



Coral Reef Conservation Fund 2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre-Proposals Webinar (Register [here](#)): **Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 1:00 PM Eastern Time**
 Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, February 10, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**
 Full Proposal Webinar: **Thursday, March 17, 2022 at 1:00 PM Eastern Time**
 Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, April 21, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award grants to improve the health of coral reef systems. Grants will be awarded to reduce land-based sources of pollution, advance coral reef fisheries management, increase capacity for reef-scale restoration and to support management in their efforts to increase the natural recovery and resiliency of coral reef systems.

The Coral Reef Conservation Fund is a partnership with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) and receives additional funding support from the USDA National Resource Conservation Service and Aramco Corporation. The Coral Reef Conservation Fund expects to have approximately \$1,000,000 available for funding for this grants cycle.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects proposing work in any U.S. coral jurisdictions (American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands) are eligible to apply. Applications for projects in international jurisdictions will be accepted by invitation only.

Within the jurisdictions there are priority locations for both land-based and in-water activities as found in the following table. All other things equal, projects that takes place in and/or benefit these geographies and the associated reefs will be given priority for investment this year.

Jurisdiction	Watershed Priority for LBSP	In-Water Priority for Fisheries Management
American Samoa	Aua	Fagamalo Village MPA
CNMI	Achugao	Managaha Marine Conservation Area
Florida	Government Cut	FKNMS - Iconic Reef Sites (and controls where applicable) - Carysfort Reef, Horseshoe Reef, Cheeca Rocks, Newfound Harbor, Looe Key, Sombrero Key, & Eastern Dry Rocks



Guam	Manell-Geus	Piti Bomb Holes Marine Preserve
Hawaii	West Maui, Kihei	Kahekili Herbivore Fisheries Management Area, Kihei, Olowalu, Southeast Molokai (Kawela)
Puerto Rico	Culebra	Canal Luis Pena Natural Reserve
USVI	St. Croix East End Marine Park	St. Croix East End Marine Park

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The most competitive applications under this funding opportunity will work directly with local coral reef managers to implement priority projects in the following categories for reefs associated with the priority geographies above. Coral reef conservation projects that either fall outside of or only indirectly address these priority categories or geographies are still eligible for funding but are considered lower priority than those with a direct nexus.

Most of the projects funded under this program will benefit from having a **management partner** as part of the project development and implementation team. Therefore, engaging reef managers in proposal development is strongly encouraged to understand their priorities in these categories and will likely increase proposal competitiveness. A [list](#) of previously curated US jurisdictional priorities that have a nexus to the program priorities in this RFP has also been developed by NOAA for reference as a starting point. While it is not required to address one of these listed jurisdictional priorities, it may increase your competitiveness.

I. Threat Reduction to Priority Reef Sites

Projects under this category will support implementation of activities identified in watershed management plans, marine protected area plans or fisheries management plans with an increased priority for activities that benefit reefs at the above locations. Applicants should identify the specific plan where applicable including the year it was finalized, the relative priority of the activity to others in the plan, the measurable goal/target for this activity and the contribution to that target that the project seeks to achieve.

1. **Establish Water Quality Targets:** Projects will work at one of the listed watersheds above or the broader jurisdictional level to establish criteria and science-based targets for nutrient and sediment reduction. Projects under this priority must work directly with the appropriate management agency(ies) through scientific and technical assistance to establish water quality targets that directly address coral reef management goals. Further priority will be given to projects that focus on targets for a specific location and document the process and criteria in such a way that it can be used as a road-map for establishing targets in other watersheds for the jurisdiction.

2. **Reduce land-based pollution inputs to coral reef tracts:** Projects should engage local industry, community groups, and/or individuals in direct sediment and nutrient threat reduction activities such as streambank stabilization, green infrastructure, promoting the use of native planting materials, and Best Management Practice (BMP) installations to reduce sediment flow to reefs, or efforts to reduce polluted runoff through water conservation or grey water re-use as prioritized in established management plans. Proposals should incorporate specific performance metrics to monitor the effectiveness of project activities in reducing threats to nearshore coral reef ecosystems, including estimates of percent reductions in a given threat as a result of specific project activities and how these reductions relate to established goals.
3. **Increase fish stocks of key species along priority reef tracts:** Projects should identify activities that support local managers and communities in reef fish management within priority reef tracts including but not limited to training, cost/benefit analysis of management options and activities to increase compliance. Proposals should incorporate specific performance metrics to monitor the effectiveness of project activities toward increasing fish biomass within key functional roles over the long term. Priority taxa for this work include Parrotfish Families, Surgeonfish Family and hogfish (*L. maximus*).

II. Coral Reef Restoration

Projects under this category will help jurisdictions prepare to implement coral reef restoration projects at scale. The expected size of awards through the Coral Reef Conservation Fund is unlikely to be sufficient to support large-scale restoration efforts but rather prepare for these larger efforts and increase their likelihood for success.

