

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TX 76102-0300

May 16, 2024

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST
W9126G-24-2-SOI-2874**

*Applicants must be a member in one of the following Cooperative Ecosystem Studies
Units Regions: Californian/Desert Southwest CESU Regions*

**Project Title: Natural Resources Support – Black Abalone at Vandenberg
SFB, California**

A cooperative agreement is being offered ONLY to members of the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Program Region(s) identified above. Award will be made upon mutual agreement and acceptance of the terms and conditions contained in the request for proposal and the of the recipient's CESU Master Agreement. Note the established CESU Program indirect rate is 17.5%.

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential organizations for this project. Approximately **\$50,000.00** is expected to be available to support this project for the **base period**. Additional funding may be available to the successful recipient for optional tasks and/or follow on work in subsequent years.

NOTE: This project will be awarded under the authority of 16 USC 670c-1, **Sikes Act**: For projects for the implementation and enforcement of integrated natural resources management plans, priority shall be given to award to Federal and State agencies having responsibility for the conservation or management of fish or wildlife.

Period of Performance. The base period of agreement will extend 18-months from date of award (*3-month administrative period for project preparation, 12-months of technical support/field work, 3-month administrative period to complete deliverables*). There may be up to five 18-month follow-on periods based on availability of funding.

Description of Anticipated Work: See attached Statement of Objectives

NOTE: At this time we are only requesting that you demonstrate available qualifications and capability for performing similar or same type of work by submitting a Statement of Interest. A full proposal and budget are NOT requested at this time.

Preparation of your Statement of Interest: Provide the following (Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced, 12 pt. font):

1. Name, Organization, Cage Code, Unique Entity ID, and Contact Information (Email)
2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
 - a. Biographical sketch of the Principal Investigator, to include specific

- experience and capabilities in areas related to this project's requirements
- b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects
- c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise
- d. Brief description of other capabilities to successfully complete the project: (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.)

Submission of Your Statement of Interest

1. Statements of Interest are due by **12:00 P.M., Central Time, on 17 June 2024.**
2. Submit your Statement of Interest via e-mail attachments or direct questions to:

Sandy Justman

Grants Specialist
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: nicholas.a.aprea@usace.army.mil
Office: 817-886-1073

David Leptien

Project Manager
USACE, Fort Worth District
Email: david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil
Office: 402-889-5570

Review of Statements Received: All statements of interest received from a member of the CESU Region(s) identified above will be evaluated by a board comprised of one or more people at the receiving installation or activity, who will determine which statement(s) best meet the program objectives: offer the most highly qualified Principal Investigator, have the most relevant experience and the highest capability to successfully meet the program objectives. Submitters whose statements are determined to best meet the program objectives will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest: RSOL's are required to be posted on www.Grants.gov for 30 days prior to the Government making a decision and requesting full proposals.

Thank you for your interest in our Cooperative Agreements Program.

Paige E. Poorman
PAIGE E. POORMAN
Grants Officer

Attachment: Statement of Objectives

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
BLACK ABALONE SURVEYS AND MANAGEMENT
at
VANDENBERG SFB, CALIFORNIA

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) environmental program ensures military mission activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations and policies with cooperation and assistance from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's (AFCEC) Installation Support Section (ISS). Article I B of the master agreement states the objectives of the CESU are to: provide research, technical assistance and education to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their potential partners; develop a program of research, technical assistance and education that involves the biological, physical, social sciences needed to address resource issues and interdisciplinary problem-solving at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context at the local, regional, and national levels; and place special emphasis on the working collaboration among federal agencies and universities and their related partner institutions.

1.2 The work will involve natural resource management activities, field surveys, reporting, coordination, and travel to and from VSFB.

2.0 AUTHORITY

Authority to enter into a Cooperative Agreements (CA) for the work: Section 670c-1, Title 16 United States Code, Sikes Act.

2.1. In agreement with the above stated goals, the Non-Federal Entity (NFE) agrees to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and materials required to implement, in part, the VSFB responsibilities pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.), the Sikes Act Improvement Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and applicable implementing regulations, such as Air Force Manual 32-7003, *Environmental Conservation*; Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), all CESU projects must carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation, instead of acquiring goods or services for the exclusive direct benefit of the United States Government. Examples of carrying out a public purpose may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Project results are made available to a wide audience (including nonfederal entities, following necessary coordination with the VSFB project manager)
- Project results/outputs add to the scientific literature/knowledge base, with applicability and utility beyond the scope of the project footprint/study area.

- Academic and other nonfederal partner institutions (and their personnel) gain professional experience, increase knowledge, and develop skills and abilities.
- Students benefit from direct interaction with federal scientists, program and technical staff, and field unit managers.

