U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Funding Opportunity

F25AS00133 Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund - ASIA FY25

Funding Opportunity Number

F25AS00133

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: F25AS00133

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.619

Estimated Total Program Funding: $8,000,000

Expected Number of Awards: 20

Award Ceiling: $750,000

Award Floor: $250,000

Award Funding Range
The amount of funding per award may range from $250,000 - $750,000.

The amount of funding you request must match the scope of your activities, anticipated results, and the length of the project period.

Project Time frame
Your anticipated project and award start date should be 01 October 2025, or later. The length of your project may range from 3 to 5 years. If your project spans multiple years, you should describe your activities in phases or years. Support for phases or years will be contingent on your project performance, satisfactory reporting, financial management, and availability of program funds.

USFWS may extend your award for additional years contingent on USFWS priorities, your project performance, USFWS management approval, and funding availability.

Continuation of Ongoing Projects
If you have a current USFWS award you are eligible to apply for renewal of your existing or ongoing project. You will compete with all other applications for new Federal awards.

Application Language
Your application must be written in English.

Cost Sharing Required?
No

Closing Date for Applications: 02/27/2025

Your electronically submitted application must be submitted no later than 23:59 ET on 27 February 2025.

Late applications will not be accepted. Once you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email with an application number that starts with "FWS-." If you do not receive this

email within five days after the closing date, please contact mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov. Do not submit your application more than once, as duplicate applications will be discarded.

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100

Have Questions?
Please email the program for programmatic, technical, or administrative questions: mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov

Application Questions Webinar with USFWS Program Officer
The USFWS Program Officer will host a virtual office hour open to all potential applicants at 07:00 ET on 16 January 2025.

The Program Officer will be available to answer questions about this call for applications, submission processes, eligibility, requirements, and other concerns. To receive a link to join this session, please submit an email to mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov at least 24 hours before the session.

Executive Summary
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The purpose of USFWS is to protect the natural world so current and future generations can live with, live from, and find awe in lands, waters, and wildlife. USFWS envisions a future where people and nature thrive in an interconnected way and where every community feels part of and committed to the natural world around us. The USFWS International Affairs program works to coordinate domestic and international efforts to protect, restore, and enhance the world's diverse wildlife and their habitats with a focus on species of international concern, including domestic species that range or migrate beyond our borders or are traded or trafficked internationally. We envision a world where all people value nature and conserve living resources for the well-being of life on Earth. The USFWS International Affairs program achieves its goals by providing financial support for important projects that achieve clear conservation results for key species and their habitats around the world.

Congress passed the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §5301) in 1994 because they recognized the increasing threats to tigers and rhinoceros and the American people's commitment to conserving these iconic species. This law helps protect tigers and all rhinoceros species by supporting conservation programs in their habitats. The goal of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF) is effective, long-term conservation of rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats. RTCF supports projects that have lasting benefits for Asian rhinoceros and tigers. RTCF funds projects that are designed to increase rhino and tiger populations, manage their habitats, create protected areas, involve local communities and Indigenous peoples in conservation, deal with conflicts between people and wildlife, and educate the public about these animals.

This RTCF NOFO invites applications for conservation projects in Asia that have lasting benefits and:

- **Support protected areas and restore habitats** where rhinoceros and tigers live in Asia.
- **Ensure strong protections** to stop illegal killing and end the illegal trade in live tigers and rhinos, their products, and their body parts.

- **Work with local communities** to protect biodiversity, plan how land is used, and provide alternative ways to earn a living that have lasting benefits.
- **Promote coexistence** by reducing the negative impacts of humans on Asian rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats, tackling the root causes of conflicts between humans and these animals, and finding solutions to minimize such conflicts.
- **Conduct research** on Asian rhinoceros and tiger populations and their habitats, that informs conservation decision-making, including surveys and monitoring.
- **Enforce CITES** and other relevant treaties and laws that prohibit or regulate the taking or trade of rhinoceros and tigers or control how their habitats are used and managed.
- **Eliminate the demand** for illegal rhinoceros and tiger parts, products, and live animals in countries that consume them.
- **Reintroduce Asian rhinoceros** to places where they once lived.
- **Improve cooperation** between countries to promote conservation of tigers and Asian rhinoceros across borders.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Applicants can be individuals; non-profit, non-governmental organizations; public and private institutions of higher education.

Restrictions and Requirements for Non-U.S. Entities or Projects

- We do not fund [countries supporting terrorism subject to U.S. sanctions](#).
- We do not fund [countries under U.S. Treasury sanctions without licenses](#).
- You must get all required approvals for work outside the U.S. We are not responsible for your compliance with local rules.
- For projects over $500,000, you may need to comply with [2 CFR 175.105(b)](#) before we make an award.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Include All Project Costs

Your entire project may be funded only with this USFWS award, or it may include funding from other sources. If your project is funded by multiple sources, we describe that as cost sharing. Cost sharing refers to your project costs that are not covered by USFWS. In this program, cost sharing is not required, but you can offer it voluntarily.

