Pre-Announcement of the 2018 Request for Proposals

Biodiversity Informatics for African Freshwater and Pollinator Biodiversity

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for multi-year projects focused upon biodiversity data, knowledge and information services related to freshwater biodiversity and pollinator biodiversity. The foundation will award about $1,600,000 among qualifying proposals by July 2018[1]. Please write to JRSRFP@jrsbiodiversity.org with any questions. For the latest updates, please see JRS 2018 Request for Proposals and 2018 RFP Frequently Asked Questions.

JRS BIODIVERSITY FOUNDATION

Our foundation's vision is a world in which greater access to knowledge contributes to conserving the Earth's biodiversity for the benefit of society. Our mission is to increase the access to and the use of information for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2007, the foundation has invested more than $16M in biodiversity informatics projects that focus on: (1) collecting and enhancing data, (2) aggregating, synthesizing, and publishing data, (3) making data more widely available to potential end users, and (4) interpreting and gaining insights from biodiversity data to inform policy and conservation of biodiversity.

The JRS strategy is to connect data to knowledge use in domains of conservation and sustainable development where the demand for information can sustain investment in biodiversity informatics. This call for proposals supports our grantmaking programs in Freshwater Biodiversity and Resources and in Pollinator Biodiversity and Services. Please see http://jrsbiodiversity.org to learn more about our work.

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is focusing our grantmaking in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Exceptions to this policy may be made for projects with the potential for exceptional biodiversity informatics capacity development impact, highly transferrable models or technologies, or exceptional partnerships of data providers and data use. Please see Where We Work for more information.

Please Ask Us Questions
The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is grateful for the creative efforts of our grantee partners and we are very respectful of the time devoted to seeking funds. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions regarding the degree to which your project fits this RFP scope. Project ideas outside of the scope of this RFP as defined below should use the foundation's Funding Inquiry Form and upload utility at http://jrsbiodiversity.org/how-to-apply/funding-inquiries/.

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[1] This is an estimate only and is subject to change. JRS awards for multi-year implementation projects have ranged from $70,000 to $350,000 and averaged $180,000.

FRESHWATER BIODIVERSITY SCOPE

JRS seeks projects that increase the access to and use of biodiversity information relating to freshwater biodiversity assessment and the conservation of freshwater ecosystem services in targeted countries in eastern and southern Africa. Freshwater ecosystems are under threat from expanding agriculture, human settlement, extractive industries, and from climate change. The biodiversity of freshwater ecosystems is critical for the ecosystem services for human wellbeing and livelihoods. Please see our program description at Freshwater Biodiversity and Resources.

Meeting Demand for Knowledge: Approaches to ensuring the value and use of data and information may include, but are not limited to: partnerships that include data providers and users, data use for the development and implementation of national policies or international agreements, data use for conservation planning and management, and partnerships to mobilize environmental impact assessment data. Users may be in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors in roles that involve decision-making that influences biodiversity.

Problem Scope: Successful proposals will address challenges that face freshwater biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Challenges (focusing on the biodiversity component) may include assessment of species and ecosystem conservation status, designation of protected areas, regulation of fisheries, siting of water and other infrastructure, mitigating impacts of energy and extractive industry development, protection of watersheds for freshwater supply, implementation of safeguard policies, and trans-boundary management of catchment basins.

Technical Scope: Successful proposals will increase the access to biodiversity data and knowledge of freshwater systems that is valuable and relevant to near-term decision-making for conservation and sustainable development. Technical approaches may include, but are not limited to mobilizing and enhancing: existing data; new or improved information platforms and services; technologies for data collection and publishing; and data visualization tools and platforms.

Out of Scope: Out of the scope of this call for proposals are projects in marine ecosystems, projects focused upon species that do not have critical life stages that are dependent upon freshwater ecosystems, projects that are primarily aimed at taxonomy or museum collection digitization, and projects without specific end-users and partners. Projects that focus on conservation and monitoring without development of an informatics component and capacity are also out of scope.

