



Protecting nature. Preserving life.

**ENTREPRENEUR IN RESIDENCE
TO SUPPORT THE NORTH AMERICA AGRICULTURE
REGENERATIVE GRAZING LANDS STRATEGY**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

1.1. Technical – General

1. Could you provide background on the following teams? Specifically, where are these teams located, and what is the organizational structure?

- TNC’s North America Agriculture Regenerative Grazing Lands (RGL) Strategy

The NA RGL team works remotely from across the U.S., with team members in Great Plains, Western and Midwest states. The NA RGL team has five core members and many more affiliated members that work within TNC state business units and across priority landscapes, including scientists and individuals with expertise in land management, facilitation, beef industry and ecosystem, and project management. The NA RGL team reports to the NA Agriculture Program.

- Agriculture Innovation

Currently, the Agriculture Innovation team has two members: the director and the agriculture innovation strategy manager. Both of which work remotely and are located in the U.S. Eastern time zone.

- Are there other key stakeholders, whether regional TNC chapters or others?

TNC has existing relationships with public and private sector stakeholders operating in the ranching sector and is seeking input from the EIR regarding which of these stakeholders should be engaged in this project through the assignment.

2. What is TNC vision’s in initiating this project?

TNC’s goal with this project is to accelerate the adoption of regenerative ranch management practices to improve conservation, ecological and economic outcomes for ranching communities. Understanding and leveraging innovative tools and solutions is critical to achieving this goal. TNC seeks an Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) that can bring “fresh eyes” and an entrepreneurial approach to this work. In addition to identifying the most promising solutions and gaps that need to be addressed with new solutions, TNC also seeks an EIR to support the beef industry/sector to understand the unique role that both the public and private sector can play in the acceleration of the adoption of these practices by leveraging, promoting, and developing existing and new tools/solutions.

3. Is your intention to fund and build a business or create an initiative that is part of TNC the non-profit?

TNC is seeking recommendations from the EIR regarding how TNC can best support the beef industry/sector to accelerate the adoption of regenerative ranch management practices to improve conservation, ecological and economic outcomes for ranching communities; however, TNC does not have any specific intentions for the outcomes of this assignment at this time.

As stated in the section “1.11 Notice of Intent” in the RFP, RFP TNC has identified critical areas for intervention to drive conservation outcomes and is procuring the services of creative and innovative Consultants outside of TNC to address these critical areas as outlined in this RFP.

TNC is not an entrepreneur; however, as part of its mission and to achieve its conservation goals, TNC supports the development of entrepreneurial work and market incentives. For any work completed under this contract with TNC, consultant will be required to assign and/or license the rights to an ideas and concepts developed to promote conservation outcomes, including the promotion of regenerative grazing land practices in this instance, to ensure that others with a public interest have access to the ideas and concepts to enrich the wholistic approach to innovation and technology development for conservation.

4. Is it TNC's intention to provide tools to its existing ranch properties or provide access to tools and / or results to the broader ranch community?

Please refer to the response to question #3 re: TNC's intention. TNC anticipates that the EIR will support the organization to identify the role that it and other stakeholders should play with leveraging innovative solutions and tools across the beef industry/sector, including TNC's existing ranch properties and the broader ranching community. TNC has the right to use and share ideas and concepts developed to promote conservation outcomes, including the promotion of regenerative grazing land practices in this instance, to ensure that others with a public interest have access to the ideas and concepts to enrich the wholistic approach to innovation and technology development for conservation.

1.2. Technical—Scope of Work

5. What, if any, labor resources will the RGL and Agriculture Innovation teams supply? I assume the EIR will be responsible for producing all deliverables with the approval and consideration of TNC.

TNC anticipates that the EIR will be paired with a primary point of contact on the RGL team throughout the duration of the assignment. Additionally, TNC anticipates that other members of the RGL and Agriculture Innovation teams will be available to work with the EIR when needed. TNC also anticipates that the EIR will have access to TNC state leaders as needed. The RGL and Agriculture Innovation team will provide feedback and approval for all deliverables.

