



**CALL FOR PROJECTS FOR THE NINTH CYCLE OF THE
TransNet ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION PROGRAM
LAND MANAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM
OVERVIEW AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Program Description

The *TransNet* Extension Ordinance and Expenditure Plan, as approved by the voters on November 2, 2004, includes an Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP). The EMP is a funding allocation category for the costs to mitigate habitat impacts for regional transportation projects. The EMP is a unique component of the *TransNet* Extension in that it goes beyond traditional mitigation for transportation projects by including a funding allocation for habitat acquisition, management, and monitoring activities as needed to help implement regional habitat conservation plans.

On September 22, 2017, the SANDAG Board of Directors approved the call for projects for the ninth cycle of the EMP Land Management Grant Program with a budget of \$2 million. Two funding categories have been identified for the ninth cycle of EMP Land Management Grants. Approximately \$800,000 will be allocated to short-term threat reduction projects and approximately \$1,200,000 will be allocated to long-term (three- to five-year) species and habitat recovery projects pursuant to the Management Strategic Plan for Conserved Lands in Western San Diego (MSP).

Eligible Project Proposals

To be eligible for funding, proposed projects must be located within the MSP Area (MSPA) on lands conserved for habitat preservation and must include activities within one of the categories below:

- 1. Threat Reduction Stewardship (approximately \$800,000 available).** Eligible activities include management stewardship actions to reduce threats to MSP species and their habitats on existing conserved lands. Projects must demonstrate that future funding is available (if needed) and that the project will maintain benefits long-term. Highest priority will be given to projects that focus on SL¹ and SO² species. Example stewardship activities include, but are not limited to: control of invasive plant³ and animal species; erosion control; trail maintenance needed to protect MSP species; signage and directional fencing; enforcement; linkage improvement, and access control. Applicants should use the SDMMMP portal to research species-specific threats and management objectives (<https://portal.sdmmp.com/species.php>). Threats are noted in each species' profile.

Projects in the Threat Reduction Stewardship category should be short-term projects in need of one-time funding necessary to fill existing budget gaps for specific tasks. Projects should be completed within 18 months of receiving a notice to proceed (NTP). *The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded for a project in this category is \$80,000.*

¹ Category SL Species: species whose persistence in the MSPA is at high-risk of loss without immediate management action above and beyond that of daily maintenance activities.

² Category SO Species: species whose persistence of one or more significant occurrences in the MSPA is at high-risk of loss without immediate management action above and beyond that of daily maintenance activities.

³ Invasive plant species: species that are determined to be impacting MSP SL or SO species, as identified in the Management Priorities for Invasive Non-native Plants, A Strategy for Regional Implementation.

2. Species and Habitat Recovery (approximately \$1,200,000 available). Eligible activities include habitat restoration and enhancement projects with a focus on MSP priority species and their habitats. Highest priority will be given to projects that focus on SL¹ and SO² species. Example activities include, but are not limited to: habitat restoration including control of invasive plant³ and animal species and planting and seeding of areas with native vegetation; minimization of wildfire ignition and fuel sources to reduce intensity of spread and increase viability of MSP species; and management actions as identified through MSP Roadmap's Management Objectives to reduce impacts to SL or SO species. These projects should promote the goals and objectives identified in the MSP for those species. Funding will not be granted to projects being pursued to fulfill a permit obligation.

Projects in the Species and Habitat Recovery category should be completed within three to five years of receiving a NTP. *The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded for a project in this category is \$1,200,000, but applicants are encouraged to phase their projects into discrete tasks because full funding may not be awarded.*

Projects that are not ready to begin work within 12 months of submission of the proposal to SANDAG will not be eligible for this funding cycle. Project proposals approved by the SANDAG Board of Directors for funding that do not begin work within one year will be at risk of losing their funding. The total length of time funded should be appropriate to the proposed project. All requests for extensions to proposed project schedules within final executed grant agreements are subject to SANDAG Board Policy No. 035: Competitive Grant Program Procedures, which can be found at sandag.org/legal.

Process for Allocating Funds

SANDAG will accept project proposals from land managers in San Diego County that will benefit regional conservation planning under the Natural Communities Conservation Planning Program. The applicant must own the land, or be designated to manage the land by the land owner under a contract or other written form of legal documentation, and should have any applicable state and federal permits prior to the initiation of work. The land must be conserved as open space for natural resources. Representatives of the land owner and land manager must be identified on the Grant Application Form (**Attachment 2 or 3**) and be authorized in writing to enter into a grant agreement with SANDAG.

Applicants applying for funding in the **Threat Reduction Stewardship** category must complete a Grant Application Form (**Attachment 2**) that does not exceed eight pages. The project proposal will include the purpose of the proposed project, the scope of work, costs, and schedule. Applicants must clearly identify; (1) their proposed tasks in the scope of work, (2) funding requested for each task, (3) start and end dates of the tasks, and (4) deliverables. Any required supplementary materials (with the exception of right-of-entry permit and indirect cost proposal, if applicable) will be counted toward the eight-page maximum. Letters of support should **NOT** be included with the project application materials.

Applicants applying for funding in the **Species and Habitat Recovery** category must complete a Grant Application Form (**Attachment 3**) that does not exceed 12 pages. The project proposal will include the purpose of the proposed project, the scope of work, costs, and schedule. Applicants must clearly identify; (1) their proposed tasks in the scope of work, (2) funding requested for each task,

(3) start and end dates of the tasks, and (4) deliverables. Any required supplementary materials (with the exception of right-of-entry permit, indirect cost proposal, and matching funds confirmation, if applicable) will be counted towards the 12-page maximum. Letters of support should **NOT** be included with the project application materials.

