



## REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS March 24, 2021

### ***Contractor to Develop a Mojave Desert Tortoise Monitoring Plan in Support of the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership***

#### **OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified independent Contractor to develop a monitoring plan ("the Monitoring Plan") that will be used to track progress towards objectives integral to implementing the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP) initiative to recover the Mojave desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). The Contractor will conduct requisite review of existing data sources, describe methods to generate new data for species objective monitoring and suggest guidance for data management. The successful Offeror will be selected through a competitive process that is based on an assessment of the Offeror's proposed plan for achieving work items, technical qualifications, and cost considerations. The contract Period of Performance is estimated to be up to 5 months.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In June 2018, the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Interior (DOI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the RASP initiative to develop species conservation and recovery initiatives and provide increased flexibility for military missions. Stated purposes of the RASP in the MOU were to "develop and promote effective ecosystem and species conservation and recovery initiatives" and to "provide for increased flexibility for military mission activities."

DoD and DOI identified the Mojave desert tortoise ("desert tortoise") as a priority species for recovery support through the RASP, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has developed biological opinions (BOs) in consultation with several DoD installations within the range of the desert tortoise to support the RASP initiative. Each BO documents the respective installation's proposed contribution to implement this Endangered Species Act section 7(a)(1) program. The goal is for the implementation of the section 7(a)(1) program to be a joint effort by RASP installations in California's Mojave Desert, including the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) and Ft. Irwin.

The Desert Tortoise Recovery Partnership (DTRP) was formed through a collaboration between NFWF, U.S. Marines Corps, U.S. Army, USFWS and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to coordinate implementation of strategies outlined in the RASP BOs and provide additional resources to address the pressing conservation needs of the desert tortoise. As a coordinating partner, NFWF is developing the Mojave Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Plan that will guide future investments to achieve targeted conservation goals for desert tortoise populations and their habitat.

NFWF is seeking a qualified contractor to develop a Monitoring Plan to accompany the Mojave Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Plan that will provide a detailed framework to monitor desert tortoise population parameters (survival, reproduction, recruitment, density) to track progress towards achieving conservation goals.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work for this Request for Quotations. The Contractor should anticipate bi-weekly check-in calls with NFWF throughout the duration of the project. Please provide time and cost quotes for each Task using the Contractor Budget template provided. The deliverable for each Task will be time and resource dependent, and one or more tasks may be added or removed from the contract SOW at NFWF's discretion due to funding limitations, time constraints, the results from earlier tasks or other reasons.

### **Task 1: Kick-off meeting and initial RASP objectives orientation**

Kick-off meeting via phone May 2021

Review key documents relating to the RASP Implementation Plan to become familiar with the strategies, goals, objectives (both habitat and population parameters) and partner priorities as they pertain to the development of the Monitoring Plan

Become familiar with the Implementation Plan materials and identify any additional data needs

Target Date: May 2021

Deliverable: A memo summarizing the final set of objectives that will be informed by Tasks 2-4

### **Task 2: Identify, review and recommend existing data sources for Monitoring Plan**

Review and recommend existing data sources that provide relevant, timely, and reliable data to include in the Monitoring Plan to inform baseline estimates and progress made towards RASP objectives identified in Task 1

The contractor should assess the statistical soundness of each data source and if needed, provide guidance to supplement or complement existing data to meet the scope and scale of RASP objectives

Identify processes and schedules by which NFWF can officially access and collect these data to support Implementation Plan monitoring needs

Identify instances where additional guidance will need to be developed as described in Task 3

Target Date: Jun 2021

Deliverable: Memo with recommendations on the compiled data sources for use in the Monitoring Plan with gaps identified; conference call with NFWF to review and discuss recommendations

### **Task 3: Describe methods and study design needed to complete the scope of required monitoring towards objectives**

Using the existing monitoring portfolio compiled from Task 2, develop monitoring guidance necessary to establish baselines and monitor progress towards objectives for instances where existing monitoring data are lacking to adequately track progress

The contractor should work collaboratively with partners to ensure the developed guidance is of comparable or greater scientific rigor to existing efforts, and incorporates vetted monitoring protocols and methodologies for monitoring desert tortoise populations

Target Dates: Jul 2021

Deliverable: Detailed, written summary that clearly describes the newly developed study design guidance for objective monitoring

**Task 4: Identify opportunities for effectiveness monitoring to inform an adaptive management strategy**

Identify RASP partner priorities for monitoring the effectiveness of habitat improvements, translocations, head-starting and other strategies that are part of the RASP Implementation Plan  
Compile existing monitoring protocols and describe new guidance for identified effectiveness monitoring priorities

