

DORIS DUKE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Center for Conservation Incentives

Request for Proposals

Letter of Intent Deadline: August 15, 2002

(Must be received by the Foundation no later than 5 p.m. EST)

Staff Contact:

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Program Overview

The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation seeks to establish a center to promote more efficient and effective approaches to conservation of the nation's biodiversity. The center will develop and advance the use of analysis, mapping and demonstration of promising incentives on private lands. The center will focus and help leverage public and private funds to achieve the greatest amount of biodiversity protection at the least cost. A five-year grant of up to \$5 million will be awarded through a competitive, expert-reviewed process.

Background

Over two-thirds of US land is privately owned, with farmland accounting for more than 50%. Financial returns largely dictate the management of most of these lands. Without substantial financial and/or regulatory incentives, most landowners are unlikely to protect biodiversity.

Various federal programs are designed to provide financial incentives at significant scale. Billions of dollars are available to private landowners over the next ten years, principally through the United States Department of Agriculture's farm bill programs and comparable programs under the Department of Interior. However, the allocation of these funds has not made biodiversity a target or priority in the rule making or implementation processes at the federal or state levels.

The distribution of federal conservation funding to states, and within states, is the subject of an ongoing, iterative process. Constructive input by an institution that can bring sound science and landowner knowledge will increase the likelihood of a more rational and effective distribution of conservation funding. There exists a compelling need and opportunity for an entity to assemble and integrate the expertise and experience of the best economists, scientists and planners in the field to ensure the efficient and effective distribution of federally funded incentives for biodiversity conservation on private lands.

The Center for Conservation Incentives (CCI) will be housed within an existing nonprofit organization. CCI will coordinate the involvement of national, state and local partners to ensure a systematic approach to developing and replicating successful incentive models and exerting policy influence at the state and federal levels.

Program Goals

The objective of the Center will be to increase the quantity and efficiency of biodiversity conservation on private lands through new and expanded incentives. To achieve this objective, the Center will pursue three goals:

1. Establish a science-based rationale and analytical framework for the allocation of federal and state funding for incentives for biodiversity conservation.
2. Design and demonstrate highly effective models for local application of federal biodiversity funding focused on incentives.
3. Develop and advance policy recommendations related to federal and state rule development regarding conservation incentive programs.

Program Elements

The following is a fuller description of activities that DDCF expects the Center to undertake. DDCF encourages applicants to develop a strategy that follows this outline.

Establishing a Science-based Biodiversity Priority Rationale

The Center will establish a sound, basic scientific foundation for allocation of federal funding for the protection and restoration of biodiversity. This will involve an integrated analysis of biodiversity priority areas and available federal funding to 1) guide and prioritize the Center's local efforts, and 2) guide and inform the Center's strategic federal policy initiatives. Eligible activities could include:

- Integrated mapping of biodiversity areas and current federal funding.
- Identification of required adjustments to current/future federal and state funding and allocation models.
- Support and development of habitat conservation plans (at the regional, state, or local level) and design of improved delivery systems for incentive funding.

Design and Demonstrate Effective Models for Local Application of Federal Biodiversity Funding:

The Center will select a sample of high value, privately owned biodiversity areas (informed by the planning activities outlined above) and work with local groups and state governments to develop integrated incentive funding plans and strategies and pilot projects. The Center will be expected to re-grant significant funding to other organizations to develop and implement these projects. It will also share lessons about promising models with partnering grantee organizations as well as other public and nonprofit institutions. Eligible activities could include:

- Development and replication of site-based pilot projects on private lands in high value conservation areas that integrate conservation and funding plans.
- Development and replication of effective strategies to streamline the administration of funding programs for landowners.
- Development and replication of flexible funding mechanisms that leverage federal, state and private funds.

Developing Policy Recommendations for Federal and State Rule Development

The Center will work extensively with clients at the state and federal level to ensure that implementation rules, yearly funding allocations, new incentive policies, etc., are developed to maximize biodiversity conservation value per dollar invested. Federal policy work should be part of an integrated approach built on knowledge gained through landowner involvement and state policy activities. Political lobbying will not be funded. Eligible activities could include:

- Taking a leading role in influential states and coalitions that will shape the rules of the new farm bill programs.
- Working with selected states, where still possible, to develop their interpretation of national rules.

