2020 JRS RFP Application Instructions

Version: January 7, 2020

General Application Instructions

Please read the Request for Proposals, Application Instructions, and Glossary of Terms before you begin. All proposals must be submitted online in English. All applications are confidential to JRS and external confidential reviewers.

RESTRICTIONS ON FUNDED ACTIVITIES

The JRS Biodiversity Foundation is prohibited by U.S. law from funding lobbying or political campaign activities. U.S. private foundations are prohibited from funding grants "to influence legislation," anywhere that they operate. The JRS Biodiversity Foundation cannot lobby or fund any lobbying activities carried out by its grantees. There are certain exceptions and conditions under which foundations may fund grantees to provide analysis and advice regarding legislation. Please contact us if you believe your project may touch upon the above restrictions.

Online Grant Application Form

You may save drafts online by clicking the 'Save Draft' button at the bottom of the page. Text fields may be character-limited or word-limited and truncate automatically. The form entry fields are expandable by stretching from the lower right corner of the text box. The online form includes brief instructions with each question. Please address questions to JRSRFP@jrsbiodiversity.org.

Beginning of the Online Form

GENERAL INFORMATION AND SUMMARY

Application Topic

Check the option that best describes the subject of your application. Proposals for technical implementation projects are typically 2-3 years in duration and $150,000-$250,000 in requested funds. Proposals are encouraged for cases in which JRS provides "co-funding" to support biodiversity informatics components in projects funded by other donors.

If your application does not fit within these three categories, select "Other Subject" and contact JRS using the In-Process Review form below or by email at JRSRFP@jrsbiodiversity.org to assess if your idea is within our funding scope.

- ❑ Freshwater Biodiversity Project
- ❑ Pollinator Biodiversity Project
- ❑ Biodiversity Informatics Capacity Development
- ❑ Freshwater Biodiversity Special Study
- ❑ Pollinator Biodiversity Special Study
- ❑ Other Subject

TIP: If your project is not an obvious fit into one of the above categories, send an email to JRS with a short description before spending time on an application.

In-Process or Advance Review

Please check the box below if you wish to have preliminary feedback on your draft application (no longer valid after February 25, 2020). Feedback is no guarantee of future funding:

- ❑ Yes, please email me suggestions to strengthen my draft proposal
- ❑ Yes, please review this summary (Form will automatically open).
- ❑ No, thank you.

TIP: We advise that you check one of the "Yes" fields!

Potential Conflict of Interest

Are any of the project's principals or partners current or former JRS Biodiversity Foundation Trustees?

Are principals or partners the family of, direct reports of, or supervisors of current or former JRS Biodiversity Foundation Trustees? We ask this question to avoid, manage, or mitigate any real or perceived conflicts of interest regarding the grant proposal. Please contact us with any questions regarding conflicts of interest.

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No
- ❑ Unsure

A. Proposal Information

The fields in this section collect general information that will be used to administer your application. Please note these definitions:

- Organization Legal Name: This is the organization that will receive funds and is legally responsible for the project and financial management.
- Project Director: The name of the individual responsible for the daily leadership of the project and its success.
- Total Project Budget ($USD): This is your calculation of the total costs, from all sources, for the project that you propose.
- Total Request from JRS ($USD): Portion of the Total Project Budget that you are requesting from JRS.

TIP: JRS grants span a broad range in duration and total funding. Propose what is best for the success of your project. Our average grant size is $230,000. Proposals over $300,000 are strongly discouraged.

B. Executive Summary [250 words max.]

Please write a concise summary that includes the approach and measurable goals.

The Executive Summary describes your project's subject and your technical and institutional approach and goals. Describe the goals in terms of specific, measurable, and time-bound targets that will indicate your success.

TIP: Get right to the point of what you will accomplish. Do not restate the problem and why it is important. Describe the outcomes of who will do what differently as a result of your work. Write this summary last. Ensure that at least half the words describe tangible outputs of your work.

PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

C. Problem in Conservation or Sustainable Development [300 words max.]

What problem for conservation or sustainable development will you address with improved biodiversity data and knowledge systems?

This section describes the significance of the work that you will do. Please explain the problem using quantitative evidence and specific terms that apply to the geographic area that your work will address.

TIP: Be specific in describing the connection between improved and accessible data to the outcome you seek in conservation or sustainable development. Do not use space for the general justification of freshwater or pollinator biodiversity conservation. Citing references or providing links is recommended. [JRS does not support general conservation work, livelihood projects, or community development projects.]

D. Problem in Biodiversity Information and Knowledge Access [350 words max.]

What demand for data, information, or knowledge access are you addressing?

This section should describe what gap in data, information, knowledge, and related services limits addressing the conservation problem that you described above. <u>What is the evidence for the demand for the information, and who are the end-users?</u> What will the users do with the information and information access created by this project? Please be sure that you can "connect the dots" between solving the information problem (Part D) and solving the conservation or development problem (Part C).

TIP: JRS is a funder of biodiversity data, information, and knowledge access. Data and information systems are the focus of all projects that we fund. Describe the current "baseline" of accessible data and the technical barriers to data access.

