CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SOS – Save Our Species

Rapid Action Grants

AFRICAN WILDLIFE INITIATIVE

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Open-ended call

Applicants are strongly recommended to read this guidance document in full before completing and submitting a proposal for the SOS – Rapid Action Grants (RAG).
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1. **Background**

The SOS African Wildlife initiative, launched in 2017 and financed by the European Union, DG Development and Cooperation, aims primarily to halt the decline of large carnivores in Africa, particularly lions (*Panthera leo*), leopards (*Panthera pardus*), cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*), African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*), and Ethiopian wolves (*Canis simensis*), as well as other African species increasingly threatened by poaching, habitat fragmentation and human encroachment on wild habitats. The objectives of this initiative are (i) to demonstrate impact of conservation actions on threatened species and their habitats in Africa and (ii) to empower and strengthen civil society organisations which are committed to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

IUCN SOS is now issuing a call to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to submit proposals targeting the conservation of any or all of the target species and other threatened African species according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (i.e. those species that are assessed as Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN), or Critically Endangered (CR)). Applications will only be accepted if they are submitted through the online portal at [https://portals.iucn.org/sos/](https://portals.iucn.org/sos/)

2. **Objective**

The objective of this Call for Proposals is to enable and support CSOs engaged in the conservation of threatened species to carry out urgent conservation measures at local level to protect the species and their habitat. Eligible projects should respond to emergency situations requiring rapid action, rather than proposing programmatic action on long-standing issues.

3. **Financial allocation**

Maximum grant size for the Rapid Action Grant (RAG) is EUR 25,000 with no matching funds required. The proposed project activities should be consistent with the amount requested and include a work plan. It is important to be realistic as to what can be achieved with the available amount and within the implementation period of the project. Expenses incurred outside Africa must be kept to a minimum and carefully justified.

4. **Project duration**

The maximum duration of the project should be 12 months. The start date of the project will be determined by the date of the signature of the grant contract. The performance of the contract cannot start before its entry into force. Project Results and Activities need to be clear, attainable and resolve the immediate threat within the timeframe of the grant.

5. **Eligibility criteria**

a) **Eligible actors**

In order to be eligible for a grant the applicant must be:

i. a legal person **and**

ii. be non-profit-making **and**

iii. be a civil society entity, local or international non-governmental organisation. Projects presented by local and national CSOs\(^1\), including indigenous organizations (Community Based Organisations) will be favourably considered. African NGOs are encouraged to apply.

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\(^1\) A Civil Society Organisation (CSO) is a non-state and not-for-profit voluntary association.
International NGOs applying will be required to work closely with national stakeholders, local communities and with the consent and all required authorizations from the government. If international NGOs apply, overseas costs (indirect costs, salaries and international travel) will have to be minimal and justification for their need provided. In the case of international NGOs having a legally registered office in Africa, SOS will privilege the signature of a grant agreement and direct transfer of funds to their African registered office. Working with governments is encouraged although governments and government-affiliated entities are not eligible to receive grants directly. The costs of travel for government bodies (for example for attending a workshop) can be reimbursed if they are directly linked to the project.

iv. grantees cannot have a conflict of interest in applying for this call. A conflict of interest may arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties, or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

v. grantees cannot be current employees of IUCN or close relatives (i.e. immediate family) of IUCN employees.

b) Eligible activities

i. A range of conservation activities are eligible including, but not limited to, the following:
   - Investigation of sudden new threats to species in specific locations (diseases, pollution, stranding, oil spill, anarchic development);
   - Rapid support for specific actions aiming at preserving highly threatened species (targeted support for protected areas, meeting to agree last chance emergency measures, purchase of crucial equipment to protect specific threatened species);
   - Urgent surveys and monitoring in the face of development.

ii. Proposed activities must observe all relevant environmental and social Principles and Standards. Short-listed projects will be subjected to a full Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) screening through the use of the ESMS questionnaire. Please refer to the ESMS section in Annex 5 for further information.

iii. Projects must be implemented in Sub-Saharan continental Africa (with the exception of South Africa). The following countries are eligible: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

c) Ineligible activities

iv. Projects proposing pure research activities, captive breeding or conservation planning are not eligible.

