

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS - International Conservation

African Elephant Conservation Fund

Protecting and Conserving African Elephant Priority Populations

Fiscal Year (FY): 2024

F24AS00060

<https://www.fws.gov/service/african-elephant-conservation-grant-fund>

Due Date for Applications: **11/27/2023**

<https://www.fws.gov/service/protecting-and-conserving-african-elephant-priority-populations-funding-opportunity>

****Last updated 09/27/23****

****Please refer back as the FAQs will be updated as additional questions are received.****

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please send any additional questions to: mscf_africanelephant@fws.gov.

What are the FY2024 NOFO priorities?

- The NOFO aims to strengthen the long-term capacity for African forest and savanna elephant conservation across the continent's 37 elephant range states. Specifically, it prioritizes the following program objectives: (1) habitat protection for and conservation of African elephant priority populations, (2) improving conservation governance and human well-being in landscapes housing elephant priority populations, and (3) greater partner connectivity and conservation capacity in African elephant range states. Applicants may choose to include additional objectives or are welcome to use different terminology or framing to describe proposal goals and objectives that align with a project's existing strategic planning or local context. All proposed outcomes and activities, however, should collectively facilitate the delivery of meaningful results consistent with the African Elephant Conservation Fund Program goal and objectives, as stated in the NOFO.

What types of proposals are being solicited?

- This funding opportunity solicits multi-year awards (the standard period of performance for projects is two to five years).
- Proposals can range from \$100,000 to \$250,000 USD/per year for each project.
- Anticipated support for African forest and savanna elephant population strongholds (see NOFO for definition) will be approximately \$5,500,000, with awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$1,250,000.

- Anticipated support for other priorities described in the NOFO occurring outside of elephant population strongholds will be approximately \$2,500,000, with awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$750,000.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Applicants may be multi-national secretariats, U.S. and foreign non-profits, non-governmental organizations, community and Indigenous organizations, and U.S. and foreign public and private institutions of higher education.

What are the criteria for evaluating the proposal?

- Proposals will be evaluated and scored on how well each addresses program priorities and integrates requested elements. Higher scores will result from well-justified projects that address all requested proposal elements. The Service will consider the following *criteria* in evaluating proposals:

(1) **Likelihood of conservation impact** in support of the Service's African Elephant Conservation Fund Program **goal** and **objectives** outlined in Section A of the NOFO, specifically: (a) To what degree the proposed project is likely to contribute to one or more of the following:

- Habitat protection for and conservation of African elephant priority populations
- Improving conservation governance and human well-being in landscapes housing elephant priority populations.
- Greater partner connectivity and conservation capacity in African elephant range states.

(b) Whether the objectives have incorporated **desired results**;

(2) **Capacity of the organization and its staff to implement the project**, including:

- Whether the proposal demonstrates the applicant's ability to implement the proposed activities effectively (e.g., activities are logistically feasible, resourced, and under the authority of the applicant);
- Whether the proposal is clear, concise, and complete;
- Whether the proposal provides sufficient detail regarding relevant qualifications and institutional policies of the applicant, including experience of key personnel;
- If applicable, whether the applicant has received a positive record of accomplishment with the Service based on previous grant support;
- The degree to which the project has authority over the project operations and staff;

(3) **Sufficient evidence of collaboration with or inclusion of key stakeholders**, including host country governments and impacted Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

- Whether the project demonstrates that it has considered, both positive and negative, impacts on stakeholders;

- Where relevant, whether the application references specific consultation, input, facilitation, or participatory activities with stakeholders;
- Whether the proposal have sufficient detail regarding coordination of project activities with similar, ongoing, or planned activities of other stakeholders.

How much funding does USFWS have available in FY2024 and how many grants are expected to be awarded?

- The anticipated funding available is \$8,000,000 USD. It is anticipated that approximately 15 multi-year grants will be awarded.

When will the next NOFO be released, and will a similar amount of funding be expected?

- As a biennial funding opportunity, the next African Elephant Conservation Fund Program NOFO is anticipated to be released in FY2026. The Service cannot guarantee the amount of funding available for forthcoming NOFOs, as it is based on future Congressional appropriations. Congressional appropriations for the African Elephant Conservation Fund for the past two fiscal years were ~\$4.4 million USD (FY2022) and ~\$4.6 million USD (FY2023).

Does the application of novel technology (e.g., environmental DNA (eDNA)) that supports elephant conservation fit within the FY2024 NOFO priorities?

- Application of “novel” technology in support of elephant conservation would fit under the overarching goal of the African Elephant Conservation Fund Program, which seeks to *“ensure healthy African elephant populations in the wild, while improving pathways for human-elephant coexistence”*. Specifically, under the stated NOFO objectives, such efforts could fit under the following desired result for Objective 1 *“Habitat protection for and conservation of African elephant priority populations”*: “(5a) development of innovative technologies that have the potential to improve elephant protection.”

How should confidential/sensitive information be handled in a proposal?

- If specific data on elephant population size and locations is confidential due to security risks to the population, please provide only relevant information in the proposal that can be shared publicly. Sensitive or confidential data, clearly indicated as such, may be provided directly to the USFWS Program Officer separately if relevant or requested. In the proposal, please provide only relevant information that can be shared publicly.

Are proposals required to include applicant cost share (i.e., matching or leveraged funds)?

- Cost share is voluntary and not required and does not impact an applicant’s eligibility, nor is it part of the application review criteria.

Will a grant application proposing work at a site where the African Elephant Conservation Fund Program has provided recent funding to a different organization be penalized?

- Proposals will not be penalized for applying to conduct work at sites where the African Elephant Conservation Fund Program has provided recent support to organizations or individuals other than the applicant. Please see section E1 of the NOFO for full review criteria. The Program does encourage prospective applicants to explore where their work can complement, and where feasible, directly engage with active African Elephant Conservation Fund Program partners, in those cases of geographic overlap.

How do I learn more about applying for the African Elephant Conservation Fund?

- Please visit the NOFO webpage at <https://www.fws.gov/service/protecting-and-conserving-african-elephant-priority-populations-funding-opportunity> or email the program inbox at mscf_africanelephant@fws.gov.

How do I apply?

- All applicants should apply through [GrantSolutions.gov](https://www.fws.gov/grantsolutions) (search for funding opportunity number F24AS00060) or if unable, [Grants.gov](https://www.fws.gov/grants).
- Applicants who are unable to submit applications through GrantSolutions.gov may seek a waiver and obtain Service approval to apply via direct email to the program inbox. If you wish to seek a waiver, you must submit supporting documentation to demonstrate the issues you are experiencing. Documentation may include computer screenshots showing error messages or email communication with the GrantSolutions Help Desk attempting to resolve the issue. The request must be submitted at least **three** days before the submission deadline. Please send your waiver request to DIC_GRANTS@fws.gov. Individual applicants who have received a waiver can send the application package via email to the following address: mscf_africanelephant@fws.gov.