6. In section 1.1, in the subsection under the subheading "Background:", from the paragraph that begins with, "Building on the work of Ahlering et al...", the RFP describes two precedent projects the TNC has completed:
 - The convention of "a dozen ranchers and beef industry leaders to refine its understanding of key ranch-level indicators..."
 - Work TNC completed with a social science firm to obtain feedback from a broader group of ranchers..."

Will EIR applicants be granted access to the findings of these two projects before submitting a proposal? Or is that privilege limited to the chosen EIR?

At this time, TNC and partners are working on a manuscript to compile the learnings from these two studies. Once this is completed, it will be shared with the selected EIR as well as shared publicly via a to be determined medium.

7. Is it the expectation the EIR will leverage TNC's existing ranching sector network for input on the gap and opportunities analysis? If so, could you provide some sense of the scale and breadth of the network?

Yes, TNC anticipates that the selected EIR will leverage TNC's existing ranching sector network as well as make suggestions for other stakeholders to be engaged if there are identified gaps. TNC's existing network includes public and private land managers on native range lands, ranch technical advisors, university extensions and agencies, public policy makers, beef supply chain actors, etc. Based on the expertise of the EIR and input from the RGL team, TNC and the EIR will co-develop a stakeholder outreach plan most relevant to this assignment.

8. Can you help me to understand what the stakeholder map might look like?

The stakeholder map is comprised of public and private land managers on native range lands, ranch technical advisors, university extensions and agencies, public policy makers, beef supply chain actors, etc.

9. Other than the RGL team and ranchers, should I assume we should be talking to industry solution providers, national labs or universities, state or local governments officials, others?

Please see the response to #7 & #8.

10. Please provide number of ranches currently piloting existing tools & solutions and the nearest city to their location for field visits.

TNC anticipates that the EIR will gather this input through the analysis component of the assignment and then be able to co-develop the required travel schedule for site visits, interviews, etc. with the RGL and Agriculture Innovation teams. The site locations will be primarily based in the Great Plains and Western states in the U.S.

11. Can you give me a scope of how many interviews should be conducted?

Please see the response to question #10.

12. Are you aware of support in the IRA for implementing tools and solutions that will be evaluated for this effort?

TNC recognizes that there may be opportunities with IRA and other funding opportunities. TNC anticipates that the identification of appropriate opportunities for funding, such as IRA, for financial feasibility/strategy will be included in the Implementation Plan as part of the deliverables for the assignment.

13. Can you provide some examples of the solutions and tools that will be reviewed and evaluated?

Tools and solutions generally fall into these broad categories: animal and feed performance, environmental footprint, finance, livestock management (including range and forage), meat processing and sales, natural resource management, soil health, weather and climate, and monitoring and testing. Tool type examples could include (please note that this is not an exhaustive list): application, hardware, equipment, reference material, biologics, training, software, spreadsheet, website, map, mobile app and, pen and paper. Please also see response to question #18 for existing compilations of potentially relevant decision support tools.

14. The RFP and associated materials do not provide much detail on the types of tools to be evaluated. Is the focus primarily on "indirect" tools such as software focused on tracking and

measuring outcomes and guiding decisions, or is there also a focus on “direct” tools and practices that are physically used to implement improvements on the rangeland?

TNC is agnostic to the type of tool; however, TNC is focused on identifying the best solutions or set of solutions (and how they should be properly bundled) that are scalable to accelerate the adoption of key improved, regenerative management practices and deliver improved business outcomes.

15. For tools such as software, will TNC provide the necessary licenses and access for the Consultant to experience the tools first-hand, or should the Consultant budget for access fees? If the later, any guidance on a reasonable license fees allowance would be appreciated.

TNC does not anticipate that full user access would be required or would be relevant to assess each tool; however, that would be at the discretion of the EIR and the RGL point of contact. The applicant should include their best estimate in the proposal budget for the cost of any licenses and access for software that the EIR feels necessary for the assignment. TNC anticipates reimbursing for actual costs accrued for fees related to any required software access.