2.2. In accordance with section 6305 – *Using cooperative agreements of the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977* (31 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.), substantial involvement is expected between the Department of Defense and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the cooperative agreement. The DoD agrees to participate at a national level in support of the CESU program as accepted in the Master MOU for the establishment and continuation of the CESU program Article II 1-4 and Article VI 1-7.

The installation further (hence DoD) agrees to provide substantial involvement as directed under the appropriate master agreement to include, but not be limited to, the following:

- VSFB and AFCEC ISS are involved in development of study methodology, data gathering, analysis, and/or report writing.
- VSFB and AFCEC ISS are active participants and collaborators in carrying out the project plan of work, they will review and approve activities, and help train or select project staff or trainees.
- VSFB and AFCEC ISS incurs in-kind or direct expenditures in carrying out the activities specified in the project agreement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Providing staff time to work on the project.
 - Provide previous reports and data
 - Review and authorization of scholarly reports and presentations

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

Provide labor, materials, equipment and supplies to perform the tasks described below. Conduct tasks in accordance with this Statement of Objectives (SOO), as prioritized by AFCEC ISS Project Manager (PM) and Base Natural Resources Manager (NRM). Only work aligned with the original AF programming and approved by the USACE Grant’s Officer Technical Representative (GOTR) should be completed as part of this support.

Travel: Provide transportation and fuel for all NFE staff to get to and from all field sites. Retain current proof of insurance, current registration, and REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses for all modes of transportation.

Coordination: Coordinate concurrently with the Base NRM, AFCEC ISS, and USACE PM. All work shall be approved by the AFCEC and be consistent with the Project Schedule & Work Plan (Deliverable 9.3) approved by the Base NRM. Schedule changes can be made; trade-off decisions will be jointly made by the USACE-PM, Base NRM and AFCEC ISS and align with the Sikes Act compliant INRMP and original budget programming. Any changes in scope or cost must be approved by the USACE Grants Officer. All coordination with state and federal regulators will be by the Base NRM or AFCEC ISS only.

Project Management: A Project Manager should be assigned to coordinate across tasks, manage all personnel hired to complete work, and ensure all scoped objectives are completed on time. Level of effort for Project Management is expected to be at least 6 hours per month with additional hours as needed, generally at the beginning and end of the agreement period of performance and before and after monthly meetings. Project manager shall provide monthly meeting agenda, track deliverables, provide meeting notes, etc.

Within 30 days of award, the NFE will schedule an initial project kick off meeting with all parties involved (VSFB, AFCEC Edwards Installation Support Section, USACE, etc) to develop a project work schedule to implement the SOO. All deliverables/tasks will be submitted within the required timeframes as identified.

Access: Access to VSFB is restricted. General base access requires sponsorship by a government civilian employee and should be coordinated at least two weeks prior to the visit. Long-term base access will require additional security clearances and access processing. Access to some areas may be limited by ongoing military activities such that personnel access is limited to weekends or brief periods of a few hours. Access procedures are described in further detail in the most recent version of the VSFB Contractor Access Request Procedures Template.

Photography Use: Photography at VSFB is restricted, requiring an authorization letter that must be in the photographer's possession at all times. Cell phone photos are not allowed. Any photos/reports released to the public must be reviewed and authorized by Public Affairs. A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is required for use of photographs for data analysis and report preparation prior to authorization by public affairs for release of photos/reports to the public.

Biological Security Measure: The NFE shall follow applicable Biological Security Best Management Practices identified in the most recent version of the installation Invasive Species Management Plan.

3.1 TASK 1: Mgt, Species: Black Abalone

DESCRIPTION. Conduct monitoring of the federally endangered black abalone (*Haliotis cracherodii*) at Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) in Santa Barbara County, California. "VSFB" in this document may include relatively small work efforts at two "Geographically Separated Units," Point Conception (Santa Barbara County, CA) and Pillar Point Air Force Station (San Mateo County, CA). There are currently three long-term black abalone monitoring plots on VSFB. Future monitoring would include abundance, size distribution, habitat characterization, documenting threats, health/disease, and habitat encroachment.

Additional tasks:

- Resurvey the Point Conception area that was last sampled in 2014.
- Identify if there are any remaining habitat gaps along the Vandenberg coastline and establish additional sites if access is safe.

