

SOSF Keystone Grant

Application Guidelines

Stage I & II

2021 Funding Cycle

The funding cycle is biennial, with the grant application window opening in even years (2018, 2020, etc.), and the grant covering the period from **March 2021 to June 2022**, for example. Funds are allocated on an annual basis, with the option to apply for continued funding every year. The usual project duration is limited to three years. Grants average 25,000 USD per annum. Only projects concerned with marine chondrichthyan species (sharks, rays, skates, sawfishes and chimaeras) will be considered. A special call for applications for 2020 is aimed at supporting research projects that promote the recovery of sawfishes, but all proposals are welcomed.

The Keystone Grant application process consists of a two-stage online application: Stage I involves completing a short online form, equivalent to four to six pages. Stage II, by invitation only based on the Stage I application, will involve the completion of a longer and more detailed form, equivalent to 10 to 12 pages.

Please read the funding guidelines carefully.

Receipt of any SOSF grant does not constitute a commitment to continue funding in future years, regardless of the length of the project.

Dates should all be in the format dd/mm/yyyy and the currency used in this application is USD / US\$.

Deadline: Grant applications must be submitted through the SOSF website no later than 30 June 2020 (stage I) and 30 September 2020 (stage 2) at 18:00 CET (Central European Time)

A. Format for documents

For the naming of annex documents please use the following structure for the file name:

[first four letters of project leader surname]_[first four letters of project subject]_keystone2021_stage1_[document type].[document extension]

For example, the annex documents for a project on *Chimaera conservation* submitted by *Dr Jones* would be titled: *jone_chim_keystone2021_stage1_annex1.doc*. All files submitted with the online application form should be identified in the same way (e.g. *jone_chim_keystone2021_stage1_cv.pdf*; *jone_chim_keystone2021_stage1_graph3.jpg*; *jone_chim_keystone2021_stage1_budget.xls*; etc.).

B. Completing the form

Applicant and Organisation Information

If there is more than one leader, please name the individual who will execute the project and with whom we should communicate. Their organisation and/or institute (if any) might not be the organisation most closely involved in the project, and projects do not have to be run through an institute. Outline the

qualifications and experience of the project leader in the form of a *Curriculum Vitae* and a letter that focuses upon material that is most relevant to the proposed project and upload it with your application.

Project Summary

Project topic or title (*Maximum 15 words*) This title will be used by SOSF when describing or referring to your project. It must be informative, clearly convey the subject and aim of the project.

Project focus Please select the primary, secondary (and tertiary) focus under which your project most closely falls.

Species concerned Common name (latin name)

Species status IUCN Red List status. Please also indicate if the species is listed in any international conventions (e.g. CITES, CMS, etc.) as well as any local, regional or national protection legislations.

Project location Define the geographical location - including country, region, site, sea, ocean, etc. where project activities will take place. The project leader may be based elsewhere.

Project Description

Project summary (*Maximum 150 words*) This should be a brief abstract, clearly understandable by the non-specialist, summarising the more detailed information in the next few sections.

Conservation challenge (*Maximum 150 words*) Explain briefly how or why this project has been identified. Explain what the conservation problem is and how it originated. Why is it important for this problem to be addressed now?

How will you communicate your results? (*maximum 200 words*) Most scientific projects funded by the SOSF are expected to contribute significantly to research knowledge and/or be applicable to improving the conservation and management of the species or habitats studied. These outcomes are usually only possible if results are first published in the peer-reviewed scientific literature and appear in unpublished SOSF reports. Please describe the paper(s) that you will produce and the journal(s) to which they will be submitted. Please describe if and how you will approach the media and use social networks to disseminate your project work and findings.

Background (*maximum 600 words, including citations*) For scientific or conservation projects, please summarise the key scientific and/or technical knowledge of the species, habitat, environmental threat or other issue that is the focus of your project, with an emphasis on the most relevant information. You might include a description of the conservation and management challenges or the gaps in scientific knowledge that the project aims to address. For public awareness and/or environmental education projects, please explain how similar projects have been effective in achieving their objectives. We value new and innovative ideas, approaches and projects, so do not hesitate to submit unreferenced project concepts and explain why yours is original. Refer to key scientific or other publications as appropriate, but ideally there should be no more than 10 citations.

General aim and major specific objectives (*Maximum 50 words per objective*) State clearly the broad aim or general purpose of the project. Then list the more specific objectives (at least three) of the work that you intend to undertake and how you will achieve those objectives. If more space is required, add an Excel table as an Annex document. If the planned work will be part of a larger project, you may list these broader aims and objectives, but please highlight (e.g. with an asterisk) those objectives, which it is hoped to achieve with funding from SOSF.

How will these objectives be achieved? (*maximum 150 words per methods*) For each objective listed for this SOSF project, describe briefly the methods you intend to use, and/or the precise activities that will be involved, in order to achieve these goals.

This project is unique because... (*maximum 300 words*) SOSF aims to support projects focused on exceptional species, habitats and/or locations, particularly those that have the capacity to make a

real difference to the health of the oceans. Please explain briefly how your project fulfills these criteria.

Indicators Explain how you plan to measure the results and impact of your project. The selection of indicators is key, and these should be clear, precise, feasible and reflect project results in terms of research, conservation and/or education.

New project or continuing project? We need to know whether this project is already underway. SOSF is particularly interested in funding new and innovative projects, but will support existing work if a need can be demonstrated. If a continuation, please give details on the overall project, pilot study or other related projects?

Problems and contingency planning (*maximum 300 words*) List the main foreseeable administrative, logistical or technical problems that might arise during this project and explain how you will address them.