16. For the tools to be iterated upon and/or developed, has TNC considered how to continue to support these efforts to they can be successful by additional funding, partnership/piloting opportunities or other?

TNC anticipates that this will be a core component of the Implementation Plan that the EIR will co-develop and submit to the RGL and Ag Innovation teams as part of the deliverables for the assignment.

17. Typically, an EIR role would assume that new solutions are developed that could have value in the free markets. Does TNC ever participate (e.g. equity) in for-profit companies? Provide advisory services to for-profit companies?

TNC does work with the private sector, including for profit companies. All of TNC’s work with the private sector is guided by TNC’s Principles of Corporate Engagement. Some examples of the ways in which TNC has and does engage with the private include transforming business practices to enhance corporate sustainability, engaging brands through Cause Marketing, impact investing, investment in innovation to deliver transformative change towards a regenerative agriculture system, and supporting the development of a supply chain company for sustainable tuna.

18. Please describe the scope of information already compiled by RGL Team for review (Reference Project Activity I. A. on Page 4) so that an appropriate amount of time can be dedicated for review in the work plan.

TNC has compiled a list of more than 70 tools that we feel have the most potential. In addition, a collaborative lead by The Jornada Experimental Range has compiled over 500 decision support tools for beef cattle productions and management, and The University of Arizona has more than 60 decision support tools catalogued on Rangelands Gateway.

19. For the proposed project work plan, is this more around what scope of work the EIR would like to focus on or more of a general proposal of the EIR’s workflow?

TNC anticipates that the proposed project workplan will encapsulate the entirety of the EIR's workflow as related to the scope of work in the RFP. Based on the EIR's expertise and understanding of the workflow, TNC anticipates that each applicant will submit a comprehensive proposal for the work as outlined. TNC recognizes that there may need to be adjustments made to the workflow after the analysis stage of the project and have catered to with the inclusion of the development of a subsequent workplan after this stage.

20. Please confirm the list of deliverables below. Some overlap and/or additional items between the activities and deliverables sections.

- Gap and opportunity analysis
- Survey results of the ranching sector for input and feedback on gap and opportunity analysis
- Track 1 –
 - i. Iterate existing tools/solutions
 - ii. Business case and value proposition pitch for each solution (includes a model informing operation costs, financing, and revenue generation)
- Track 2 –
 - i. Develop or expand concepts for new tools
 - ii. Business case and value proposition pitch for each solution (includes a model informing operation costs, financing, and revenue generation)
- Implementation plan
- Written final report detailing:
 - i. All business case and value proposition pitches (working ranches)
 - ii. Final concepts for innovative tools/solutions
 - iii. Implementation plan

The anticipated project deliverables are as follows:

- I. Attendance at weekly or bi-weekly check-in call with RGL counterpart for project progress reports and updates.
- II. Participation in virtual calls with the RGL team and partners, as needed to develop understanding of RGL strategy, and solicit feedback on project findings.
- III. Presentation to RGL and Agriculture Innovation teams on outcomes from analysis, including which existing tools/solutions are most promising and which gaps still need to be addressed by developing new innovations. (Please note this will include input from all aspects of the analysis conduct, including review of existing literature, evaluation criteria for assessment, evaluation conducted against criteria and assessment of key assumption of analysis from diverse individuals engaged in the ranching sector.)
- IV. Workplan with corresponding timelines for two workstreams:
 - a. Workstream 1: Promoting adoption of existing solutions and tools
 - b. Workstream 2: Driving innovation to address identified gaps
- V. Presentation to RGL and Agriculture Innovation teams on business case and value proposition pitch for adoption and sustained use of the most promising, existing tools/solutions and concepts for new innovations needed.
- VI. Written final report detailing:
 - a. The business case and value proposition pitch for working ranches for the adoption and sustained use of the most promising, existing tools/solutions.
 - b. Final concepts for new innovations needed based on identified gaps as well as business case and value proposition pitches for entrepreneurs/start-ups on for developing new tools/solutions, including technical feasibility, problem

definition, market research, competitive landscape, partnerships opportunities and more, as applicable.