- Identify and characterize potential black abalone restoration and donor sites on VSFB.
- Conduct black abalone restoration at these sites, including habitat restoration and/or translocations if needed as part of the Black Abalone Recovery Plan or in the event of an emergency response (e.g. oil spill, vessel grounding, etc.)
- Collaborate with geneticists to collect non-lethal samples (swabs or epipodial clips) to document the spatial genetic structure of the species. This information is critical to both the recovery of the species and restoration approaches.
- Design and implement studies that answer important questions for the management of the species as determined by VSFB and/or NMFS.
- If funding is available,
 - Assess vulnerability of VSFB intertidal areas and their biological communities to Sea Level Rise.
 - Increase the number of sites sampled at VSFB from 4 to 8, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the biological resources on base.
 - Install temperature, pH and Dissolved oxygen (DO) meters at selected sites to characterize the physical and chemical properties of intertidal area on base.
 - Complete a comprehensive survey for exotic species on base.

TASK SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES. Prepare a technical report that summarizes work completed under this project. Submit a draft report (electronic) and draft GIS deliverables. Allow at least 30 days for Government review of drafts. After edits, prepare and submit a final report (electronic) and final GIS deliverables.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS

The Principal Investigator should have at least ten years of experience working with the black abalone in coastal California. They must possess needed permits issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to survey for and “harass” the species. An ESA section 10(a)(1)(A) permit issued by NMFS authorizing work on this species is mandatory. Field crew members should have relevant experience enabling them to perform the field activities in conformance with the survey protocols. Either a Letter of Authorization (LOA) or Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) issued by NMFS permitting incidental harassment of pinnipeds while conducting abalone research is required.

The NFE shall ensure that project activities, project reports, and project data are professionally executed with minimal errors.

5.0 GOVERNMENT FURNISHED MATERIALS OR PROPERTY

The government will provide maps, master plans and previous reports relevant to this agreement.

Government-furnished materials or property is governed by 2 C.F.R. Part 200.312 which states that a) Title to federally-owned property remains vested in the Federal government. The non-

Federal entity must submit annually an inventory listing of federally-owned property in its custody to the Federal awarding agency. Upon completion of the Federal award or when the property is no longer needed, the non- Federal entity must return the property to the Federal awarding agency for further Federal agency utilization.

6.0 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE (PoP)

Base Period:

18-months from date of award (*3-month administrative period for project preparation, 12-months of technical support/field work, 3-month administrative period to complete deliverables*).

7.0 OPTIONS

Five (5) 18-month Follow-On (FO) periods. *Overlap in PoPs is administrative and includes project preparation before start of technical support/field work and completion of deliverables after end of technical support/field work.*

8.0 COORDINATION

USACE POC

David Leptien, PM, 402-889-5570

david.b.leptien@usace.army.mil

AFCEC POC

Daniel Garcia, Natural Resources, AFCEC/CZOW, 805-606-9834

daniel.garcia.23@us.af.mil

9.0 DELIVERABLES

- 9.1 Progress Reports – Submit quarterly progress reports describing progress on the project throughout the period of performance. The report shall be due as of the last day of the third month (quarterly) and shall be transmitted via electronic mail no later than the 10th calendar day following the end of the reporting period. Invoices for partial payment shall be submitted to coincide with receipt of the quarterly progress reports. No partial payment will be approved unless the government has received all progress reports which are due.
- 9.2 Reports - Reports shall generally be free of typos, grammatical errors, formatting inconsistencies and incorrectly labeled tables and figures. The reports shall provide proper citations for all documents referenced. It is requested that draft reports contain line numbering for ease of Government comment. Government and NFE comments shall be provided in a comment matrix provided by the Government. Project GIS Data shall be submitted along with draft and final reports. Final work plans, final technical

- reports, and final GIS data deliverables shall be submitted only after the NFE has addressed all Government comments satisfactorily.
- 9.3 Work Plan – The NFE shall submit a draft work plan, NFE reconciled comment matrix of government comments of draft work plan, and final work plan. The plan shall follow the VSFB Work Plan Template. Methodology section shall be described in sufficient detail to allow study or work to be replicated by persons unfamiliar with the project. Methodologies shall also include planned data analyses. Raw data collection methodology shall provide sufficient data for planned analyses. The NFE shall provide a proposed comprehensive timeline for completion of the required work element activities and submittals. Updated project schedules will be provided by the NFE when the schedule changes, regardless of whom is responsible for causing the change in schedule. Updated schedules shall be submitted within seven (7) calendar days of any documented change in project schedule.
- 9.4 Technical Report: The NFE shall submit a draft technical report, NFE reconciled comment matrix of government comments of draft technical report and GIS data, and final technical report. The report shall describe in narrative format the accomplishments of the project tasks including pertinent maps, figures, tables, photographs, and GIS data. The report format shall follow that of a scientific publication and include the following section heading: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Literature Cited, as well as original data sheets and/or copies thereof, laboratory reports, and other appendices as appropriate. A separate report will be required for follow-on periods, if funded.
- 9.5 GIS Data: The NFE shall comply with all requirements in the most recent version of *Vandenberg SFB GeoBase Spatial Data Submittal Standards*, as amended (current version is dated 1 April 2021). This document provides all details required for a successful GIS delivery. A consultation with the Vandenberg GeoBase manager is strongly encouraged. When GIS Data is required for reports it shall be delivered with the draft and final reports for reconciliation with the reports.
- 9.6 GIS Deliverables: All tasks shall have at least one and likely several GIS deliverables that include all data layers used to create any and all maps within submitted deliverables. GIS deliverables shall include all new data collected throughout the course of the project. Draft GIS deliverables shall be submitted with draft reports that include their data, with final reports and GIS info submitted together. GIS deliverables must follow VSFB geospatial data standards, an adaptation of the SDSFIE 3.1x data model, as described in the data layer specifications (DLS)). Deliverables must comply with the latest version which are updated annually. All metadata associated with data layers must meet the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (CSDGM) revised in June 1998. Metadata must also include all content stated in the metadata section of each layer's DLS, which includes layer specific verbiage for attribute fields and definitions.
- 9.7 Annual Inventory Federally Owned – Federally Owned Property - an annual inventory listing Federal property (to include description of the property, a serial number or other identification number) that is in the custody of the recipient and available at the request of the government.