If USFWS shares the costs of your project with other sources, you must report a full accounting of the entire project budget including those costs that are covered by non-USFWS sources. If you include cost sharing in your budget, the sources and values for cost sharing should be included in your detailed budget, along with a description or explanation. If you receive an award, you must

keep written records to support all allowable costs claimed as contributions to the cost sharing, as well as costs covered by USFWS. Your financial records can be audited.

Voluntary Cost Share (as explained in [2 CFR 200.1](#)) does not affect your eligibility, and including it will not give you a better chance of receiving funds.

- Your cost sharing should be necessary and reasonable to help achieve your project's goals.
- You must follow the rules about cost sharing in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#).
- You can consider all types of cost sharing, including in-kind contributions and public-private partnerships.
  - For example, using office space from other organizations, donated or borrowed supplies and equipment, travel costs sponsored by non-federal sources, waived indirect costs, and services provided by qualified volunteers like translations or consultations.
  - You should assign each in-kind contribution a monetary value in U.S. dollars.
- Funds from another U.S. Federal Government agency or another USFWS grant cannot be counted as cost sharing.

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov "Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications".
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your "Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications" on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page.](#)

GRANTSOLUTIONS

This program accepts application through GrantSolutions.gov. You must register with GrantSolutions. See [Submission Instructions](#).

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- The long-term outcome of the USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund Asia is effective, long-term conservation of rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats in Asia.

- The intermediate outcomes of the USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund are 1) Species recovery and protection of habitat in the wild, 2) Safe passage for wildlife movement and dispersal between habitats, and 3) Effective conservation programs in range states.

- The short-term outcomes of the USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund are 1) Long-term conservation projects with stakeholder buy-in in each range state, 2) Effective implementation of conservation activities guided by the best available science and evidence, 3) Monitoring of range state conservation needs, habitat availability, connectivity, and threats to species' long-term viability, 4) Trust and collaboration between projects, USFWS, and wildlife authority personnel, and 5) Local capacity for conservation management and participation of range state nationals in project activities.

- The outputs of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Program are projects in range states, communications, education, networks and communities of practice.

- The inputs and activities that are used to achieve the long-term, intermediate and short-term outcomes of the USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund are 1) stewardship of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds, 2) convening people and supporting partnerships, 3) influencing conservation decision-making with data and evidence, and 4) mentorship and relationship building.

Program Description

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The purpose of USFWS is to protect the natural world so current and future generations can live with, live from, and find awe in lands, waters, and wildlife. USFWS envisions a future where people and nature thrive in an interconnected way and where every community feels part of and committed to the natural world around us. The USFWS International Affairs program works to coordinate domestic and international efforts to protect, restore, and enhance the world's diverse wildlife and their habitats with a focus on species of international concern, including domestic species that range or migrate beyond our borders or are traded or trafficked internationally. We envision a world where all people value nature and conserve living resources for the well-being of life on Earth. The USFWS International Affairs program achieves its goals by providing financial support for important projects that achieve clear conservation results for key species and their habitats around the world. The USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund supports projects that implement sustainable conservation programs for the effective long-term conservation of rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats in Asia.

Tigers (*Panthera tigris*) used to live in many places but are now gone from about 95% of those areas. Today, wild tigers are found only in 13 countries, and their populations have dropped by 97% in the last 100 years. There are only about 4,500 wild tigers left. In the past 20 years, a few

tiger populations have started to recover thanks to strong conservation efforts, such as protecting their habitats, stopping poachers, and ensuring there is enough food.

All Asian rhinoceros species are struggling, with some on the verge of extinction. The Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) has fewer than 40 individuals left and is found only in Indonesia's Ujung Kulon National Park. The Sumatran rhino (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) has about 80 individuals left, living in two small groups in Sumatra. The Indian one-horned rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), found in Nepal, India, and Bhutan, have made a strong recovery. There now number over 4,000, thanks to ongoing efforts by governments and conservation groups.

Congress passed the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act ([16 U.S.C. §5301](16)) in 1994 because they recognized the increasing threats to tigers and rhinoceros and the American people's commitment to conserving these iconic species. This law helps protect tigers and all rhinoceros species by supporting conservation programs in their habitats. The goal of the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF) is effective, long-term conservation of rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats. RTCF supports projects that have lasting benefits for Asian rhinoceros and tigers. RTCF funds projects that are designed to increase rhino and tiger populations, manage their habitats, create protected areas, involve local communities and Indigenous Peoples in conservation, deal with conflicts between people and wildlife, and educate the public about these animals.

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- **Work with local communities** to protect biodiversity, plan how land is used, and provide alternative ways to earn a living that have lasting benefits.
- **Promote coexistence** by reducing the negative impacts of humans on Asian rhinoceros and tigers and their habitats, tackling the root causes of conflicts between humans and these animals, and finding solutions to minimize such conflicts.
- **Conduct research** on Asian rhinoceros and tiger populations and their habitats, that informs conservation decision-making, including surveys and monitoring.
- **Enforce CITES** and other relevant treaties and laws that prohibit or regulate the taking or trade of rhinoceros and tigers or control how their habitats are used and managed.
- **Eliminate the demand** for illegal rhinoceros and tiger parts, products, and live animals in countries that consume them.
- **Reintroduce Asian rhinoceros** to places where they once lived.
- **Improve cooperation** between countries to promote conservation of tigers and Asian rhinoceros across borders.

