

**REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST
WITHIN THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT
NUMBER N62473-21-2-0001
PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2021**

**Project Title: MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH FOR HEADSTARTING AGASSIZ’S DESERT
TORTOISE (GOPHERUS AGASSIZII) AT MCAGCC, THE MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND
COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA**

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) will be used to address captive rearing and associated research of desert tortoise at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, California. The statement of interest will be for on-the-ground actions at MCAGCC. Activities associated with the proposed project include maintaining the integrity of the Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site (TRACRS) facility, monitoring the health, condition, and survivorship of head start mothers and offspring, sustaining the annual generation of eggs, hatchlings, and juveniles at TRACRS, evaluating the success of released juveniles, evaluating the adequacy of the facility in helping to sustain local populations, and optimizing health of raised individuals. This work is in support of the endangered species program at the installation and is critically important to mission sustainability and recovery of the desert tortoise.

The approximate amounts expected to be available to support the base requirements of this project are:

Option Item	Estimated Available Funding
Base Period	\$221,260.88 to \$245,956.88
Option Period 1	\$209,309.92 to \$232,566.58

***Subject to the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 U.S.C. § 1341), additional funding may be available for follow on work in subsequent fiscal years to the successful Recipient.*

Type of Assistance Instrument Anticipated: Cooperative Agreement

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

Eligible Applicants: Any Californian and Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) 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:

The federally threatened Agassiz’s Desert Tortoises must be monitored and managed on MCAGCC in accordance with conservation measures of MCAGCC’s Basewide Biological Opinion (USFWS 1-8-99F-41, 8-8-10-F-65R) and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (MCAGCC 2018). Research contributing to the recovery of the species is critical to species recovery. One of the main recovery tools used by MCAGCC is their head start program, whereby tortoises are hatched and reared in a captive field facility called the TRACRS located in a restricted use area just north of Sandhill Range Training Area, and subsequently released into the wild.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

This Cooperative Agreement outlines terms and the cooperative effort of the Department of the Navy, Navy Facilities Engineering Systems Command, Southwest (NAVFAC SW), on behalf of MCAGCC, for

Implementing a cooperative program to Provide Animal Care, Facility Maintenance and Research to the Headstart Program for Agassiz's Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). MCAGCC's Headstart Program has recently expanded after initial successes rearing juvenile desert tortoise and releasing those animals back into protected on- and off-base habitat. Continued operation of this program, coupled with applied research to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, satisfies regulatory requirements in the installation's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and a Biological Opinion issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

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 36 months upon award. The proposed period of performance consists of a 36 month base period and one (1), 24-month option. The total duration of this agreement, including any option period, shall not exceed 60 months. The end date is the anticipated date that the Final Report is accepted by the Government. The option period is subject to the availability of funds and may be unilaterally awarded by the Government.

Option Item	Period of Performance	Anticipated Award Date
Base Period	Date of Award – July 2023	Summer 2021
Option Period	July 2023 - 2025	Winter 2024/Spring 2025

A fifteen (15) day period, starting on date of award, will be used for the cooperator to provide preliminary documents to the CAA and CATR. Documents include, but are not limited to, insurance documents/certificates, Accident Prevention Plans/Site Health and Safety Plans (as applicable), and Draft Work Plans. Cooperator may not begin performance until preliminary documents are submitted and accepted or approved as appropriate.

Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: Kevin Magennis (kevin.magennis@navy.mil).

- 1) SF 424 (Enclosure 3)
- 2) Research & Related Senior/Key Personnel Form (Enclosure 4). Please see Factor 1 for additional submittal requirements.
- 3) Research & 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."

**Reimbursement of pre-award costs will not be allowed.

**Please note, that some of the forms functionality may be lost. Please visit <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/r-r-family.html#sortBy=1> to retrieve the forms directly from the Grants.gov website.

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

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 one-sided pages.

