

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST WITHIN
THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT
INTEREST #N62473-18-2-0011
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2018**

Project Title: Agassiz's Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus Agassizii*) Post-Translocation Genetic Assimilation at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for a project to be funded by the Department of the Navy (DoN) to conduct a genetic assimilation study for translocated Agassiz's Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) populations on and around the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) in accordance with the conservation measures of MCAGCC's Basewide Biological Opinions (USFWS 1-8-99F-41 and 8-8-11-F-65R) and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (MCAGCC 2012). The authority for this Cooperative Agreement is 16 USC §670c-1 (Sikes Act). Approximately \$208,856.00 is expected to be available to support the base requirements of this project.

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

Authority: Cooperative Agreement under 16 USC §670c-1

Eligible Applicants: Any Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Californian and Desert Southwest cooperative partner who qualifies under the DoDGARS Part 34 or 2 Code of Federal Regulations 200 is eligible to apply.

Cost Sharing: Not required

Background:

In 2017 and 2018, under contract N62470-13-D-8016 Task Order FZ02, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) translocated approximately 1,300 federally threatened desert tortoise (Agassiz's Desert Tortoise) from training areas to adjacent protected areas on the installation and adjacent Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) lands. A successful translocation presumes that desert tortoise integrate into the resident population by dispersing across the recipient area and reproducing with the resident population. A research paper published in 2017 (Mulder et al.) found that male desert tortoise that were translocated by the Department of Defense in a previous effort did not sire any offspring four years after the translocation. This proposed Cooperative Agreement seeks to find a Cooperator to replicate that study for the MCAGCC translocation, with the goal of determining if, and to what extent, translocated tortoises reproduce in their new locations. Such efforts are made in accordance with the conservation measures of MCAGCC's Basewide Biological Opinions (BO) and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP), which require the Agassiz's Desert Tortoise to be monitored and managed.

Reference:

Mulder KP, AD Walde, WI Boarman, AP Woodman, EK Latch, RC Fleischer. 2017. No paternal genetic integration in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) following translocation into an existing population. *Biological Conservation* 210: 318-324.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

The primary objective is to conduct a genetic analysis of tortoise progeny in order to assign parentage to either translocated or resident males. The analysis will use a large number of samples collected in association with the 2017 and 2018 translocated animals. Samples of male and female resident and translocated animals will be used to generate a genetic database from which offspring will be assigned parentage. The analysis will investigate parentage for juveniles hatched in 2018, and an Option Period may be awarded to investigate parentage in 2019 and 2020 as well.

Please see enclosure 1 for full scope of work and enclosure 2 for applicable terms and conditions.

Period of Performance.

The period of performance covered by this agreement is 24 months upon award with an Option Period, that if exercised, will extend the period of performance by another 24 months. The end date is the anticipated date that the Final Report is accepted by the Government. The parties may extend the term of this agreement by written modification. The total duration of this agreement, including the option period, shall not exceed 48 months. The Option Period is subject to the availability of funds.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Reagan Pablo (reagan.s.pablo@navy.mil)

- 1) SF 424 (Enclosure 3)
- 2) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 4). Please see Factor 1 for qualification requirements.
- 3) Research and Related Budget Form (Enclosure 5). Please see Factor 3 for additional submittal requirements.
- 4) SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Enclosure 6). If applicable, complete SF-LLL. Applicability: If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the grant/cooperative agreement, you must

complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."

5) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 7). The Federal Government has a continuing commitment to monitor the operation of its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of its proposed PDs/PIs and co-PDs/PIs. To gather information needed for this important task, the applicant should submit the requested information for each identified PD/PI and co-PDs/PIs with each proposal. Submission of the requested information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. However, information not submitted will seriously undermine the statistical validity, and therefore the usefulness, of information received from others. Any individual not wishing to submit some or all the information should check the box provided for this purpose. Upon receipt of the application, this form will be separated from the application. This form will not be duplicated, and it will not be a part of the review process. This data will be kept confidential.

Reimbursement of pre-award costs will not be allowed.

Review of Statements Received: Proposals will be evaluated based on the following three factors: 1) Credentials of Key Personnel, 2) Scientific Approach, and 3) Reasonableness of Cost. Factors 1, 2, and 3 are of equal importance.

NOTE: All requirements listed are minimum requirements. Offerors will be assessed on their ability to adhere to the listed requirements, completeness of responses, follow directions, comply with restrictions and provide quality control on their submittals. All page limits refer to 12 point font and single spaced pages.