Project Team

Project leader's experience and qualifications (*Maximum 100 words*) Applicants are expected to provide details of their track record in the subject area and/or practical relevant experience in the region where the proposed project is to take place, thus demonstrating that they will be able to undertake this work successfully. This will complement the project leader's CV and complementary documents to be attached as an Annex document to this application.

Why are you the best person to lead this project? (*maximum 150 words*) You might use this space to explain what drives you and why the goals of this project are important to you.

Project supervisor or advisor If a recent postgraduate or graduate student is applying for funds, or if the applicant cannot demonstrate significant experience in the subject area and/or region, provide name(s), respective affiliation and contact details of a supervisor or advisor and describe their experience in the subject area and/or the region where the proposed project is to take place. A letter from these individuals, outlining their experience and confirming their participation as supervisor/advisor, must also be provided with your application. Where students are applying, only one application will be accepted from each supervisor.

Other referees Please provide name and contact details of two senior referees (three if no supervisor) who will indicate their support for your application and whom we can, if necessary, approach to ask for their opinion of your project.

Previous SOSF applications List brief details of project application(s), successful and unsuccessful, year(s) and outputs of projects that may have received a SOSF grant in the past.

Collaboration and Association List and describe present and future collaborative efforts and associations with governmental institutions, NPOs and/or NGOs locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Dates and Figures

Project schedule This asks for the anticipated start and end dates of the project named here, and for the duration of the project plan presented to SOSF (although funding is awarded for only one year at a time, your funding application and proposal may be set in the context of a project plan expected to extend over 2 or 3 years, or possibly longer, where a longer period is necessary to secure the anticipated conservation benefits). Space for further details and comments is also provided.

Exit strategy (*maximum 300 words*) Detail a comprehensive exit strategy plan for your project, since SOSF funding will not exceed 3 years (Please note that all continuation funding is subject to annual review and reapplication).

Project budget Please indicate the total budget (to the closest US \$ 100) for the first year of the project and provide more detail as Annex 1. Successful grant applications will likely receive between 10'000 and 50'000 USD with an average of about 25'000 USD from the Foundation. Requests for grants exceeding 200'000 USD will be rejected without review. (SOSF funding will generally not exceed three years, and is subject to an annual review and continuation application - SOSF is not guaranteeing any funding for more than one year.) 'Funding anticipated from other sources' may include support from the internal resources of the applicant's own organisation (in-kind) or support from external sources (please list). Joint funding or fund matching is not essential. SOSF does not support salaries (full-time or part-time) of project researchers, nor pay unspecified overheads to host organisations (e.g. Universities or non-governmental organisations). Individuals may apply. SOSF grants are designed to fund project leaders and projects, and not institutions or organisations. Please describe your projected budget for the upcoming years (the latter can be expanded in Annex 1). These figures should include grants from SOSF and significant (i.e. >5–10% of total budget) contributions from other sources. Space for further details and comments is also provided.

Co-sponsors and other potential sources of support Please list here the other sources of funds identified in the previous section (i.e. Budget). These include other organisations, agencies or foundations that have confirmed funding for 2019, or who have been approached with requests that they support this project.

Website profile

The details provided in this section will be used to create the project and personal profiles on our website for successful applications. These sections should be written for a general audience, please refer to existing profiles for reference on style:

Who I am (*Maximum 300 words*) A brief description of yourself – essentially a mini biography for the website.

Where I work (*Maximum 300 words*) A description of your project location to provide context to the reader.

What I do (*Maximum 300 words*) Describe the typical work your project involves e.g. a daily routine, field experiences etc.

Key Objective Please describe the primary objective of your project in no more than one or two sentences.

Why is this important (*Maximum 75 words*) This can be a variant of your 'general aim' part of the application adapted for a general audience – highlight the conservation issue and how this project will address it.

Background (*Maximum 500 words*) Please provide the context for the project. This can be adapted from your 'background' section above for a general audience (e.g. it will not include citations).

Aims & objectives This can be a simplified version of the main aims and objectives from your application.

Annexes

Please upload the following documents with your application form (*you can also upload other materials*):

Budget Please use the SOSF Excel spreadsheet to present how the funds requested will be spent, including major items of capital expenditure. Please present a detailed budget for year 1, year 2, etc. separately using the different excel sheets (Please note that all continuation funding is subject to annual review and reapplication). Joint funding or fund matching is not essential. SOSF does not support salaries (full-time or part-time) of project researchers, nor pay unspecified overheads to host organisations (e.g. Universities or non-governmental organisations). Individuals can apply.

Gantt chart When will the objectives be achieved? Please upload a Gantt chart that illustrates the schedule and timeline of each the objectives mentioned above (please upload a PDF).

Cover letter A scan of a short covering letter signed by the applicant or project leader or, where this is required by an applicant's employer, signed by the authorising officer of that organisation. This must be dated and, where appropriate, printed on the headed notepaper of the project leader's employer or lead organisation. Scan(s) of letter(s) from project supervisor(s) and/or advisor(s).

Curriculum vitae Curriculum Vitae of the project leader(s) and complementary documents.

We will endeavour to acknowledge all grant applications within 10 days of their receipt. Applicants may be contacted by SOSF staff if further explanation or information is required, or if there are suggestions or recommendations to amend and improve the project proposal. If submitted by June 30, 2020, the applications will be reviewed during July 2020. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a stage II application (deadline September 30, 2020). Stage II Applications will be reviewed during the last quarter of 2020, and recommendations forwarded to the next Foundation Board meeting. The final decision on successful applications should be available during the first quarter of 2021.

Save Our Seas Foundation (April 2020)