v. The following types of action are ineligible: the purchase of land, buildings and firearms, activities adversely affecting people and local communities or where these communities have not provided their broad support to the project activities (e.g. involuntary resettlement of people), the removal or altering of any physical cultural property (includes sites having archaeological, paleontological, historical, religious, or unique natural values) and activities that duplicate work previously funded by SOS.

d) Eligible costs

Only eligible costs will be reimbursed by the grant.

i. Eligible costs include personnel costs (salaries, social charges, employer costs), subcontracting (external services), local office costs (rent, utilities, telecommunication costs) – please note the local office costs cannot exceed 7% of the Total project budget, supplies (not office related), equipment & maintenance, travel (international travel, local travel,
accommodation, subsistence), meetings & workshops (venue costs, catering, speakers’ fees).

ii. Grantees will need to adhere to the Procurement Policy and Procedure for SOS Grant Recipients, available at: https://portals.iucn.org/sos/sites/sos/files/procurement_policy_and_procedure_for_sos_grant_recipients.pdf. For costs with a value in excess of EUR 20,000 three price quotations from different suppliers will need to be obtained and kept with financial records.

iii. Indirect costs\(^2\) are eligible at the flat-rate of up to 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs.

e) **Ineligible costs**

i. Applicants may not propose financial support to third parties through sub-grants.

ii. Ineligible costs include debts and debt service charges (interest), provisions for losses or potential future liabilities, exchange rate losses and purchases of land and buildings.

### 6. Components of the project proposal

Application templates (technical and financial) are available online for submitting the proposals (see section 7 for more information). Applicants can submit applications in **English** or **French**. Templates and guidelines are available in each language.

The proposal must indicate how the project will be structured, staffed, and managed. Applicants must demonstrate capacity to manage and implement successful projects. Proposals should include a clear logical framework demonstrating how Activities will lead to Outputs and Results (please see Annex 2 for additional guidance on the terminology used in the logical framework). Proposals should concretely describe anticipated **impacts** of the project and how they will resolve the threat resulting from the emergency. The proposal should also include a project monitoring plan with clear **measurable indicators**; two types of indicators must be considered:

**a.** Indicators related to the target species, their habitat and the people who depend on it such as (i) change in population numbers of target species, (ii) measurable reduction of threat to target species and its habitat, (iii) number of project beneficiaries, (iv) enabling conditions for conservation such as improvement of management effectiveness.

**b.** Indicators related to the project proponent; these indicators will help evaluate increase in capacity of the proponent. Over the course of the project the proponent will be asked to report on parameters such as number of staff, increase in the organisation’s annual budget, new grants signed as a direct result of the project, number of members, number of visitors on website or followers on social media.

### 7. How to apply

Applications can be submitted only through the **SOS ONLINE PORTAL**. Applicants need to create an account to upload an application. The SOS Online Portal is accessible from the SOS website [here](#).

\(^2\) Indirect costs are costs that are not directly accountable to a cost object (such as a particular project, facility, function or product) and may include administration, personnel and security costs.
Following registration, you will receive an email with your username and a link that will allow you to choose an account password and update your contact details. If you already have an account but have forgotten your credentials, you can request a new password. This will be sent in a separate email.

The application templates and a copy of these guidelines (Detailed Instructions for Applicants) can be downloaded from the links on the right-hand side of the Portal:

Applications templates can be filled in offline and uploaded once completed.

When ready to submit your application please click on the “Apply for a Rapid Action Grant” link:
Some information will need to be provided directly on the Portal before the application documents can be uploaded. Please fill in all the fields.

- **ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS**

  Do you plan to use any of the potential project funds to purchase land for any purpose? *
  - Yes
  - No
  This includes rights of way, easements, etc.

  Does the project involve the removal or alteration of any physical cultural property? *
  - Yes
  - No
  This includes movable or immovable objects, sites, structures, and natural features and landscapes that have archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, religious, aesthetic, or other cultural significance?

  Does the project involve the relocation of people or any other form of involuntary resettlement? *
  - Yes
  - No
  This includes restricting access to protected areas or causing income losses.