- c. Implementation plan for TNC's RGL team, which details the plan for scaling the adoption of the most promising, existing tools/solutions and developing and/or improving innovations to address gaps, with proposed roles and responsibilities of TNC and public and private sector partners clearly identified. This will include how TNC and other sector actors, including the public and private sector, will make pitches to ranching communities regarding the use of the best tools available and develop new tools.

1.3. Budget

21. Should the budget be based around projected time spent working with TNC as an EIR, or is this project based where I'm predicting a project now, and writing in my proposed budget?

TNC requests that the proposed budget encapsulates all expenses related to implementing the entirety of the scope of work for the EIR as proposed in the RFP.

22. Is there a schedule or description of planned meetings, events, etc. that applicants should consider when developing their travel budget?

There is not a set schedule and/or description of planned meeting, events, etc. Because TNC anticipates developing this in collaboration with the EIR. However, TNC requests that applicants include the number of in-person meeting/events that they believe may be required based on their previous experiences and what has been outlined in the SOW. TNC anticipates reimbursing for actual costs accrued for travel.

23. Do you have a suggested or assumed set of travel locations? Important in building travel budget.

TNC does not have a set list of travel locations. Based on the response to #22 and the priority regions of work identified in #1, TNC asks that the applicants provide an estimate budget for travel to Great Plains and Western states from where they will be primarily based during the duration of the assignment. TNC anticipates reimbursing for actual costs accrued for travel.

1.4. Administrative

24. Will bids from outside the US be considered?

Yes, bids from outside of the U.S. will be considered subject to applicable laws and regulations. TNC will evaluate proposals as outlined in the response to question #30.

25. Are you looking for an EIR or a consultant?

TNC seeks an Entrepreneur in Residence to conduct this assignment as an independent contractor.

26. Would a team approach be favorably considered by the reviewing team?

TNC is open to an individual, team or entity executing this assignment. TNC aims to select the most effective applicant to take on this assignment based on the evaluation criteria in the RFP.

27. Is The Nature Conservancy open to two individuals applying for this, proposing a job share to complete these duties?

Please see the response to question #26.

28. Do you have a preference for a single EIR over a team (company) approach or would you treat both equally?

Please see the response to question #26.

29. Is there a requirement or strong preference for a full-time equivalent effort during the project period of 6-8 months, or would a 50% effort over a 12 month project period be considered acceptable?

TNC is open to either approach based on the availability and commitment of the selected EIR. TNC aims to select the most effective applicant to take on this assignment based on the evaluation criteria in the RFP.

30. What are the evaluation criteria that TNC will be using?

The selection criteria is as follows:

The Contractor selection will be based on a number of factors such as, but not limited to, all elements of the proposal submission, including Proposed Approach and Methodology, Experience and Qualifications, Relevant Previous Work, and Budget.

31. Can TNC review candidacy qualifications ahead of proposal submission?

Unfortunately, TNC is not able to provide any feedback on candidacy qualifications. TNC recommends that all interested applicants review the RFP, including the qualifications, and then submit full proposals based on self-evaluation. As a reminder, only submissions that contain all requested input will be considered.

32. Will TNC provide pre-submission feedback on proposals? Asked by someone who already submitted a proposal.

Unfortunately, TNC is not able to provide any feedback on proposals; however, interested applicants can resubmit their full proposals by the deadline after reviewing and considering these Q&As. As a reminder, only submissions that contain all requested input will be considered.

33. Are you open to scheduling a meeting before the application submittal to share additional background information on TNC's RGL efforts to date?

Unfortunately, TNC is not able to hold calls with interested applicants and/or share additional information outside of what is contained in the RFP and this Q&A. TNC recommends that all interested applicants review the RFP and then submit full proposals based on self-evaluation. As a reminder, only submissions that contain all requested input will be considered.