Recommend guidance that evaluates the significance and implications of effectiveness monitoring to inform recommendations for change as they relate to spatial, temporal and implementation priorities that support adaptive management

Target Date: Aug 2021

Deliverable: Detailed, written summary that describes effectiveness standards and priorities, the methods used to evaluate them, and guidance for evaluating the implications of results

**Task 5: Develop data management guidance**

Prepare data management guidance that describes the format, organization and storage of acquired and newly generated monitoring data outlined in Tasks 2-4

If needed, create templates for data entry in Excel, Access and other types of databases

Identify when and how data should be uploaded to federal data repositories, and ensuing availability to RASP partners or other agents

Target Date: Sept 2021

Deliverables: Written report of data management guidance and associated data entry templates

**Task 6: Presentation of monitoring plan to RASP Partnership**

Virtual Presentation to RASP partners to present the proposed Monitoring Plan

Solicit and process feedback from meeting to incorporate in the final version of the Monitoring Plan

Target Dates: Sept 2021

Deliverables: Final draft to circulate to RASP partners prior to presentation

**Task 7: Final report**

Finalize Monitoring Plan. NFWF will review a draft of the report and provide comments, which should be addressed prior to the deliverable date

Target Dates: Oct 1, 2021

Deliverables: Written Monitoring Plan that includes all the elements produced from Tasks 2-5 and any supplemental material (data entry templates, spatial data, etc.) created or acquired in support of the Monitoring Plan development

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Describe when and where assistance of a RASP coordinator would be necessary to facilitate the planning, data collection or other duties to implement the Monitoring Plan, especially as they pertain to gaps in partner capacity

NFWF staff will assist Contractor with access to NFWF data, information, and other relevant information, as appropriate



Contractor shall treat all such information as CONFIDENTIAL without express security review and written permission to share, disclose, or otherwise utilize that information for purposes beyond this project

All data, models and information developed during this project shall be the property of NFWF at the conclusion of this project unless express written permission to the contrary has been provided by NFWF

## REQUIRED EXPERTISE

The successful offeror will have significant expertise in study design, statistics, population biology, conservation biology, data management, spatial data, and desert tortoise and Mojave Desert ecology. The Offeror should have experience with applied desert tortoise management and be able to incorporate a practical understanding of desert tortoise restoration actions and species response in the Monitoring Plan.

## CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Proposal Narrative based on these sections:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Proposal Narrative should demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the tasks, including familiarity with desert tortoise conservation involved under this contract. It should include a description of how the Offeror plans to communicate with NFWF to report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 10%
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach should clearly describe the methods necessary to complete each portion of the Monitoring Plan. This section should clearly describe the proposed methods and demonstrate that they are robust, accurate and appropriate for conducting the project, and logically and quantitatively address any areas of complexity or uncertainty. Weight: 20%
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite skills to do so successfully. Weight: 20%
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the principal investigator's past performance experience with population monitoring, particularly those associated with the desert tortoise. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered. If subcontractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this project. Weight: 20%
5. **Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the [Contractor Budget Template provided](#). You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed, but should not make any other changes. Weight: 30%



## **ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state and Indian tribal governments.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the Statement of Quotations, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Quotations) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the contractor, the contractor's employees, or the contractor's subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a Contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an Contract with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration's, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension," or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other Contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions instructions can be found here: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

## SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF's Staff Scientist for Wildlife Conservation, Erica Perez (Erica.Perez@nfwf.org), using the requirements below:

### 1. Technical Proposal

- Format: Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- Contact information: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- Narrative: Concise (10-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.
- Biographies: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area (no page limit).
- References: List at least two clients who have received services from the applicant that is similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.

2. **Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the provided [Contractor Budget Template](#).

3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirements of this solicitation.

## SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF and RASP partner staff will review the proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Only one award will be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINES

### March 30, 2021

Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Erica Perez (erica.perez@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF **no later than 11:59 PM EST on March 30, 2021**.

### April 2, 2021

NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website: <https://www.nfwf.org/media-center/announcements/request-quotations-contractor-develop-mojave-desert-tortoise-monitoring-plan-support-recovery-and>



**April 21, 2021**

Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals.

Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Erica Perez ([erica.perez@nfwf.org](mailto:erica.perez@nfwf.org)) by **5:00 PM EST on April 21, 2021**.

Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.

**May 2021**

Contract award to selected offeror

**October 1, 2021**

Final Deliverables Due

*Interim deliverables are due at the times specified in the Statement of Work*