All project proposals will be reviewed for eligibility, ranked, and prioritized as described below. A list of recommended project proposals will be submitted for review and recommendation to the Environmental Mitigation Program Working Group (EMPWG), Regional Planning Committee, and Transportation Committee; for information and review for consistency with the *TransNet* Extension Ordinance to the Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee; and for final approval by the SANDAG Board of Directors.

Successful applicants will then be required to enter into a grant agreement with SANDAG for grant funding. The grant agreement signed by the parties will be in substantially the same form as the Sample Grant Agreement (**Attachment 4**) included in the call for projects. Successful applicants will be required to submit quarterly invoices and reports on their progress. In addition, a final report of the project's contribution to promote habitat conservation in the region along with the final invoice and all remaining deliverables will be submitted at the conclusion of the grant term. Quarterly report and final report templates will be sent to the grantee after the contract agreement is executed and a notice to proceed is issued.

Who Will Score the Project Proposals?

An evaluation committee made up of EMPWG Working Group members and/or other qualified individuals who do not have an affiliation with any of the proposed projects will score and rank the proposals, in conformance with the criteria and values listed below. The committee will be comprised of individuals with knowledge of the regional preserve system and land management.

Protests

A protest by any adversely affected applicant must be made in writing and must be mailed or hand delivered to the SANDAG Protest Administrator, Charles "Muggs" Stoll, at 401 B Street, Suite 800, San Diego, California 92101, within five business days after an applicant is notified by SANDAG that its proposal is not being recommended for funding. A protest which does not strictly comply with the SANDAG protest procedures will be rejected. The Competitive Grant Program Protest Procedures can be found at the SANDAG EMP Grants webpage available at sandag.org/empgrants.

Project Proposal Evaluation and Ranking

The following evaluation and ranking criteria will be used by the evaluation committee.

Eligible Activity: 1. Threat Reduction Stewardship (18-month Projects)

Project Proposal Evaluation Criteria	Point Range	Maximum Score Possible	Total Score
Proposed project addresses a high-priority MSP species and their habitats. SL or SO species will be given higher priority.	0-20	20	
Proposed project will address an urgent need and includes actions that will reduce or manage an identified threat.	0-20	20	
Success criteria have been identified and will be monitored and reported.	0-10	10	
Success of proposed project is likely with clear, measurable, proven results that will promote conservation.	0-10	10	
Any activities necessary to maintain the proposed project after the 18-month grant period have been identified and funding for those activities has been secured.	0-10	10	
Total		70	

Eligible Activity: 2. Species and Habitat Recovery (Three- to Five-Year Projects)

Project Proposal Evaluation Criteria	Point Range	Maximum Score Possible	Total Score
Proposed project addresses a high-priority MSP species and their habitats. SL or SO species will be given higher priority.	0-20	20	
The degree to which actions proposed meet MSP objectives and will benefit targeted species	0-30	30	
Long-term success of management activities is likely.	0-20	20	
Success criteria have been identified and will be monitored and reported.	0-10	10	
Proposed project is synergistic with other larger and ongoing efforts to recover a priority species and/or sensitive habitat.	0-10	10	
Matching funds are available to implement the proposed project. ⁴	0-10	10	
Total		100	

⁴ Scores for matching funds will be based on the following scale: 1 point for 1-10 percent match; 2 points for 11-20 percent match; 3 points for 21-30 percent match; 4 points for 31-40 percent match; 5 points for 41-50 percent match; 6 points for 51-60 percent match; 7 points for 61-70 percent match; 8 points for 71-80 percent match; 9 points for 81-90 percent match; and 10 points for 91-100 percent match. For example, if \$500,000 of grant funding is requested and \$200,000 in matching funds are identified, the project will receive 4 points because matching funds total 40 percent of the grant amount requested.

Proposed Timeline
(dates proposed are subject to change)

October 2, 2017 – A call for projects is provided to interested stakeholders included in SANDAG's *TransNet* EMP stakeholder database. A call for projects also will be posted on the SANDAG EMP Grants webpage, sandag.org/empgrants.

November 8, 2017 – A public workshop will be provided to address any questions related to the call for projects and proposal processes. SANDAG staff will provide information and address questions on the eligibility, approval, contracting, and specific requirements of this grant program. The meeting will be held from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in the SANDAG Board Room.

January 12, 2018 – Proposals are due to SANDAG. **One signed electronic file** must be **received by 4 p.m.** Email electronic submittal to: sarah.pierce@sandag.org or use SANDAG's We Transfer site for large files: <https://sandag.wetransfer.com/>

March, 2018 – The evaluation committee will review and rank project proposals following the criteria above and forward the list of prioritized project proposals to the EMPWG for consideration.

May, 2018 – The EMPWG will recommend a list of prioritized project proposals to the Regional Planning and Transportation Committees.

June, 2018 – The Regional Planning and Transportation Committees will be provided a list of prioritized project proposals for review and information. The list of prioritized project proposals also will be provided to the Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee to review for consistency with the *TransNet* Extension Ordinance.

July, 2018 – The Regional Planning and Transportation Committees will be asked to recommend a list of prioritized project proposals for funding to the SANDAG Board of Directors.

July, 2018 – The SANDAG Board of Directors will be asked to approve a list of prioritized project proposals for funding.