  Do you plan to use any of the project funds to capitalize a trust fund(s)? *
  - Yes
  - No

  Does the proposed project involve the purchase, storage, application or use of pesticides and poisons? *
  - Yes
  - No

  Do you plan to use any of the project funds to purchase weapons or ammunition? *
  - Yes
  - No

  Have any of the proposed activities previously benefited from an SOS grant? *
  - Yes
  - No

  Do the project activities already receive funding from the European Union? *
  - Yes
  - No
A function at the bottom of the page allows you to change the status of your application from DRAFT to SUBMITTED once completed. Once ready to submit it is sufficient to change the status to SUBMITTED and click on the SAVE button below. Please note that once submitted, applications cannot be modified in any way although all the information provided and the files uploaded will be available for consultation and downloading. Before submitting you should ensure that you have entered all the requested information and that all the required documents have been uploaded successfully. Applications can also be DELETED if the applicant desires to do so.

8. **Deadlines**

This is an open-ended call, to be kept open until 31 August 2021.

We will only accept applications submitted through the online portal.

9. **Evaluation of proposals and selection criteria**

The review process and the final decision on awarding the grant are expected to take a maximum of 6 weeks following the receipt of proposals. Criteria for allocation of support are:

a) projects must directly address a crisis or emergency situation for threatened species;

b) the proposed intervention must have a moderate to high likelihood to improve the situation; and

c) grantees must demonstrate proven capacity to implement proposed activities, responsibly manage projects, and meet IUCN safeguards. Short-listed applications will be requested to complete and submit a full Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) questionnaire (see Annex 5 for more information).

If approved, the SOS Secretariat will inform the applicant that the project has been selected for funding. The Applicant will be asked to address any of the issues raised during the project evaluation and it may be needed to modify the proposal. Once the key issues have been addressed, IUCN will ask the applicant to sign a grant agreement.

10. **Notification of applicants**

Applicants will be informed in writing by the SOS Secretariat about the results of the evaluation of their proposal.

The SOS Secretariat will provide an explanation to all applicants whose proposals are unsuccessful as part of its focus on building capacity. Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant focal person or the Secretariat at SaveOurSpecies@iucn.org if they have additional questions about the decision. If the applicant is not satisfied with the response, a grievance may be submitted to the Species Conservation Grants Coordinator at Remco.VANMER@iucn.org up to one month after having been informed of the decision.
Annex 1: Application templates

Please note that you need to create an account on the SOS Online Portal in order to access the application templates.

The proposal template can be downloaded from https://portals.iucn.org/sos/sites/sos/files/awi_rag_proposal_template.doc

The budget template can be downloaded from https://portals.iucn.org/sos/sites/sos/files/awi_rag_budget_template.xlsx
Annex 2: Guidance on terminology

This section provides guidance for the completion of the Logical Framework and the proper use of the terms Result, Output and Activity in SOS proposals.

**Activity**: Action taken or work performed by the project staff through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other resources are mobilized to produce specific Outputs.

Activities are numbered in accordance with the Output they refer to: A.1.1.1, A.1.1.2 etc.

**Output**: Represent the tangible products, capital goods and services which result from an Activity. It may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of Results. They are usually understood as short or mid-term effects from Activities, while Results refer to longer-term effects from Outputs.

Outputs are numbered in accordance with the Result they refer to: O.1.1, O.1.2 etc.

**Result**: Proponents should identify a limited number of Results that will help achieve the overall Objective of the project. The Results identified should present possible solutions to problems identified in the Conservation problem section of the Proposal. The Results should be expressed in a SMART format (see section on Monitoring Plan below for more details).

Results are numbered in incremental order: R.1, R.2 etc.

In general, each Activity leads to an Output. The combination of several Outputs leads to the achievement of a particular Result. Similarly, the combination of all Results of a project leads to the achievement of the overall project Objective.

**Overall project Objective**: the overarching rationale that drives the project and its activities in its entirety.

See next page a simplified example of this logic:
Annex 3: Guidance on monitoring and indicators

The Project Monitoring Plan (Section 6 of the Project Proposal) is intended to outline how the Results of the project intervention will be measured. A Monitoring Plan contains selected indicators, their baseline value/status at the beginning of the project and the target value/status the project aspires to achieve. The Monitoring Plan also contains information on the methods, cost and an indication of who will be responsible for collecting the data on the indicators.

Indicators are measures that show progress toward the intended Result. In its broadest sense, an indicator is a measurable entity related to a specific information need, such as the status of a species, the characteristic of a species population, change in a threat, or progress toward a Result. An indicator can be defined as “a quantifiable measure of a characteristic or condition of species, people, institutions, systems, or processes that may change over time.”