Guidelines for Proposed Projects

- Your project should take place within the habitats of tigers and Asian rhinoceros. If any work is planned outside these areas, your application must clearly show how it relates to conserving wild tigers and Asian rhinoceros.

- If your project activities focus on collecting data and assessing the status of these animals you should explain how this information will lead to management actions and why the lack of information has been a major obstacle for management in the past.
- You must clearly state how the data collected from your project activities will be shared with the tiger and rhinoceros conservation community.
- If your project involves research you should focus on specific management needs, actions, and outcomes to inform conservation decision-making.
- If your project aims to address human-wildlife conflict (HWC) you should follow the key principles and best practices outlined in the IUCN SSC guidelines on human-wildlife conflict and coexistence. You should show that you have previously engaged meaningfully with impacted groups, such as local communities and other stakeholders.
- If your project aims to prevent damage from HWC you must prove that your methods are effective, ethically and culturally appropriate, realistic, and recognized as effective by the stakeholders involved, and that those stakeholders understand the limitations of the methods.
- Your application should identify specific conservation actions that are likely to create lasting benefits.
- Your application should explain how your actions will reduce threats to the species of concern.

Safeguarding Human Rights

RTCF programs fund projects in complex, remote landscapes often inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, and local communities (IPLCs). In these areas, vulnerable IPLCs may experience instability, weakened rule of law, and may have histories of human rights abuses. It is important to recognize that certain activities could increase the risk of Gross Human Rights Violations (GHRVs) without strong social safeguard mechanisms. To mitigate this risk, you must include the social safeguard requirements outlined in this NOFO to support conservation partners and protect human rights. Additionally, there may be opportunities to develop organizational social safeguard mechanisms.

Legislative Authority

Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §5301 et seq.)

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through:

Funding Instrument
G (Grant)

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Required Forms

The table below specifies the required forms that you must submit with your application. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the Submission Instructions section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the Grants.gov Forms Repository.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: If you are requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on your Application for Federal Assistance form also represents your certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants. Must be signed and dated by the Authorized Representative of your organization. The person named as the Authorized Representative must have the authority to submit applications for U.S. Federal financial assistance on behalf of your organization. The signature of your Authorized Representative must match the name listed as Authorized Representative.
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if you are requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funds, and you have used or plan to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: Award purpose, Activities to be performed, Expected deliverables or outcomes, Intended beneficiaries, Sub-recipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants

Project Narrative

*Your project narrative should be **no more than 15 pages long**. Pictures, tables, maps, resumes, and required forms do not count towards the 15-page limit. You can put any tables, charts, or flowcharts in the project narrative, not as separate attachments. Include your bibliography, if you have one, as an addendum and not in the main text of your application.*

Project Title
- Write a simple description of your project, including where it is and the country, in the title.
- If your project is a follow-up to a previously funded application, keep the same title and add a number to show that it is a new application.

Statement of Need
Why is this project needed?

- Clearly identify the wildlife, habitat, or biodiversity that you want to protect, including any current estimates of population size, their locations, and distributions across the landscape.
- Describe the direct threats that impact the targeted species at your project site and the specific threats your project will reduce.
- Explain how your planned activities will help achieve your conservation goals, such as reducing threats or improving the conditions of species and habitats.
- Summarize any previous or ongoing efforts by you, your organization, or others that relate to your proposed project.
  - Include how your project is different from past work, how it builds on previous efforts, and how you plan to learn from past successes and failures.
- If you have received funding in the past from USFWS for this specific project or site, please provide a summary of that funding.
  - You should include details about the activities, products created, outcomes, and measurable conservation results.
  - A table might be the easiest way to share this information. Your table may have columns for the donor, reference number, amount funded, year of activity, and bullet points for major activities, products, outcomes, and measurable conservation results.
- If your project has received funding from any other government source, or if it is eligible for other government funding, include a section that describes those activities and how USFWS support adds value.
  - Make sure you explain how your project is different from or expands upon funding from other major sources.
- If you have received support from USFWS before, keep in mind that each application needs to be clear and stand alone. Not all people reviewing your application may be familiar with your past grants, so summarizing your activities and accomplishments will help everyone understand your application.
- Explain how your project is based on the best evidence available.
  - You should explain and reference the research or other information that supports the main conservation activities in your application.
  - For example, describe the evidence that suggests your proposed actions will work as intended. To find this evidence, you can use the Conservation Evidence database. You can also use published studies, your experiences, Indigenous knowledge, or evidence reviews, as well as species information from the U.S. Endangered Species Act and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
  - Your project budget can include costs related to data and evaluation as described in 2 CFR §200.455.

Project Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Methods
What do you want to achieve, and how will you do it?

- Describe the long-term goal(s) of your project.

- Your goal(s) should have objectives, which are the specific steps you will take to reach those goals.
    - Your objectives should be things you can achieve during the project time frame.
    - Your objectives should be clear, measurable, and achievable.