- Working with selected states to advocate for annual funding appropriations.
- Supporting efforts by organizations on state technical committees to help steer funding toward biodiversity.
- Taking a leading role with policy recommendations for federal conservation programs and the next farm bill.

Program Governance and Advisory Committee

The leading organization will determine staffing and governance structure for the Center. The structure should include dedicated staff including at least one full-time management-level staff. The Center should also establish a formal external advisory committee to oversee its work. The committee will review the Center's workplan and provide feedback as appropriate throughout the grant. The Advisory Committee also will review the criteria and process for awarding regrants for pilot projects.

Program Outcomes and Evaluation

DDCF program staff will hold the Center accountable for specific outcomes, as expressed in explicit milestones. The range of outcomes could include the following:

Establishing a Science-based Biodiversity Priority Rationale:

- Identification of potential discrepancies between federal funding and high value/high threat biodiversity areas across the US (peer reviewed)
- Identification of required adjustments to current/future federal and state funding (peer reviewed)
- Development of an explicit strategy for influencing federal biodiversity funding policy
- Identification of highly effective demonstration projects for integrated local biodiversity funding systems
- Support of local demonstration projects with development of integrated habitat conservation plans

Design and Demonstrate Effective Models for Local Application of Federal Biodiversity Funding:

- Demonstrated implementation of at least five highly effective local projects demonstrating integrated local biodiversity funding systems
- Evidence of replication of these incentive systems throughout the US
- Introduction and replication of administrative streamlining processes at various locations

Developing Policy Recommendations for Federal and State Rule Development:

- Demonstrated influence on rule making, identification of federal funding deficiencies, and the redress of mismatches
- Demonstrated influence on future iterations of major federal conservation incentive legislation and policy
- Successfully integrated conservation and funding plans
- Demonstrated influence on state-level biodiversity incentive legislation and policy

Grant Description and Recommended Funding Structure

DDCF will fund an individual nonprofit or consortium with a five-year grant of up to \$5 million. The grant will fund the leading organization to provide overall administration, coordination, and strategy for the program. The organization will implement projects on the ground, but is also expected to re-grant a significant portion of the funds to other conservation organizations working with local landowners. Grant funds should be allocated roughly as follows:

Analysis and planning activities	15%
Internal pilot projects, research and development	20%
External pilot projects, research and development (re-granting)	35%
Federal policy involvement	20%
Administrative overhead	10%

(Note: DDCF anticipates that at least 25% of funds spent on pilot projects (both internal and external) would go toward developing *new* incentives, as opposed to expanding or improving the delivery of existing ones. No direct payments to landowners are anticipated under this grant.)

Organizational Qualifications

DDCF seeks a qualified nonprofit organization or consortium to establish and operate the Center for Conservation Incentives. Qualified bidders will have the following qualifications:

- Be a national organization with sufficient size and capacity to receive and manage a \$5 million grant.
- Possess working knowledge of federal funds.
- Have knowledge and experience in designing, implementing and analyzing conservation incentives involving private landowners.
- Demonstrate commitment to and track record of working with regional governments and local and regional nonprofit organizations.

In areas where respondents are weak, they should suggest, where feasible, partnerships with other organizations that can provide needed expertise.

Grant Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by DDCF staff and program advisors according to the following criteria:

- Quality of overall plan.
- Clarity of vision for increasing quantity and effectiveness of biodiversity funding through incentives.
- Clarity and feasibility of program plan, including mapping and analysis, demonstration projects and policy influence.
- Clarity of plans for assessing the center's effectiveness.

- Effectiveness of plan in leveraging federal funds and other available funding.
- Skills, experience and capacity of proposed staff.
- Organizational track record with similar efforts.

Application Process

DDCF will implement a two-step proposal process:

- 1.** Letter of Intent. Applicants will submit descriptions of their approach, timeline, resource requirements, partnerships, budget, etc. Expert advisors will review these letters of intent according to the criteria described above. DDCF may choose to eliminate a number of applicants at this time.
- 2.** Final proposals. Final proposals will be requested from the remaining eligible applicants. Proposals will go through a final evaluation by DDCF staff and advisors, and a grantee will be selected according to aforementioned criteria.

Application Timeline

July 3, 2002	Initial RFP distributed
August 15, 2002	Letters of Intent Due
September 3 2002	Invitations to Submit Full Proposals
November 6, 2002	Invited Proposals Due
December 15, 2002	Notification of grantee award

Application Guidelines – Letter of Intent

Applicants must submit initial letters of intent according to the following guidelines. Narrative proposals should be double-spaced, 12pt font, and no more than six pages, excluding attachments. They should be organized according to the headings below and in the order listed. They should be submitted by e-mail by 5 p.m. on August 15, 2002.