E. Technical Solution to the Biodiversity Information Problems [350 words max.]

(a) Do you propose to design or invent a new database, information portal, or mobile app?

❑ Yes
❑ No
❑ Not Yet Determined

Select your best answer. The choice of information technologies may an aim of the project, may need additional partners with expertise, or may require advice from JRS.

(b) If Yes, Contingent Question: Why are the existing models insufficient? Do you propose developing a novel technology? (250 words max.)

The development of software, information platforms, and websites takes expertise, resources, and may present significant benefits as well as risks. This section should demonstrate familiarity with existing technologies and offer a rationale for why novel technology (e.g., software, apps,

knowledge platforms, websites) is needed. Please provide links and describe what existing platforms or technologies provide the closest model for your effort.

TIP: We welcome new technology, and there are existing solutions for many problems in biodiversity informatics that merit consideration. We recommend using existing infrastructure where it serves your needs. Finding solutions may be part of your project plan.

(c) *What is your planned technical solution to the problem described above in Sections C & D? (400 words max.)*

Describe any hardware, software, database, data standards, data repositories, website software, APIs, or other informatics elements essential to your success. Please describe the result of your efforts and not the activities to get to that point. Activities will be in the Work Plan section below.

TIP: If you are not familiar with biodiversity informatics technology, how will you partner with experts in this domain? Our projects may include research, training, and activities in different domains of ecology and conservation science, but our primary interest is in information technologies. This section should be specific regarding hardware and software.

F. Organizational Solution to the Problems

Why hasn't this happened before? How are your project management and your partnerships designed for success? [350 words max.]

Organizational solutions include new partnerships, capacity development, network-building, outreach, cooperation, awareness, legal agreements, and new incentives or awards. What will support a sustainable connection between data providers and data end-users?

TIP: Address how the organizations involved have mandates and missions that align with your goals.

GOALS AND PLANS

G. Major Milestones and Measures of Success

Please list what 8-12 milestones [specific outputs and outcomes] will you achieve, by when, and how will you know that you are successful. [400 words max.]

This section describes specific quantitative and qualitative indicators of progress and success and the project month in which any specific milestones and targets will be achieved (e.g., M03, M18). Please see the Glossary of Terms for definitions. Activities will be described in the section below on Work Plan. Please focus on the key results.

TIP: Imagine distilling this whole proposal to about ten tangible or measurable achievements, what would those be?

H. Work Plan

What is your plan of work? [500 words max.]

We recommend that you first complete the Work Planning Table which provides space for more detailed planning to then summarize here. Divide your work into a set of Objectives that organize activities and their results (outputs and outcomes) to best illustrate how you will manage the

project, allocate resources, and report on progress over time. For start and end dates of activities and dates of key milestones, please indicate by project month (e.g., M01, M12).

TIP: Objectives that correlate to timed phases of activity are recommended to communicate your plans best. It may be helpful to indicate if specific partners are responsible for particular Objectives.

I.   Sustainability

What will be the evidence of your success 1 to 3 years after the end of your project? What will you do to ensure sustainability? [300 words max.]

What ongoing activities, outcomes, and capacity will create measurable benefits? How will funding be secured to continue salaries and other costs created by this project? How will your communications, outreach, partnerships, and fund-raising support long-term viability?

TIP: Imagine you have succeeded, and evaluators work to assess your project. What evidence will they find or measure in-person or online?

ACCESS TO BIODIVERSITY DATA AND INFORMATION

J.   Open Access

(a) Confirmation of JRS' Open Access Data Policy

Open access to biodiversity information and knowledge by all stakeholders is essential to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Foundation requires that the biodiversity informatics output of its grants, such as datasets, training materials, decision tools, and software, is openly and freely available in formats that promote maximum re-use. We require that grant outputs are made available under the least restrictive licensing possible and per creative commons license definitions. The Foundation recognizes that different data outputs are subject to varying types of licensing and policies. Our grant application forms require that our grantees disclose their data sharing plans and any relevant licenses or agreements to which the grantee organization or the principal investigator is a party that may affect data sharing. JRS grantees may be asked at any time to report on the progress of data sharing plans and are expected to apply appropriate evaluation methodology and analytic tools to provide evidence of successful data sharing. The primary grantee is expected to use good faith efforts to ensure that any subcontractors and sub-grantees also comply with this policy. We recommend that you confirm compliance with this policy with any named partners in this proposal. The Foundation recognizes that circumstances may obligate the grantee or may benefit the project if data sharing is restricted. You must request any specific exceptions to restrict the use of, access to, or delayed access to the data. All interim and final progress reports should include live URLs as well as access methods for databases.

Any exceptions to our Open Data Policy must be justified in this application.

- ❑   I have read and understood the JRS Open Data Policy.
- ❑   This project's approach or our institutional policies may not comply with the above JRS policy.
- ❑   This project's approach or our institutional policies appear to comply with the above JRS policy.