Results should be expressed in a SMART format. SMART is an acronym that stands for:

(S)pecific – The information captured measures appropriate change. The data collected clearly and directly relates to the achievement of a specific objective. If the information collected is specific, it can tell whether the change we seek to create is happening or not.

(M)easurable – Before starting monitoring, staff must make sure that the information required can be practically collected using measurable, robust indicators.

(A)tributable – Any changes measured must be attributable to the intervention.

(R)elevant – Monitoring results must make a contribution to selected priorities, i.e. they must fit with the Results and timescale of the project.

(T)ime-bound – Monitoring is not open-ended but allows change to be tracked at the desired frequency for a set period of time and yields information at pre-specified periods.

For example, Results expressed in a SMART format include:

- “Legal rights to forest resources transferred to 8 community organizations by December 2019.”
- “Maintain a population of at least 200 individuals of the target species within the limits of the X Protected Area between January 2019 and December 2019.”
Annex 4: Guidance on long term sustainability

Section 4 g) in the Project Proposal should describe in narrative terms the means by which Results will be sustained and how the project team will prepare stakeholders, partners and authorities to assume responsibility for maintaining the project achievements in the medium (2-5 years) to long term (5-10 years).

All projects should define a clear exit strategy outlining how project assets and achievements will be sustained beyond the lifespan of an individual grant. Proponents should make sure they provide an approximate timeline of relevant milestones to ensure work is continued and monitored.

Sustainability refers to the extent to which the positive results of the project intervention will persist once the project implementation (and funding) ends. Sustainability is an often overlooked aspect of project design. There are a number of ways of ensuring sustainability, for example, through:

- Building capacity in local stakeholders and communities to continue conservation activities;
- Involving government agencies throughout the project so that key activities will continue beyond the project lifespan;
- Project results influencing long term changes in behaviour and local attitudes;
- Ensuring that benefits that emerge from good conservation results are shared equitably amongst stakeholder groups and across genders;
- Handing over responsibility to a capable organization for continued conservation activities;
- Integrate the project interventions into other long-term initiatives, involving government departments;
- Designing and implementing plans to manage potential conflicts between wildlife populations and the local community, in the long-term;
- Creating a policy or governance change, that places the project result permanently under the control of stakeholders or an appropriate government authority.
Annex 5: Environmental and Social Management System

The main objective of IUCN projects is to realize positive environmental and social impacts, including benefits for women and men from communities that depend on natural resources. However, unwanted negative environmental and social side effects from the projects being implemented may occur. Within the context of its Mission, it is IUCN’s policy to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to avoid or minimize these environmental and social impacts. Therefore, the main purpose of this Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) is to provide the governance and policy framework for the managerial and operational measures to avoid or minimize environmental and social impacts of IUCN projects and enhance the positive impacts.

The ESMS is a methodological approach to identifying and managing environmental and social impacts in a structured way. Its application is closely related to the IUCN Project Guidelines and Standards and integrates the nature and scale of the project and the predicted impacts.

IUCN has a number of safeguards in place, structured through the ESMS. This ensures that appropriate measures are taken to avoid or minimize potential environmental and social impacts of projects while at the same time aiming to enhance the positive impacts. The ESMS is consistent with international frameworks such as the World Bank Operational Policies, GEF minimum standards on environmental and social safeguards, and IFC Performance Standards.

The ESMS incorporates the following four stages: (i) screening of impacts; (ii) scoping and assessment of impacts; (iii) development of environmental management plans, and (iv) monitoring and review.

Short-listed projects will be subjected to a full Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) screening through the use of the ESMS questionnaire. Applicants will be notified of this in due course and will be requested to fill in the questionnaire which will be provided at a later stage.
Annex 6: Checklist

Please make sure your application includes all the following documents at submission:

- Application templates duly filled in (including technical and financial documents)
- Certificate of registration or bylaws
- Confirmation letters from subcontractors
- CVs of key staff
- Due diligence questionnaire and supporting documents
- The applicant declaration form

All application templates are complemented with instructions and examples in order to provide as much guidance as possible in their compilation.

In case of any questions, please contact Remco van Merm, Species Conservation Grants Coordinator at Remco.VANMERM@iucn.org.