- Each of your objectives should have specific activities. Activities are the actions you will take to meet your objectives and achieve your overall goal(s).
    - You should explain the activities in enough detail so that reviewers can see how they connect to the costs of the project.
    - Each activity should:
        - Include detailed methods needed to accomplish it
        - Directly address a threat mentioned in your "Statement of Need" section
        - Use the best scientific information and methods available
        - Involve local partners, including participation from government and community members
        - Have long-term benefits

Ineligible Activities

The following activities are ineligible for funding. Regardless of your planned mitigation or use, we will not fund them. These ineligible activities include, but may not be limited to:

- Physical resettlement of people (voluntary or involuntary)
- Purchase of firearms or ammunition
- Gathering information by persons who conceal their true identity
- Purchase of intelligence, evidence or information, or paying informants
- Law enforcement operations that prompt the suspects to carry out illegal activities (entrapment)
- Any activity that will circumvent sanctions, laws, or regulations of either the U.S. or the country in which the proposed activity will take place

Project Timetable
How long will your project activities take?

- Provide a timetable that shows when you expect to complete different activities or important steps in the project.
- Group your project activities by month. Do not provide specific dates.

Stakeholder Coordination and Involvement
Who will you work with?

- For the purposes of this application, a stakeholder is defined as an individual, group, or organization that will be impacted by the project or may impact its success. Examples

include government, non-government and academic organizations, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, companies, volunteer groups, and individuals.

- Describe stakeholders that are relevant to your project, their connection to the specific threats or target audiences you are addressing, and any previous work you have done with these stakeholders.
- Describe how you will coordinate with stakeholders in planning the project.
- Explain how stakeholders will participate in your project activities, share the project results, and use your findings or products in their own work.
- Include letters of support for your project from each organization that is working in the same area or are listed as a stakeholder in your application, include letters of support for your project from each partner organization. If your application is recommended for funding, USFWS may ask for more proof of your coordination with these organizations.
- Include letters of support from local communities or people who will benefit from the project if possible.

Project Sustainability

What is your long-term plan for your project after the funding from USFWS ends?

- Describe what activities from your project will keep going after the proposed project period ends.
- Explain who will continue the work or act based on the results you achieved.
- Describe how you expect these future activities to be funded and at what level.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

How will you evaluate the progress and success of this project?

- Explain your plan for monitoring and evaluating your project.
- For each of your project objectives include an indicator (what you will measure) and a monitoring method (how you will measure the indicator).
- Your indicators should show a change in skills, human behavior, threats, or the status of the species you are trying to protect.
- If known, provide the current and desired status of your indicator.
- Outputs or products should not be used as indicators.
- Performance reports to the USFWS are not products or indicators.
- Your project budget can include costs related to evaluation as described in 2 CFR §200.455.

Budget Narrative Table

You must describe and justify items and costs listed in your budget. Your budget narrative must identify the following cost items:

- total estimated costs,
- non-Federal cost share,

- third-party contributions, and
- any pre-award costs.

This program prefers your Budget Narrative be written in a table format.

- This itemized budget table is an optional format that illustrates the type of information to include.
- Your budget table should be organized according to the object class categories listed on the SF-424A form, such as Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Travel, etc. Do not organize budget categories by project activities Cost Sharing Requirement
- Your total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including voluntary cost sharing and third-party contributions.
- Justifications for your project costs must provide sufficient information for reviewers to easily understand the costs and how they are calculated.
  - For example, a cost of $3,300 for lodging should include the formula used to determine this cost, such as: Lodging for 20 nights x 11 people x $15 per night = $3,300.
- If your project is part of a larger program, please list any additional funds and resources you have or need to reach your goals.
  - Provide the specific amounts of non-Federal cost sharing other sources will provide and explain what activities they will support.
- Discuss the overall cost-effectiveness and feasibility of your application, including how you will leverage other resources.

Budget items must be**:**

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with 2 CFR §200 Subpart E cost principles

Indirect Costs: You must indicate in your budget narrative how you will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to 2 CFR 200.414(f).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Specific Project Costs
- Salary and personnel
  - Include the base salaries and the estimated percentage of time key personnel are dedicated to your project.
  - List the individuals and their qualifications who will be paid a salary through this project in the section "Description of Entities Undertaking the Project."

- Training and meetings
  - Provide details regarding training events in the Activities section, include who will attend, anticipated number of attendees, curriculum, and how attendees will be selected, if applicable.
  - For meetings, include participants, a draft agenda, and desired outcomes.

- Equipment
  - Equipment refers to items costing $10,000 or more that last over one year, which require compliance with federal procurement rules.
  - Items not meeting these criteria should be classified as "Supplies."
  - Your budget narrative should explain the reason for purchasing or renting equipment.
  - List any existing U.S. federally funded equipment for your project and its specific funding source.
  - For large purchases, include technical specifications or a pro forma invoice.

- Supplies
  - List items separately using the unit cost and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the award, for instance, Telephone: $50/month x 50% x 12 months.

- Contractual
  - Sub-awards: If your project will award funds to another organization, for each sub-award provide a detailed line-item breakdown of costs explaining specific services, including personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, other direct costs, and indirect costs.
  - Consultant Fees: For costs such as lecture fees, honoraria, travel, and per diem for speakers or independent evaluators, list the number of people and rates per day. These costs should be consistent with the level of experience of your consultant and based on a fair market value.

