



NFWF



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Coral Reef Conservation Fund 2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre-Proposals Webinar (Register [here](#)): **Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time**

Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, February 9, 2023 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

Full Proposal Webinar: **March 2023**

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, April 20, 2023 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 (NRCS) and Aramco Corporation. The Coral Reef Conservation Fund expects to have approximately \$1,000,000 available for funding for this grants cycle.

SPECIFIC NEEDS BY STATE/TERRITORY

Most of the projects funded under this program will benefit from coordinating with a **management partner** in the project development and implementation. 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 curated US jurisdictional priorities that have a nexus to the program priorities in this RFP has been developed by NOAA for reference as a starting point.** While it is not required to address one of the listed jurisdictional priorities, it may increase your competitiveness.

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 take 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.

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, agriculture, community groups, landowners, land managers, and/or individuals in

direct sediment and nutrient threat reduction activities such as stream restoration, green infrastructure, promoting the use of native planting materials, and best management/conservation practice installations to reduce sediment and/or nutrient 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 targets 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.

NRCS Guidance - There are NRCS funds available for projects with a nexus to agricultural working lands in US Coral Reef Task Force Priority Watersheds and/or that increase Farm Bill program participation and conservation practice implementation among agricultural producers, especially farmers and ranchers in the Historically Underserved and Special Emphasis categories. This priority is targeting land-use and land-use change, nutrient and sediment runoff, sewage treatment, streambank stabilization, buffer improvements, and improved sediment and erosion control.

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*).

2023 Priority - Reef Fish Assessments were listed by jurisdictional managers as an increasing priority for U.S. coral reef management. Projects that demonstrate cooperation with the management entity and specific use of assessment data will be prioritized.

4. ***Respond to and Prepare for Episodic Events:*** Projects should include activities to develop or implement response plans for priority reef areas for episodic events such as outbreaks of disease, large bleaching events and invasive species. Proactive response may include intervention treatments and/or the rescue of corals from affected areas as appropriate.

2023 Priority – Projects that work to respond to areas affected by stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) will be a priority this year. Activities may include but are not limited to response planning, surveillance for the appearance of SCTLD, intervention through the application of disease treatments, the rescue of corals from affected areas and measures to prevent the spread. Guides, training and learning exchanges to assist managers and NGOs that are just starting to deal with SCTLD in PR and USVI are also encouraged.

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 nursery capacity and/or increasing the climate resiliency of 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.

2023 Priority – Special interest in learning exchanges beyond large conferences and publications for practitioners across the jurisdictions that are implementing this work.

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.

2023 Priority - Assistance for US jurisdictional managers to characterize the ecosystem services of specific reefs and to understand both resilience benefits and green infrastructure opportunities that will assist managers in accessing funding for FEMA, NFWF, NOAA and other federal resilience funding opportunities. Activities may include but are not limited to preliminary engineering and design work or reef assessment for ecoservices modeling.

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 with recommendations by activity). If an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact *Michelle Pico* (pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance and ‘Notes’ Requirements
I. Threat Reduction	
Management or Governance Planning - # plan activities	All projects under the Threat Reduction category should reference specific plans and actions when applicable as priority

implemented	will be given to activities that have previously been prioritized through a planning process. Please reference the specific action and plan in the notes field that will be implemented during the period of performance and characterize its priority relative to other actions in the plan.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # gov't entities participating	Most projects under the Threat Reduction category will require some level of engagement with coral or land managers. In the notes field please list all agencies/offices that are directly engaged in establishing the parameters and targets for the study/plan/assessment or implementation.
I.1. Establishing Water Quality Targets	
Research - # research studies completed	If the project is providing general information on tipping points, regional targets, etc. then just list it as one research study and describe the research questions in the notes. However, if a specific assessment to determine key threats to a watershed/reef complex is being proposed then count one study per watershed/reef tract and list the specific watersheds/reefs in the notes field.
I.2. Reduce Land-based Pollution Inputs to Coral Reef Tracts	
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Please use this metric to reference LANDOWNERS that you are working with to reduce LBSP, not general outreach activities. Please delineate in the notes if any landowners are in the Historically Underserved or Special Emphasis categories.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs	Most proposals will have a combination of area (acres) of improved management and threat reduction metrics (lbs avoided). Please use the notes field to define how acres are calculated and prioritized for implementation and if any acres are in Historically Underserved or Special Emphasis categories.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Lbs nutrients avoided (annual)	Include necessary monitoring equipment and planning in the scope of work and budget to validate results. Please use the notes field to define target pollutants and explain models used to define how reduction targets are estimated.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Lbs sediment avoided (annually)	Include necessary monitoring equipment and planning in the scope of work and budget to validate results. Please use the notes field to define target sediments and explain models used to define how reduction targets are estimated.
I.3. Increase fish stocks	
Research - # research studies completed	For stock assessments please count one research study for each specific management question or population assessed. Please also use the notes to delineate any specific management questions your research study or assessment is seeking to address.
Marine habitat management - Acres under improved management	Most implementation proposals to reduce threats to fish stocks will have a combination of capacity building and target fish stock response metrics. Feel free to use other metrics available for training, government engagement, etc. but if targeting a specific geography or species please try to employ these metrics if applicable. Please use the notes field to define how acres are calculated and prioritized for implementation.
	Most implementation proposals to reduce threats to fish stocks

