Desk <https://sam.gov/help>
 - SAM assistance for Federal applicants (APEX Accelerators): <https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/service-area-locator>
 - **Grants.gov registration and functions:**
 - All questions regarding Grants.gov technical assistance must be directed to [Applicant Support](#). Applicants may also call the 24/7 toll-free support number 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.
 - **Program contact:** Elizabeth.lebow@usda.gov

Appendix A: Match Letter Template

The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 20 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. See [Section 3.5](#) and [Section 4.6](#) for more information regarding match requirements. This template is downloadable as a Microsoft Word document in the Related Documents tab of the Grants.gov posting.

School District/Agency/Organization Letterhead

{Date}

{Name of Entity Providing Match}

{Address}

{City, State, ZIP}

To Erica Antonson, Acting Branch Chief, Grants Management Operations Branch:

The {Organization Name} commits to providing {total \$ amount which must match what is in budget} in matching funds for {applicant's name} in their project, {"Project Title"}.

The {total \$ amount} matching funds will be provided during the project's period of performance. This amount will be distributed as {Describe the source of match, what expenses are being provided, e.g., in-kind personnel expenses, garden supplies, meeting space, etc., and how the calculation was derived} towards the completion of the project.

Should there be any questions regarding this letter, please contact us at {contact information}.

Sincerely,

{Signature}

{Name of Director, CEO, etc.}

{Contact information}