POLLINATOR BIODIVERSITY SCOPE: PROJECT PROPOSALS

JRS seeks projects that increase the access to and use of biodiversity information relating to pollinator biodiversity assessment and the conservation of pollinator services in sub-Saharan Africa. Pollination is one of the most important ecosystem services supporting human life and livelihoods as well as natural biodiversity and primary productivity. Challenges facing pollinator conservation in Africa are many and include inadequate expertise, insufficient data on pollinator status and on pollinator-plant interactions, few risk mitigation options, lack of standard field methods and data standards, and lack of economic evaluations of pollinator services.

We are seeking projects related to these three areas of conservation and development policy and practice for which pollinator information may be highly relevant:

1. Data sets for monitoring landscape level climate change impacts;
2. Biodiversity assessments and monitoring in agricultural landscapes; and
3. Monitoring the impacts of land use management and agricultural productivity strategies.

Technical Scope: We welcome proposals that focus on any significant pollinator group, yet have an interest in building our grant portfolio related to Hymenoptera (bees & wasps) or Lepidoptera (butterflies). Our technical priorities (see our Pollinators Program website) are:

1. **Methods**: (1) Approaches for large scale/low cost pollinator data collection; (2) Methods for pollinator identification; and (3) Methodology, standards, and database design for plant-pollinator data.
2. **Platforms**: (1) Develop transferrable database and website models; (2) Develop pollinator knowledge platforms; and (3) Online access to field guides and checklists.
3. **Capacity Development**: (1) Baseline datasets; (2) High quality pollinator biodiversity data components of agricultural studies; and (3) Network formation and capacity building.

Out of Scope: Out of the scope of this call are projects that seek to develop new agricultural practices, livelihood and community development projects for beekeeping and honey production, projects that are aimed at taxonomic revision and determination, and mass digitization of museum collections.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS:

Preference will be given to projects that can grow to larger scale or can be transferred across geographic regions or across organizational and institutional contexts. Partnerships will be strongly preferred over standalone projects. Projects that hold potential to engage with, reinforce, or benefit our current projects will be preferred. All projects must conform to the foundation's Open Data Policy. U.S. law governing foundations requires that projects seeking to influence legislation through advocacy or lobbying or public campaigns will not be considered. For additional information please see JRS Grantmaking on our website.

Requirements:
The following requirements will ensure that your proposal aligns with JRS strategy and will be considered for funding and act as an eligibility checklist.

☐ There is a well-defined potential use of and future value to the data or tool; the end-users are well-defined, and they are directly involved in proposal development and project implementation.
☐ The hardware, software, data standards and related technical tools are specifically described, and their choice is justified.
☐ All primary data generated by the project will be available per the Open Access Data Policy and its terms for license, timeliness, standards, access, and compliance.
☐ The grant applicants are African or African principals and African institutions play major and long-term roles in project implementation and sustainability, and as recipients of funds.

☐ Training and capacity development is an explicit aim of the project through long-term engagement, network building, and sharing of training resources.
☐ Budgets are justified in significant detail in terms of cost assumptions, timing, and rationale.
☐ Outputs and outcomes have specific targets with which to evaluate progress and success that are measurable and time-bound.
☐ Plans for outreach and communications include efforts to generate interest of future partners and funders.

Types of Proposals: The total multi-year requested grant may range from about $50,000 to about $250,000. JRS will accept two types of proposals: 1) proposals for multi-year projects, and 2) proposals for planning grants for multi-year projects. Project proposals deemed to need additional time for technical planning and partnership development may be offered the opportunity to receive a planning grant.

Application Process: All proposals will be evaluated on their merits and only those that comply with the application guidelines above and posted on the foundation website will be considered. This is a pre-announcement; all proposals must be submitted using the online system. Proposals will not be accepted after March 9, 2018.

2018 Timetable for Applications:

- Friday, January 5: Grant application portal opens.
- Friday, March 9: Deadline for submission of proposals
- Friday, April 13: Invitation to semi-finalists to revise proposals
- Thursday, May 3: Deadline for submission of revised proposals
- Tuesday, May 29: Final funding decision communicated by the Foundation
- Wednesday, August 1: Approximate date of first payment to approved grantees

Thank you in advance for your interest. Please write to JRSRFP@jrsbiodiversity.org with any questions regarding this request for proposals.