9.8 Annual Inventory Acquired – Acquired Property purchased with funding from award - property records must be maintained that includes description of the property, serial number or other identification number, source of funding, who holds title, acquisition date, cost of property, percentage of Federal participation in project costs, location, use and condition of property, and ultimate disposition including date of disposal and sale price. A physical inventory must be taken and results reconciled. Copies of the inventory to be sent annually following each year of support to USACE – SWF and AFCEC ISS.

10.0 ADMINISTRATION

10.1 This cooperative agreement may be administered through a CESU only upon mutual agreement and official authorization by both parties of the acceptance of the application of the CESU Network IDC rate (17.5%).

10.2 Any resulting cooperative agreement shall be subject to, and recipient/Cooperator shall comply with 2 CFR 200.313 “Equipment”, 200.314 “Supplies”, and 200.315 “Intangible Property” which includes use of research data. NOTE: In addition to the General Terms and Conditions, the Recipient shall request disposition instructions from the Federal Awarding agency (USACE) PM, as applicable.

11.0 POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS and DOCUMENTATION

11.1 Invoicing and Progress Reports - Submit Payment Request and additional required documents to: swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil. Carbon Copy the assigned USACE Project Manager as well as your organization’s POCs for the additional required documents as well as the delinquent accounts POC.

11.1.1 Frequency: Quarterly plus 30-day grace period. If the coverage dates are not quarterly or preapproved by the PM (or the first/last submittal), the payment request will be **rejected**.

Quarters	Invoice pkgs due No Later Than (NLT):
Q1: Oct-Dec	Q1: 31 Jan
Q2: Jan-Mar	Q2: 30 Apr
Q3: Apr-Jun	Q3: 30 Jul
Q4: Jul-Sep	Q4: 31 Oct

11.1.2 Payment Requests must be submitted on form SF270 with the accompanying SF-PPR progress report. SF270s will be **rejected** if the SF-PPR progress report has not been received.

Please ensure to include the following on the SF-PPR progress report:

- Separate details by CLIN
- Achievements
- Percent Completion

- Project Status
- Problems encountered and impact of activities and personnel on schedule
- Anticipated work in next reporting period

If the SF-PPR is incomplete, it will be rejected causing the SF270 to also be rejected. SF-PPR Forms with above fields may be requested at: swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil

The SF270 may have multiple pages. May request Excel version @ swf-cesu-invoice@usace.army.mil **Must be submitted in PDF or it will be rejected.**

SF270 Block 11 (a), (b), (c) are for the description of funds. Preferred description is: CLIN/PoP Type, PoP start and end dates, amount awarded. At minimum include the CLIN.

Example:

***CLIN 0001/ Base
22SEP23 – 21SEP24
\$100,000.00***

Funding must be separated as specified on the Award document. For Sub-CLINs that specify “*for funding only*”, may be rolled into the primary CLIN unless otherwise instructed. All others require PM approval. If the description is missing; payment request will be **rejected**.

11.1.3 The **FINAL** invoice package must include the following documents. The entire Final invoice package is due no later than 90 days from the period of performance (POP) end date:

- Final SF270
- SF-PPR
- Final SF425
- DD882
- SF428 plus attachment B (C&S if applicable)
- SF298
- Final Report

Missing any of the above required documents, the Payment Request will be **rejected**.

Forms may be requested from the district office or found at: www.grants.gov

[End of SOO]