(b) Open Data and Knowledge Access Plans [350 words max.]

Please list and describe how you will comply with each of the five terms of the JRS Open Data Policy regarding (1) access, (2) timeliness, (3) licenses, (4) standards, and (5) compliance.

Open access to the data and information products of your project is a requirement of JRS funding. Please refer to the statement of policy at http://jrsbiodiversity.org/our-approach/open-data-policy/.

Use this section to describe the data and information products and their access, including specific technical details such as standards, data repositories, requested access limits or restrictions, data formats, and software specific to creating access.

TIP: Organize your reply in five sub-sections on the five terms of 1. Access, 2. License, 3. Compliance, 4. Timeliness, and 5. Standards.

(c) *What are the URLs, Databases, or Digital Object Identifiers for discovery and access to your project's outputs? [250 words max.]*

TIP: You may not yet know these details, but please reply in a way that communicates your commitment to making your digital products "F.A.I.R." – **F**indable, **A**ccessible, **I**nteroperable, and **R**eusable.

PEOPLE, PARTNERS, AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

K. Organizational Background

What are the qualifications of your organization that will support the success of this project? [250 words max.]

Provide a brief description of the organizational unit that is most relevant to the project, including its annual budget, physical assets, and staff. Please note if there is in-kind or direct financial support from your organization that will contribute to this project.

TIP: Stick to the most relevant unit, e.g., the project team or department, and include links to past success, if available. You may wish to note the donors and dollar amounts if you have past, current, or in-process funding for related work.

L. Project Director and Principal Staff Experience

(a) *What prior experience of the director and staff will support your success and what percent (%) time will each person devote to this project? [400 words max.]*

Please name specific individuals and their contributions. If key staff are to be hired, please describe their desired credentials, percent effort on the project, their month of hiring, and source of salary support.

TIP: Remember to justify the percent of effort – particularly for low levels of effort, e.g., less than 33%.

(b) *What is the project director's or project team's experience of biodiversity informatics, including data publication? [200 words max.]*

Please list any history the project director or the project team has with publishing data. Where appropriate, include links to datasets, databases, etc. Please indicate whether and how data has been used in decision-making for conservation and development. We fund project teams without prior data publication experience.

TIP: Prior data publication is not a pre-requisite for funding but is helpful to demonstrate a commitment to increasing data access.

M. Project Partners

(a) *Have the partners named below reviewed this complete proposal?*

❑ Yes
❑ No

TIP: If you name partners, please be sure they are informed of your plan. Partners may be involved with multiple proposals and may be in communication with the JRS Biodiversity Foundation. If you are seeking co-funding for an existing project, describe its funders and partners as well as any partners needed for JRS-funded work on biodiversity information systems.

(b) *Who are the project partners, and what are their roles? Who are the data and information users? [400 words max.]*

If data users are not involved in the project, please justify why JRS should make this exception to our "demand-driven" approach. If you checked "No" in the question above, please explain why the partners have not yet directly reviewed the project plan. Please ensure that individuals named in your proposal have consented to the use of their name and potential partnership.

TIP: Including the end-users of the data, information or knowledge within your project team increases your likelihood of JRS funding and long-term success.

N. Capacity Development

How will your project increase the long-term capacity for biodiversity informatics in sub-Saharan Africa? [400 words max.]

Our most important goal is supporting capacity development for the sustainable supply of and use of biodiversity data, information, and knowledge. Describe the training, educational resources, physical infrastructure, and other elements of human and technical capacity that are outputs or outcomes of your work. How will you know that capacity development is meeting needs and is successful?

TIP: Be sure you address the capacity development for biodiversity informatics. Successful applicants from outside of Africa must involve African staff and institutions in all aspects of project design and implementation. Capacity development includes professional development implementing the project itself, and formal training activity. Be specific about how many people and at what technical level they will acquire skills.

FINANCES

O. Budget Narrative and Co-Funding Narrative [No word limit]

(a) *How does the project's budget support the activities described above? What are your assumptions, key unit costs, and allocation of resources among objectives, partners, and types of activities?*

This section is one of the most important of the proposal and has no word limit. We must understand the requested grant award and how the component amounts are sufficient to achieve your stated goals.

Please explain any cost category with expenses and the assumptions that are the basis of the cost calculations. Additional worksheets of calculations may be included in the budget spreadsheet. Describe whether and how the budget will fund your partners.

TIP: Good budget narratives describe the budget in multiple dimensions, such as by expense categories, by the partner, by objective, or by time-period. Connect how your budget fluctuates over time to support your work plan.

(b) *Please list any co-funding or in-kind contributions you have secured for this project.*

TIP: JRS does not require co-funding though we are very happy to partner with other funders. If you are seeking JRS' co-funding for biodiversity informatics components of an existing project, be sure to describe the finances of the existing project.

P.   Required Forms and Supporting Documents

Please use the upload function to attach the required Project Budget Template and the Work Planning Template. Please rename your attached file to include the project director or organization name before you upload it.

- Budget Template (Required)
- Work Planning Table (Required)