- Social Safeguards
  - You can include costs for creating and maintaining new social safeguards.
  - This includes expenses for training, hiring staff, and setting up systems to handle complaints, like Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRMs).
  - You are encouraged to seek help in building the ability of your organization to maintain these social safeguards over time.

- Data and Evaluation Costs
  - You may include costs related to data and evaluation as relevant per 2 CFR §200.455.
- Expenses listed as "Contingencies" are unallowable, unless conditions listed under 2 CFR § 200.433 are applicable.
- Expenses listed as "Other" must be identified and described.
- There are restrictions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance equipment, including drones, these restrictions can be found at 2CFR § 200.216.

Unallowable Costs

The following costs are not allowable under this program:

- Publication of materials for distribution within the United States that are not related to the program
- Pre-award costs, which are expenses incurred before the specified dates of award period of performance, unless prior written approval is received
- Programs that advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or a particular political faction
- Entertainment
- Alcoholic beverages
- Purchase of land
- Direct support or the appearance of direct support for individual or single-party electoral campaigns
- Duplication of services immediately available through municipal, provincial, or national government
- Expenses listed as "Miscellaneous" or "etc."

Other Required Information

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures: If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per 2 CFR 1402.112. Refer to 2 CFR 200.112 Conflict of Interest and 2 CFR 200.113.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement
Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal application or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative application submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping application was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

Description of Entities Undertaking the Project
Who will carry out the project, and what are their specific qualifications?

- Include a short description of the organization that is applying for the project and any other people or groups that will help.
- Explain which activities each person, group, or organization will manage.

- On your SF-424 form include complete contact information for the project manager.
- Include a short (1-page) resume for key people, showing their qualifications to help reach your project goals.
- Do not include any personal information such as identification numbers or personal details like marital status, religion, or physical characteristics.

Map of Project Area
Where is your project located?

- Your map should clearly show the project area and be big enough to read easily.
- Label all sites mentioned in your project description.

Assessment of Activities Requiring Safeguards Against GHRVs
What is the risk level for a potential abuse of power or a gross human rights violation: low, medium, or high? Do they require additional social safeguards to address any possible risks?

- If you identify possible risks, it does not mean the activity cannot proceed; many projects can continue with the right risk management in place.
- You should first identify if your activities are likely to pose potential risks that would need additional safeguards, or if all your activities are low risk and do not need safeguards.
- Low-risk activities have little to no harmful effects on the environment or communities.
    - These activities usually do not involve much contact with Indigenous Peoples and local communities and do not directly affect their livelihoods or resources.
- If an activity is assessed as having potential risks, the application should outline how to manage those risks and show that your organization has the staff and capacity to implement the strategies effectively.

Government Letter of Endorsement
- Include a letter of support from the appropriate local, regional, or national government wildlife or conservation authority if your project is outside the United States.
- Your endorsement letter should be written in English, or you should provide an English translation of your letter.
- Your endorsement letter should specifically mention USFWS and your project.
- Your endorsement letter must be less than two years old.
- Your endorsement letter should be signed by someone who is not also listed as a key team member in your application.
- We can accept a current Memorandum of Understanding between you and the government authority if it mentions the proposed work.
- USFWS will accept your application if you have a pending endorsement letter, but you must include a statement about the status of your endorsement letter in your application.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

To request paper copies of application forms or other materials, please contact mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 02/27/2025

Closing Date Explanation

Your electronically submitted application must be submitted no later than 23:59 ET on 27 February 2025.

Late applications will not be accepted. Once you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email with an application number that starts with "FWS-." If you do not receive this email within five days after the closing date, please contact mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov. Do not submit your application more than once, as duplicate applications will be discarded.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through GrantSolutions
To apply through GrantSolutions, follow these steps:

1. **Register your organization.** Send an e-mail to help@grantsolutions.gov with:
   - Subject: New Organization Request
   - Entity name (organization or individual applying as a natural person)
   - Entity type
   - SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (not required for individuals)
   - Employer Identification Number (individuals, do not include your SSN)
   - Address
   - Contact details (First and last name, e-mail, phone)
     This information should be the same as entered on the entity's SAM.gov profile.

2. **Assign system user roles.** Follow the GrantSolutions "Recipient user" registration instructions. Submit a separate Recipient User Account Request form for each official to be assigned a system role. At minimum, the Authorizing Official (ADO) and Principal Investigator/Program Director (PI/PD) must be assigned.

3. **Log in.** GrantSolutions requires users to log in through Login.gov. Each user must create a Login.gov account. For instructions, see the GrantSolutions Training Resources web page.

4. **Find and apply to this Funding Opportunity.** After logging in, click on either the "Begin an application" link (first time applicants) or the "Funding Opportunity" link to go to the "Competing Announcements-Application Kits" list screen. Search the list for this Funding Opportunity's title and number. Click on the associated "Apply" link. Follow the prompts from there. Required applications forms are provided with the Funding Opportunity in GrantSolutions unless otherwise indicated on the Required Forms table above.

