



## **Coral Reef Conservation Fund 2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, March 15, 2018 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**  
Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, May 17, 2018 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

### **OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award grants to improve the health of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems. Grants will be awarded to reduce land-based sources of pollution, advance coral reef fisheries management, support recovery and resilience of coral reef systems and improve watershed management planning.

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 works to assist the agency in coral reef conservation. The Coral Reef Conservation Fund expects to have up to \$1,000,000 available for funding.

### **GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS**

*Domestic/U.S. Jurisdictions:* Program Priorities I-III include tropical coral reefs in Florida, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI), Puerto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Priority will be given to watersheds and associated coral reefs that have been designated as priorities by the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.

*International:* Program Priority IV includes international projects to increase management capacity. Priority will be given to activities in the Indo-Pacific and the wider Caribbean; however, all international tropical coral reef locations are eligible.

### **PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

The most competitive applications under this funding opportunity will directly implement projects in the following priority categories. Coral reef conservation projects that either fall outside of or only indirectly address these priority categories are still eligible for funding, but are considered lower priority.

#### **I. Domestic Priority: Identifying Priority Reefs and Opportunities for Recovery**

Projects submitted for funding under this category will conduct assessment and prioritization efforts in order to identify priority reef tracts for conservation action. Assessments should utilize well-defined prioritization criteria. Activities may include, but are not limited to, application of resilience and connectivity criteria to prioritize reef tracts for enhanced



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protection and management), testing of the NFWF rapid assessment tool protocols (click [here](#) for tool) and multi-agency assessment teams.

## II. Domestic Priority: Implementation of Management Plans

Projects under this category will support implementation of priority activities identified in watershed management plans, marine protected area plans or fisheries management plans. Priority will be given to management needs for reef tracks and adjacent watersheds that have been prioritized by the [U.S. Coral Reef Task Force](#).

- a) **Reduce land-based pollution inputs to coral reef tracks:** Projects should engage local private industry, community groups, and/or individuals in threat reduction activities such as streambank stabilization, rain garden construction, promoting the use of native planting materials, and BMP installations to reduce sediment flow to reefs, or efforts to reduce polluted runoff through water conservation or grey water re-use. 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.
- b) **Increase fish stocks with key functional roles along priority reef tracks:** Projects should identify activities that support local managers and communities in reef fish management within priority reef tracks. Example projects include activities that test new management tools, increase public awareness of and compliance with existing regulations, and build capacity for more effective enforcement. 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.

## III. Domestic Priority: Increase Management Capacity for Coral Conservation

- a) **Fill Critical Research Gaps for Management:** Projects under this category will seek to fill specific gaps in coral conservation and management. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to:
  - o Efforts to better understand the relationship between herbivorous fish biomass and coral reef condition and resilience;
  - o Collection of essential life history (e.g., age and growth, reproductive characteristics, mortality rates) and ecological information (e.g., trophic interactions, habitat requirements) for key coral reef fish taxa; data should be applicable to fisheries models and/or other reef fish management efforts; and
  - o Thresholds and tipping points at which coral restoration/replanting efforts are more likely to succeed.
- b) **Establish Transferable Solutions to Common Problems:** Projects under this category will work to establish case studies, or models, that help address common coral reef threats in island jurisdictions. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to:
  - o Efforts to modify existing mainland best management practices to address the unique needs of island environments and communities;



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- Case studies that implement new innovations or BMPs to address common problems such as storm water infrastructure, legacy stream sediments and turf algae removal. Case study projects should focus on understanding and measuring impact of these practices and recording lessons learned in adapting to island environments.
- Projects that seek to recalibrate planning and management models to island environments; and
- Projects that work within existing federal programs (such as those under the Farm Bill or Clean Water Act) to generate opportunities and examples of successful application to benefit coral environments.

#### IV. **International Priority: Increase Management Capacity for Coral Conservation**

Applicants seeking funding under this category should address specific capacity gaps as identified through regional planning processes and that have been prioritized for action. Awards under this category are expected to range between \$30,000 - \$60,000.

- Implement Indonesia and Philippines Management Priorities:** Applicants seeking funding under this category should address coral reef conservation and management capacity needs and/or priority actions identified through regional planning and capacity building initiatives, including but not limited to activities supported by USAID, NOAA between 2010 and 2018. Project examples include the implementation of the following: sustainable tourism plans, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, MPA management effectiveness, MPA management plan, marine spatial planning and zoning plans, MPA network plans, MPA community-based enforcement plans, and sustainable financing for MPAs.
- Address Caribbean MPA Management Needs:** Projects submitted for funding under this category must address specific and discrete management capacity needs identified by MPA managers at one or more of the 31 MPA locations that are part of the MPACoast network in the Wider Caribbean (see the listing of eligible MPA locations [here](#)). Applicants under this proposal category must address specific needs identified in assessments of management capacity conducted within these 31 sites, coordinate directly with the managing authority for each MPA included in the proposal and indicate the extent to which capacity gaps would be filled if the proposal was funded. Information on the specific MPA management needs is available in the 2011 “[Management Capacity Assessment of Selected Coral Reef Marine Protected Areas in the Caribbean](#)” and on the MPACoast [webpage](#). Applicants may find particularly helpful information within the last section of this webpage entitled, “A Tool for Prioritizing Capacity Building Needs for Effective MPA Management.”

### 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](mailto:pico@nfwf.org)) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Metric</b>	<b>Additional Guidance</b>
<b>Identifying Priority Reefs and Opportunities for Recovery</b>	Research - # of research studies completed	If an assessment of a state/territory against criteria is being proposed then this would be one research study. If an assessment of the key threats to a watershed/reef complex is being proposed then it is one study per watershed/reef track.
<b>Implementation of Management Plans</b>	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.
<b>Reduce land-based pollution inputs to coral reef tracks</b>	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 how acres and reduction are defined.
<b>Increase fish stocks with key functional roles along priority reef tracks</b>	Improved management practices - Acres under improved management  Fishing effort - g/m <sup>2</sup> 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/guilds.
<b>Increase Management Capacity for Coral Conservation</b>	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 an island setting.
	Research - # of research studies completed	For applied research projects, <b>ONLY</b> select this metric to measure the direct results of your project activities; do not select any other metrics. 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.
<b>International Networks for Coral Conservation</b>	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.

## ELIGIBILITY



## Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include all persons, organizations, and non-U.S. Federal agencies, including parties within and outside of the United States.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies.
- 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

- 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 \$40,000 to \$150,000 for domestic projects and \$30,000 to \$60,000 for international projects. Projects should be 12-18 months in duration. Matching funds from non-U.S. Federal sources are required at a 1:1 ratio for all proposed projects.

**Please note:** projects may need to complete further forms or specific information for agency partners to complete NEPA, NHPA and ESA review as part of their full proposal or at any time during the proposal review process. These reviews are required for all projects with federal funds under this program prior to contracting.



## 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 Fund’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.

**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. The NFWF Coral Reef business plan can be found [here](#) for reference.

**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

**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 Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.



**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](#)).

Pre-Proposal Due Date	March 15, 2018, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	April, 2018
Full Proposal Due Date	May 17, 2018, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	June-August, 2018
Awards Announced	September, 2018

## 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](http://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 PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded [here](#).

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](mailto:pico@nfwf.org)

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

Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto: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.