Factor 1 - Credentials of Key Personnel

A. Principal Investigator: The Cooperator 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. This position shall be responsible for liaison between Cooperator 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:

- 1) A PhD degree in animal biology, ecology, or a related science
- 2) A US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 10(a)(1)(A) permit to headstart, handle and research desert tortoises and provide technical specialists with the necessary permit authorizations, qualifications and field experience to fulfill the required tasks (i.e., at least knowledge of Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, X-ray radiography, reproductive biology, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling *G. agassizii*).
- 3) A publication record demonstrating expert knowledge of Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water, physiologic and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, x-ray radiography, reproductive biology, growth, survival, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling adult and juvenile desert tortoises, and tortoise eggs, burrows and nests, and securing and maintaining headstart enclosures (fencing, netting, irrigation systems, soil, native vegetation, and native forage plants) and related support
- 4) Demonstrated use of GIS units and maps for tracking and monitoring wild tortoises, and an ability to mark and measure the body size, condition and growth of individual desert tortoises
- 5) A minimum of five years of experience in a responsible position providing oversight of, support to or directly involved in desert tortoise conservation and management on military lands

B. Project Manager: The Project Manager shall have, at the minimum:

- 1) A PhD degree in animal biology, ecology, or a related science
- 2) An ability to handle, mark, measure and provide food, water and other care for at least 1500 juvenile desert tortoises in a remote, fenced headstart facility on a live-fire military installation with extreme desert weather
- 3) An ability to help maintain the basic physical structure, security and operations of a headstart facility, to include fencing, netting, irrigation systems, anti-predator controls and related facility operations

4) An ability to use GIS units, maps, binoculars and radiotelemetry to track and monitor wild tortoises

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

- 1) A Bachelor's degree in wildlife biology, ecology or a related science
- 2) Be an Authorized Individual on a 10(a)(1)(A) permit to handle and research desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*)
- 3) Demonstrated field experience with Agassiz's Desert Tortoises, their food, water, movements, behaviors and resource requirements, radiotelemetry, x-ray radiography, health assessments and sterile techniques for handling desert tortoises
- 4) Demonstrated experience marking and measuring the condition of juvenile and adult desert tortoises

Factor 2 – Scientific Approach

Not to exceed 3 pages, the Offeror shall develop an outline for their approach to addressing the anticipated work stated above. The Offeror shall be evaluated as to the soundness of the overall approach and use of any innovative techniques to accomplish project objectives.

Factor 3 - Reasonableness of Cost

After technical evaluation of the proposal, the offers will be analyzed for fair and reasonable pricing. The proposal will be analyzed to determine whether its pricing is materially/mathematically balanced, and is fair and reasonable. The Offeror shall use OMB Circular A-21 "Cost Principles for Institutions of Higher Education", 48 CFR part 31 "Contract Cost Principles and Procedures," or 2 CFR 200 Subpart F "Audit Requirements" as applicable.

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. A clear cost breakdown of work elements to be accomplished detailing quantities for the various work items, unit, unit prices and extended prices will be required and will be evaluated. Evaluation will include an analysis to determine the Offeror's comprehension of the requirements of the proposed agreement as well as to assess the validity of the Offeror's approach. Please be sure to provide a proposal for the Option Items and Option Tasks as listed within the SOW.

Please provide your proposed budget on the provided pdf titled, "Research and Related Budget" form*(Enclosure 4). Please submit one budget form for the base year of work and separate budget form for each of the options specified in the SOW.

***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 SOW. 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 L.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify in Field L (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 L.
- 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 L.
- Other Directs Costs - Particularly 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 L.

Budget Justification (Field L 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 July 1, 2021 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 July 1, 2021 2:00 PM local standard time is considered “late” and may not be considered. Please submit requests for information/questions no later than June 25, 2021 2:00 Pacific Standard Time.

Please send electronic responses and questions to:

Mr. Kevin Magennis, Contract Specialist Environmental Acquisition Core
kevin.magennis@navy.mil

Point of Contact Information:

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