- 1. Project Goals:** Describe your goals for the project. Briefly explain how this project advances the mission of your organization.
- 2. Project Strategy:** Describe your approach to achieving the goals of the Center and implementing its three components, including details about mapping and analysis, pilot projects, geographic concentration, regranteeing and policy influence.
- 3. Outcomes:** Describe key benchmarks used to measure the success of your strategy and indicate your general approach to the assessment process.
- 4. Organizational Qualifications:** Describe your organization's applicable qualifications and assets. Outline your organization's track record of prior involvement with federal funding, landowner incentives, local partnerships, and government partnerships.
- 5. Governance:** Describe your organization's proposed administrative and implementation structure for this grant. Describe your general approach to the use of advisors on this project.
- 6. Partners:** List any organizations you expect to be collaborating with your organization on this project, and their qualifications. Describe relevant assets and resources each partner brings to the project. If you cannot yet specify potential partners, indicate the process by which you would do so at the appropriate time.
- 7. Project Timeline:** Provide a rough description of how the project will proceed over the next five years.
- 8. Project Budget:** Provide a rough budget in the attached format for the total cost of the Center and whether you intend to raise other funds to complement DDCF funding.

Draft Application Guidelines – Full Proposal

Eligible applicants will be asked to submit a more in-depth proposal according to the following draft guidelines. Narrative proposals should be double-spaced, 12pt font, and no more than twenty-five pages, excluding attachments. They should be submitted by e-mail to DCFF.

- 1. Project Goals:** Describe your goals for the project. Briefly explain how this project advances the mission of your organization. **(1 page)**
- 2. Project Strategy:** Detail your approach to implementing the Center, including proposed federal policy strategy, pilot project strategy, landowner incentive pilot projects, administrative and funding streamlining processes, partnerships, possible geographic concentrations, and proposed re-granting. Please include how information will be gathered and disseminated to participating organizations, and how it will be staffed and governed. **(3-5 pages)**
- 3. Outcomes:** Describe specific, measurable outcomes that will be used to assess success in implementing your specific program approach. Include what kinds of assessment data you will collect, how you will collect it, and how you will incorporate this information into the Center's plan. Indicate major challenges or obstacles you expect to encounter and how you will overcome them. **(2-3 pages)**
- 4. Organizational Qualifications:** Describe your organization's applicable qualifications and assets. Outline your organization's track record of prior involvement with federal funding, landowner incentives, local partnerships, and government partnerships. **(2-3 pages)**
- 5. Governance:** Describe your organization's proposed administrative and implementation structure for this grant. Describe the role and responsibilities of the advisory committee, key criteria for selection and a list of potential candidates. **(1-2 pages)**
- 6. Partners:** List any organizations you expect to be collaborating with your organization on this project, and their qualifications. Describe the assets and resources each partner brings to the project. **(1-2 pages)**
- 7. Staff:** Provide a complete list of key program and administrative staff from your organization that will be involved in the Center and their qualifications. If additional staff will be hired for the project, include a job description and brief explanation of the search and hiring process. **(1-2 pages)**
- 8. Project Timeline:** Provide a project timetable of your proposed plan, including events related to planning activities, federal policy strategy, regional/state/local landowner project implementation, etc. Describe activities by year and quarter, including milestones for success as appropriate. **(2-3 pages)**
- 9. Project Budget:** Include a concise description of the financial requirements of the proposed plan, including yearly budget projections that reflect the project timeline. **(2-3 pages)**

- 10. Board of Directors and Overall Governance:** Describe your organization's board of directors or trustees and governance structure. Include a list of board members and their affiliations. Briefly describe trustees' involvement in overall institutional planning as well as the development and implementation of this proposal. **(1/2 page)**
- 11. Letters of Support:** Provide letters of support from any private or public organizations/institutions with whom you plan to work.
- 12. Resumes of Key Staff:** Provide resumes of key staff involved in the administration and implementation of this grant.
- 13. Audited Financial Statements.** Please include audited financial statements for the three most recent years.
- 14. IRS Letter:** Provide a copy of the IRS letter determining the organization's 501(c)3 status.