5. For detailed instructions, see the GrantSolutions Training Resources web page.
6. **Need help?** Find help topics and contact information on the GrantSolutions Contact Us page.

Please Note: You must have an active registration in SAM before attempting to register in GrantSolutions. If you encounter issues while registering or submitting an application in GrantSolutions, you may be eligible for a waiver. To request a waiver, you must provide supporting documentation that demonstrates the problems you are facing. This documentation can include screenshots of error messages or email correspondence with the GrantSolutions Help Desk as you attempt to resolve the issue. Submit your waiver request at least three days before the submission deadline to dic_grants@fws.gov.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see Application Documents above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. USFWS may remove your application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

This program evaluates applications by scoring how well each application addresses the program priorities and the requested elements listed in the Merit Review Criteria section below.

USFWS will ensure that:

- applications are reviewed and evaluated by qualified reviewers,
- applications are scored and selected based on announced criteria,
- consideration is given to applicant risk and past performance,
- competitive applications are ranked, and
- funding decisions are made.

We established an evaluation plan comprised of five basic elements: 1) merit review factors and sub-factors, 2) a rating system for competitive applications, 3) evaluation standards or descriptions that explain the basis for assignment of the various rating system grades/scores, 4) program policy factors, and 5) the basis for selection.

Basic eligibility review

- After you submit your application, program staff will check it for completeness and confirm if you are eligible.
- If your application is missing information, it will be marked as ineligible until it is complete.
  - You will get an email from dic_grants@fws.gov, and you will have five days to correct your application.
  - If you do not make the required corrections within that time, your application will be rejected.
- Complete applications will receive an email from dic_grants@fws.gov confirming eligibility.

Review for minimum programmatic requirements

- After submission, the USFWS Program Officer will review your application to ensure it meets the minimum programmatic requirements before advancing to the merit review.
- The Program Officer will share with the merit review panel any applications that did not meet minimum programmatic requirements and the reasons why, and the panel will have an opportunity to discuss.

Merit review panel

- The USFWS Program Officer will identify and recruit reviewers for the merit review panel.
- The panel will evaluate and score each application according to the merit review criteria outlined in the section below.
- The panel is made up of a minimum of five U.S. Government employees, including at least three merit reviewers, one panel chair, and one recorder.
- Only permanent U.S. Government staff may score applications.
- All staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must sign and return to the Program Officer the "Department of the Interior Conflict of Interest Certification" form prior to participating in any review or evaluation process.
- By signing this form, the reviewer agrees to recuse themselves from scoring or commenting on applications for which they have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- This form must be signed and filed before a reviewer can participate in the merit review panel. For a copy of this form, contact mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see 2 CFR 25.200 and 2 CFR 25.110) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer 2 CFR 25.205 for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, USFWS will notify you in writing.

Merit Review

This program ranks applications by scoring how well each application addresses Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF) program goals and priorities as well as the requested elements listed in the Project Narrative section above. Well justified and feasible projects that can make a significant contribution to the conservation of tigers or Asian rhinoceros and their habitats and

include all the requested application elements will receive higher scores. USFWS will consider the following criteria, listed in priority order, when evaluating your application:

1. Likelihood of conservation impact in support of the RTCF's goals and objectives.

- To what degree does your proposed project contribute to at least one of the following:
    - Address a conservation need identified by a specialist group, or by a regional, national, or global strategy?
    - Improve effective management and governance in your project site?
    - Strengthen your individual and organizational capacity at your project site?

- Your objectives, activities, and methods are well-defined, measurable, statistically valid, realistic, and apply the best scientific and technical information available.
- Your project will provide benefits beyond the life of your grant.
- Your budget is reasonable and realistic for your proposed activities.

2. Technical, logistical, and institutional capacity of your organization and staff to implement the project.

- Are your activities logistically feasible, under your authority, and resourced according to the project budget?
- Does your application demonstrate that the technical experience of key personnel, institutional policies, such as codes of conduct and clear management structure are adequate?
- If applicable, do you have a positive record of accomplishment with USFWS based on previous grant support, including timely submission of your financial and performance reports?

3. Collaboration with or inclusion of key stakeholders.

- Where relevant, does your application reference specific consultation, input, facilitation, or participatory activities with stakeholders?
- Does your application have sufficient detail regarding coordination of project activities with similar, ongoing, or planned activities of other organizations?
- Does your application promote networking, partnerships, or coalitions?

Reviewers may also consider geographic and project diversity in the USFWS portfolio to break ties and further distinguish between applications with equivalent scores.

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly

- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

The merit review panel will review all applications that meet the basic program requirements and are therefore considered eligible. USFWS may also ask for technical advice from qualified U.S. Government experts to provide more information during the panel review.

After reading the application, reviewers will individually give each application a score from 1 to 3, based on how well the application meets the criteria described earlier. The scoring system is as follows:

Category 1: Excellent, higher priority to fund. Excellent application with no issues or only minor revisions needed. Important, critical, compelling, high-priority project. Application meets all program requirements. Minor revisions are allowed before funding is finalized.

Category 2: Acceptable, lower priority to fund. Acceptable to fund if additional funds become available and application revisions are made. Project meets program requirements but is not the highest conservation priority. Concerns and conditions for the project should be described in detail by the reviewers.