Fishing effort - g/m2 of fish biomass	will have a combination of capacity building and target fish stock response metrics. Feel free to use other metrics available for training, government engagement, etc. but if targeting a specific geography or species please try to employ these metrics if applicable. Include necessary monitoring and planning in the scope of work and budget to validate results. Please use the notes field to define target species/family/guilds.
I.4. Respond to Episodic Threats	
Building institutional capacity - # FTE with sufficient training	Use for targeted training efforts on disease control or other episodic event response. In the notes field please list the organizations that will participate in the training.
Marine habitat management - Acres under improved management	Please include acres covered under proactive prevention or treatment effort (if discreet area). Do not include all acres where there are known reefs for statewide planning and training efforts. In the notes field please outline your monitoring plan for this area to evaluate success.
II. Coral Restoration	
Captive breeding/ rearing/ rehab facilities - Capacity of facility	This metric is intended to capture new and enhanced capacity for coral nurseries (terrestrial or in water). Please estimate the increase in capacity based on the space for the grow-out size and type of coral you plan to raise/shelter and reference these parameters in the notes field.
Marine habitat restoration - # individuals propagated for coral restoration	Metric meant to capture coral stock raised specifically for restoration efforts. 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.
Marine habitat restoration - # of coral outplants	Metric meant to capture coral propagules planted within the period of the grant. In the notes please breakdown the value by species/genotypes planted.
Marine habitat restoration - Acres restored	Most restoration projects will have a combination of outplants and area (acres) please include just the area targeted for outplanting and in the notes please identify to what density you are restoring and how survivorship will be monitored and evaluated.
III. Increase Management Capacity for Coral Conservation	
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # gov't entities participating	This metric is required for all projects seeking funding in this category. In the notes please list the specific office/agency and point of contact that you are engaging in project planning, implementation and report-out
Tool development for decision-making - # tools developed	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. The notes should specifically list the 'end product' as to how the tool will be accessed and in what form.
Research - # studies used to inform mgmt	Use this version of the research metric for projects under this category as the value is defined by direct request/use by a specific manager. The notes section 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.
Building institutional capacity - # FTE with sufficient training	Metric should be used for targeted training efforts to a specific management entity as requested by the entity. Notes should define what ‘sufficient training’ should look like (i.e. participants will be able to understand the steps of chain of custody, identify pollutants and use guidebook to determine most effective mitigation options, etc.)
Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed	Metric should be used when the outcome of the project does not fall within other categories but assists management in coral conservation (i.e. targeted outreach plan, prioritization plan, engineering plan, permit assistance package, volunteer monitoring plan) The notes should specifically list the ‘end product’ as to how the plan/capacity/assistance will be accessed and in what form.

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 6 months to 3 years in duration. Matching funds from non-U.S. Federal cash or in-kind sources are required at a 1:1 ratio for most projects. 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.

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 – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and

efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

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

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

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

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period 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.

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

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 demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions. 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.

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF’s website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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. **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.

Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories – The historically underserved farmer and rancher categories include those with limited resources, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged (American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics) and veterans. More information on the underserved categories can be found [here](#). The special emphasis categories are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, Disability, Women, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Hispanic, and Veterans. More information on the special emphasis categories can be found [here](#).

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)	January 5, 2023 at 2:00 PM, Eastern Time
Pre-Proposal Due Date	February 9, 2023, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	Early March
Full Proposal Webinar <i>by Invite Only</i>	March 2023, details in invitation email
Full Proposal Due Date	April 20, 2023, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	May-July, 2023
Awards Announced	August, 2023

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.