1. **Increase Capacity for Coral Restoration at Scale:** Projects under this category will increase the available number and diversity of coral and associated reef species available for direct coral reef restoration efforts. Activities may include but are not limited to training in propagation techniques, establishing new nurseries, techniques to scale-up propagation, and exploring the needs of new and complex lifecycle species.
2. **Support Out-planting Success:** Projects under this category will focus on smaller-scale out-planting case studies that seek to learn about predation, competition, water quality, disease resistance, etc. or help streamline logistical hurdles like permitting that can be used to increase the success of larger scale restoration efforts. Projects can also coordinate with existing out-planting activities on larger scale projects to further refine techniques to increase success and test approaches.

III. Increase Management Capacity in Coral Conservation

The Coral Reef Conservation prioritizes applied research that responds to needs identified by jurisdictional coral reef managers. Projects under this category will work with a specific management partner to fill a critical gap in coral conservation to directly support a management decision. Competitive projects under this category will identify a specific management audience and question and will have results accessible to coral practitioners beyond a journal publication.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, a list of metrics for the *Coral Reef Conservation Fund* is available in Easygrants. Applicants will choose from this list for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact *Michelle Pico* (pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Establishing Water Quality Targets	Research - # of research studies completed	If an assessment of the key threats to a watershed/reef complex is being proposed then it is one study per watershed/reef tract.
Implementation of management plans	Management or Governance Planning - # plan activities implemented	Please reference the specific action and plan in the 'Notes' field that will be implemented during the period of performance.
Reduce land-based pollution inputs to coral reef tracts	BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs Lbs sediment avoided (annual) Lbs nutrients avoided (annual)	Most proposals will have a combination of area (acres) of improved management and threat reduction metrics. Include necessary monitoring equipment and planning in the scope of work and budget to validate results. Please use the "Notes" section to define target pollutants and explain models used and how acres and reduction are defined.
Increase fish stocks	Marine habitat management - Acres under improved management Fishing effort - g/m ² of fish biomass	Most proposals will have a combination of capacity building and target fish stock response metrics. Include necessary monitoring and planning in the scope of work and budget to validate results. Please use the "Notes" section to define target species/family/guilds.
Coral Restoration and Interventions	Marine habitat restoration – # of outplants propagated # of outplants # of acres restored (reef)	In the "Notes" please breakdown the value by species/genotypes the project will make available and the relevance of these species/genotypes to restoration for the area/jurisdiction. For the acres target please identify to what density you are restoring or providing a management intervention (i.e. invasive removal).
Increase management capacity for coral conservation	Tool development for decision making - # of tools developed	The tools metric should be used for projects that are creating a new tool or significantly recalibrating a BMP or model to meet the needs of an island setting.
	Research - # studies used to inform mgmt # of gov't entities participating	For applied research projects, ONLY select this metric to measure the direct results of your project activities and the # of gov't entities participating; do not select any other

		<p>metrics. The “Notes” section for # of research studies should clearly state progress anticipated within the period of performance and what, if any management questions will be answered at the close of the grant. The “Notes” for # of gov’t entities should articulate the name, position and agency as applicable of those that will be engaged.</p>
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ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions, including parties within and outside of the United States.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies and for-profit entities.
- NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program staff are available and encouraged to provide general information on programmatic goals and objectives, ongoing coral reef conservation programs/activities, and regional funding priorities; however, NOAA employees are not permitted to assist in the preparation of applications or write letters of support for any application. If NOAA employees will be a collaborator on a project, they may provide a statement verifying that they are collaborating with the project applicant, confirming the degree and nature of the collaboration, and acknowledging the utility of the proposed work. NOAA employee activities, including travel and salaries, are not allowable costs.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds



may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Coral Conservation Fund offers one grant cycle per year and available funding is expected to be approximately \$1,000,000. Average grant awards will range from \$80,000 to \$400,000, however there is no maximum or minimum requirement. Projects should be 12-24 months in duration. Matching funds from non-U.S. Federal cash or in-kind sources are required at a 1:1 ratio for most projects, although lower ratios are available for Guam due to other available funding. Applicants that are concerned about their ability to meet the matching requirement or to see if they may qualify for the lower ratio should contact Michelle Pico (pico@nfwf.org).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

Progress to Management Needs – Scope of work is designed to address management questions and needs and to establish actionable conclusions within the period of performance.

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Non-traditional partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use demographic data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

Cost-Effectiveness – Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for



organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period (if applicable) to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic information on applicants and their communities via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers. For more details, please see the tip sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.



Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Permits – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the appropriate local, state and federal entities (such as Army Corps of Engineers), prior to submitting their proposal.

Federal Funding – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([Coral Reef Conservation Fund](#)).

Applicant Webinar (Register here)	December 16, 2021 1:00 PM, Eastern Time
Pre-Proposal Due Date	February 10, 2022, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	Early March
Full Proposal Webinar <i>by Invite Only</i>	March 17, 2022 1:00 PM, Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date	April 21, 2022, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time



Review Period
Awards Announced

May-July, 2022
August, 2022

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#).

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:
Michelle Pico, pico@nfwf.org

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.