Category 3: Do not fund. Reject application. Project does not address a priority or is unlikely to achieve the desired impact or application has other fundamental issues or problems that make it unsuitable for this program.

Each panelist will send their individual scores to the panel chair before the review meeting. The panel chair will organize the scores to find patterns and similarities among the reviewers. These patterns may help guide the panel's discussion; for example, the panel may talk about the highest-ranked applications first.

During the merit review, the panel will discuss each application and agree on a group consensus score using the same 1 to 3 scoring system above. After the panel assigns a consensus score, the panel will rank all the applications.

After the panel, USFWS may ask you follow-up questions, or request that you provide revisions to your project scope or budget, or both. If your application is recommended for funding:

- You may be asked to demonstrate your financial capabilities to manage Federal funds in accordance with the standards in 2 CFR 200.302 Financial management.
- USFWS will review your proposed methods for safeguarding social issues and determine if your methods match the risks of the activities, as described below in the section "Evaluation of Social Safeguard Mechanisms."

If your application is recommended for funding by the panel, you will receive an email with an official Notice of Award once necessary revisions and risk reviews are completed. If your application is not recommended for funding by the panel, you will receive an email that your application was not recommended for funding, and you may ask the USFWS Program Officer for feedback from the merit review panel. Funding decisions are typically made within 180 days of the application submission deadline. If we have not contacted you regarding our funding decision within 180 days, you may contact mscf_rhinotiger@fws.gov.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the program assesses the risk posed by the applicant per 2 CFR 200.206. If an award will be made, the program may apply special conditions corresponding to the risk assessed. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000), the program reviews eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records per 2 CFR 200.206(a). The program also assesses financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential challenges.

Evaluation of Social Safeguards Mechanisms

If your application is selected for funding and your project includes only confirmed low risk activities, your application will not require further evaluation for social safeguards mechanisms.

If your application is selected for funding and your project includes any activities with potential risks requiring additional safeguards you will be contacted by USFWS to submit the following:

1. Grievance Redress Mechanism Documentation: A Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is a system designed to help Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLC) submit complaints and have them resolved in a safe and private manner. This mechanism is important for managing any negative effects that may arise from project activities. Having a proper GRM in place is crucial for building accountability and trust with these communities.

USFWS recognizes there are many ways to design and implement a GRM that can range from very simple to more complex systems that might involve software applications. It is up to you to determine the design and implementation of your GRM.

Some key points about GRMs:

- GRMs should be clear and fair, giving affected IPLCs the opportunity to voice their concerns and resolve any issues with the project team.

There are different types of GRMs, including:

- GRMs specific to individual projects
- GRMs that cover multiple projects in a region
- GRMs managed by organizations operating in other countries

Your documentation should include:

- Details about the type of GRM you plan to use.
- Your plans for raising awareness about the GRM and how it will work.
- If you are still working to develop a GRM, how will you implement the GRM before the project commences?

2. Social Impact Assessment (SIA): The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) examines how your proposed goals and activities might affect Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) within or near the project area. You will need to show what social safeguards you have put in place to reduce the risks of serious human rights violations and misuse of power.

Some key points about the SIA:

- You should identify any potential risks to IPLCs and explain the measures you have taken to address them.
- While a proposed template to complete the SIA is available on the USFWS website below, you may use any format you would like to submit your information. If more information is needed after reviewing your SIA, you may be asked for further details.
- If your activity risks cannot be mitigated, USFWS may request that you adjust your project activities to be commensurate to the social safeguard mitigations you are able to provide.

For more guidance on what information you need to provide, you can visit SIA information on the USFWS website.

3. **Consent and Community Consultation**: Applications that involve activities that might affect IPLCs will need to show proof that communities have been consulted and their consent or support is documented. This can be demonstrated in one of two ways:

A. Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Documentation:

The FPIC process puts into action the basic right of Indigenous Peoples to make their own decisions about their lands and resources, and their right to self-determination as Indigenous Peoples. It is a formal process where Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities give their consent before project activities start. This right is recognized in various international agreements, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It ensures that Indigenous Peoples can give or withhold their consent for projects that may affect them, reinforcing their ability to govern themselves and control their own futures.

FPIC is mandatory if:

- Regional Human Rights Courts have ruled on Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC: Applicants must determine if Regional Human Rights Courts have ruled on Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC in areas where the project will take place.
- Host countries have legal requirements to obtain FPIC.
- IPLCs in the project area have pre-existing, established FPIC protocols.

Additional resources on conducting FPIC are available here: Statement and Guidelines on Free, Prior, Informed Consent | FWS.gov.

For projects that include activities with a high risk of impacting IPLCs, FPIC may be required as a mitigation strategy. These high-risk activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Providing assistance to and/or participating in the legal expansion of protected area boundaries into or through community lands.
- Establishing new, legally recognized conservation areas that are part of IPLCs lands and natural resources.
- Wide-spread restrictions to natural resources, legal livelihood and subsistence activities, and areas of cultural and religious importance.

Please Note: This will be the only option available in situations where FPIC is mandatory, regardless of USFWS social safeguard policies. Recipients can contact their program technical contacts for more information.