Factor 1 - Credentials of Key Personnel:

A. Senior Scientist/Principal Investigator (PI). The Recipient shall designate one person as responsible for ensuring that provisions are in place for project and personnel supervision, quality control and meeting of reporting requirements are met on a daily basis. This position shall be responsible for liaison between Recipient and the Grants Officer or CATR and shall serve as the main point of contact for all required results and/or progress reports on the study. This person shall have, at the minimum:

- i) A PhD degree in Genetics, Conservation Biology, or related field.
- ii) At least five years of professional research experience conducting and publishing genetic analyses, including having developed genetic markers for and analyzing genetic patterns on Agassiz's desert tortoise.
- iii) A minimum of five years of experience in a PI capacity.

B. Research Scientist/Project Manager (PM). The PM shall serve as the main point of contact for status/progress and deliverables. This person shall have, at the minimum:

- i) A Master's degree in Genetics, Conservation Biology, or similar field.
- ii) A background in bio-informatics and genetic analyses, with a minimum of two years of applicable experience conducting genetic sequence analyses.

C. Technician(s) (if proposed): shall possess, at a minimum:

- i) A Bachelor's degree in Biology or related field.
- ii) Have a minimum of one year of lab/data experience conducting genetic sample processing and analysis

With the Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form, the Applicant shall provide type written resumes, not to exceed 3 pages (per key personnel), single spaced with 12pt font for the PI and PM. Resumes must state qualifications and experience with this type of project.

Factor 2 –Scientific Approach – The Offeror shall develop and submit a proposal (maximum 10 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt. font), addressing the proposed research objectives. The Offeror will be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and the use of any innovative techniques that can enhance the accuracy of the genetic analysis. The project proposal shall include timelines across the base period and the 24-month Option Period, roles and responsibilities of personnel, specific tasks to be conducted, and deliverables. Please be as specific as possible.

Factor 3 – Reasonableness of Cost – After technical evaluation of the proposal, the offers will be analyzed to determine whether they are balanced with respect to prices or separately priced items, and for fair and reasonable pricing. Evaluations will include an analysis to determine the Offeror's comprehension of the requirements of the solicitation as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror's approach. Please submit proposed budget for the option years on separate research and related budget form.

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form*(Enclosure 5).

***Form: RESEARCH AND RELATED BUDGET**

Complete the Research and Related Budget form in accordance with the instructions on the form. You must provide a detailed cost breakdown of all costs, by cost category, by the funding periods described below, and by task/sub-task corresponding to the task number in the proposed Statement of Work. You may request funds under any of the categories listed as long as the item and amount are necessary to perform the proposed work and

meet all the criteria for allowability under the applicable Federal cost principles. The budget should adhere to the following guidelines:

The budget should be driven by program requirements. Elements of the budget shall include:

- Direct Labor - Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates.
- Indirect Costs - Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, COM, etc. (must show base amount and rate). Justify in Field K.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify in Field K (on the form).
- Subcontract - A cost proposal as detailed as the applicant's cost proposal will be required to be submitted by the subcontractor. If applicable, include in Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment Form.
- Consultant - Provide consultant agreement or other document that verifies the proposed loaded daily/hourly rate. Include a description of the nature of and the need for any consultant's participation. Strong justification must be provided, and consultants are to be used only under exceptional circumstances where no equivalent expertise can be found at a participating university. Provide budget justification in Field K.
- Materials - Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field K.
- Other Directs Costs – Clarify any proposed items of equipment or facilities. Equipment and facilities generally must be furnished by the cooperator/recipient (justifications must be provided when Government funding for such items is sought). Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify in Field K.

Budget Justification (Field K on the form): Provide the required supporting information for the cost elements as shown above (see Research & Related Budget instructions) and listed as follows: indirect cost, travel, consultant, materials, and other direct costs. Provide any other information you wish to submit to justify your budget request.

NOTE: Every deviation from the scope of work requirement must be identified. Proposer must identify the paragraph in the scope of work that is applicable and provide sufficient information to justify why the deviation is in the best interest of the government.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION FACTORS – Factor 1, 2, and 3 are of

equal importance.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest:

We request that Statements of Interest be submitted by August 17, 2018 2:00 PM local standard time. This Request for Statements of Interest will remain open until an investigator team is selected. Statements of Interest received after August 17, 2018 2:00 PM local standard time is considered “late” and may not be considered.

Please send responses or direct questions to:

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