B) Community Support Summary:

If FPIC is not required, applicants must instead provide a summary of communication and engagement plans with IPLCs, noting how IPLCs will be informed of project activities. This should include details on how applicants plan to notify and maintain communication with IPLCs on project activities, along with evidence of direct communication with IPLCs, such as letters of support or other forms of communication. While consent is not required with this option, evidence of ongoing transparent communication and support is mandatory.

Examples of Evidence:

- Letters from communities stating they are aware of and acknowledge the activities they will have close or direct involvement with.
- Evidence of a communication and outreach plan if activities require continued interaction with IPLCs.
- Evidence of research on the background of IPLCs, that can include historical context, social, economic and governance structures, and any evidence of existing or past conflicts involving other communities, government entities, or external organizations.

Submission Time Frame:

Once you are notified that your application has been selected for funding, you will have 30 calendar days to submit the necessary social safeguards documentation. Applicants who provide the necessary social safeguards will be recommended for funding.

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per 2 CFR 200.211. The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per 2 CFR 200.458, beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 10/01/2025

Anticipated Project End Date: 10/01/2030

You are not required to sign and return the Notice of Award document. You accept an award by starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means.

Pre-award costs are costs that you incur before the start date on your Notice of Award document, see 2 CFR 200.458 for a definition of pre-award costs. You are not authorized to incur pre-award costs without prior written approval from the USFWS Program Officer. If you incur costs prior to the start date of award, you do so at your own risk. USFWS is not required to reimburse you such costs if you do not receive a Federal award or if the Federal award is less than you anticipated and inadequate to cover such costs.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

See the [FWS General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for national policy requirements for FWS awards. Special terms and conditions will be detailed in award notices.

Courtesy Human Rights Vetting of Foreign Security Forces (if applicable): If a project involves foreign security forces, USFWS requires a process called Courtesy Human Rights Vetting. USFWS considers foreign security forces to include any organizations, units, or individuals authorized by a state or government to use force, including but not limited to the authority to search, detain, and arrest. If activities with foreign security forces are included in an application, the applicant agrees to comply and implement this vetting process. Cooperation with USFWS and the U.S. Department of State is mandatory. Qualifying security forces must be vetted before any activities related to supporting security forces can start. This requirement applies to all forms of support, including training, technical assistance, and direct support to purchase materials or equipment. An application must clearly state that foreign security forces are involved and will need Courtesy Human Rights Vetting.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report (SF-425) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329(e)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than $100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and

information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over $30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS)](#).

Implementation and Monitoring of Social Safeguard Mechanisms

You must track, monitor, and report on your social safeguard mechanisms and include updated information in your annual interim and final performance. This should include information on issues encountered, resolutions, and lessons learned.

The summary may include:

- Whether your safeguards are working as expected.
- Whether you have discovered any new social safeguard risks related to your planned activities.
- If Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is needed, an update on that process. If FPIC is not needed, an update on the Community Outreach Plan.
- Any planned changes to mitigation measures based on new information.
- How effective is your Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), if applicable?
- Any unexpected events, like emergencies, that may require changes to your safeguards to meet foreign assistance goals.

If a measure is ineffective, risks increase, or new risks arise, USFWS may require adjustments to your social safeguard mitigation measures. USFWS can also raise the risk level of an activity based on new information.

Reporting Human Rights Violations

If a serious human rights violation or abuse of power is reported, the recipient must inform the USFWS Program Officer in writing within 72 hours of receiving the report. Once reported, the USFWS Program Officer will contact the recipient for more details.

The report must include the following:

- Date(s) of the incident,
- Description of the incident,
- If the incident will be investigated or is pending investigation,
- Who is conducting the investigation,
- Whether U.S. Government funds are involved,
- Whether U.S. nationals or domestic residents are involved,
- Any gross human rights violations, abuses of power, fraud, waste, and if the incident has affected the project or your timeline.

Annual Certifications for Grants Over $500,000

If your project conducts activities outside the U.S. and your award is more than $500,000, you must submit annual certifications that you have a written plan and procedures to prevent human trafficking, as required by [2 CFR § 175.105](#)

Other Information

The U.S. Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this announcement. Only USFWS Grants Officers can bind the U.S. Government to the expenditure of funds.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Registration in Financial Assistance Systems

☐ System for Award Management (SAM) (initiate at least 30 days before the application deadline)

☐ GrantSolutions (for new, first-time applicants)

Application Requirements and Forms

☐ SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

☐ SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs

☐ Project Abstract Summary

☐ Project Narrative

☐ Itemized Budget or Budget Narrative

☐ Conflict of interest disclosure (if applicable)

☐ Overlap/Duplication Statement

☐ Description of Entities Undertaking the Project

☐ Map of Project Area

☐ Assessment of Activities Requiring Safeguards Against GHRVs

☐ Government Letter of Endorsement or MOU, or statement on its status (may be submitted after application deadline)

☐ Indirect Cost Statement

☐ Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if claiming more than 15% de minimis of MTDC

☐ SF-LLL form (if applicable)

☐ Uniform Audit Reporting Statement (U.S.-based applicants only)

☐ FCRA documentation (India-based applicants only)