



**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)  
Small Grants Programme 2021**

**APPLICANT GUIDELINES**

This document describes the UNEP/ICRI Small Grants Programme 2021, including application process, eligibility criteria and other requirements.

Grants up to USD 80,000 will be awarded to projects aimed at protecting and restoring coastal marine ecosystems, with a particular emphasis on payment for ecosystem services, ecosystem restoration, blue carbon, marine protected areas, locally managed marine areas and action on UNEP's strategic pillars climate stability, living in harmony with nature and a pollution-free planet.

***Applications close 31 March 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.***

**PART 1 – About the UNEP Marine Small Grants Program**

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This small-scale grants programme is an initiative of the UNEP Coral Reef Unit to catalyze implementation of UNEP Project 316.1 "Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services" 2018-2022, the [International Coral Reef Initiative \(ICRI\) Plan of Action 2018-2021](#), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions 2/12 and [4/13](#) on sustainable coral reefs management, and resolution [4/12](#) on sustainable management for global health of mangroves. The small grants programme is organized in partnership with ICRI, following the 2017 ICRI/UNEP grants programme.

UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. The UNEP Coral Reef Unit was established by the UNEP Executive Director in 2000 with further direction provided by the UNEP Governing Council to coordinate UNEP's work on coral reefs. It works in partnership with Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans on joint development and implementation of tools and methods that enable ecosystem-based approaches to coral reef management. More information can be found at <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/protecting-coral-reefs/why-protecting-coral-reefs-matters>

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is a global partnership for the preservation of the world's coral reefs and associated ecosystems among governments, international organisations and non-government organisations. ICRI counts 93 members, including 44 countries custodians of 75% of the world's coral reefs. The Initiative strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world by implementing Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, which was adopted by the international community at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and calls for the protection and rational use of oceans, seas and coastal

areas. The initiative contributes to raising awareness on the importance of and threats to coral reefs and related ecosystems, recognising that they are facing serious degradation mainly due to anthropogenic stresses. More information can be found at [www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)

### **1.1 How much funding can be applied for?**

Grants of up to 80,000 USD will be awarded to successful applicants.

### **1.2 What are the priority areas that projects should address?**

Projects must focus on the sustainable management of coral reefs and/or related coastal ecosystems such as mangroves and seagrasses. Projects should be innovative and with the potential for replication in other settings. Within their concept notes, projects should prioritize climate change resilience, adaptation, ecosystem restoration and recovery, approaches to payment for ecosystem services (PES), community engagement, sustainable blue economy and/or implementation of conservation tools such as marine protected areas or locally managed marine areas. Projects that aim to utilize and implement management tools and guidelines developed by UNEP and partners (see Annex B) will be favourably considered. Projects in developing countries will be prioritized.

Examples of activities that would qualify for this grant include, *inter alia*:

- a) Community-based ecosystem restoration;
- b) Development, management and sustainable financing of locally managed marine areas or marine protected areas;
- c) Community-based blue carbon projects;
- d) Co-management of marine resources through public and private partnerships;
- e) Payment for coastal ecosystem services projects;
- f) Mainstreaming of gender in coastal ecosystem management

### **1.3 What are the objectives of the Programme?**

The UNEP/ICRI Marine Small Grants Programme is designed to encourage project development and implementation to demonstrate and catalyze enhanced protection and ecosystem-based management of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass in particular by promoting resilience of ecosystems as well as dependent people and economic sectors. Innovative and replicable projects that address UNEP and ICRI priorities and allow for upscaling and development of further work will be favourably considered.

UNEP and ICRI may assist successful grant implementors to further develop proposals for continued funding.

## **PART 2 – Eligibility**

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### **2.1 Who are the UNEP/ICRI grants targeted at?**

Grants under the UNEP/ICRI Small-Scale Grants Programme are available to governments, NGOs and community groups, for projects implemented in developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing states. Check the eligibility criteria before applying to ensure you are eligible for funding. Community groups that are not legal entities can apply through another legal entity (such as a local government or non-government organisation) that can go through the application process on their behalf. In such cases the application must demonstrate that the project is driven by the community group. The applicant organization will be responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the grant.

### **2.2 Who can apply for a UNEP/ICRI grant?**

Applicants must be a legal entity, for instance:

- a national or local government;

- a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), registered charity, research institution, foundation or similar organization demonstrating a not-for-profit status, registered and permitted to work in the intervention country.

Note that your organization must have been in existence for at least two full years. Applicants that are NOT governments or government agencies need to fulfil UNEP's due diligence requirements.

Individuals or private sector companies may not apply.

### **2.3 What specific criteria must the project meet?**

To be eligible, a project must meet all the following criteria:

1. The project must be participatory and partnership-based, designed and implemented in conjunction with stakeholders and with relevant local and/or international partners. Please note that involvement of private sector is possible and desirable if the project implementation is carried out by governments or NGOs.
2. Project must have concrete, measurable results and a clear strategy for sustainability.
3. Funding from this grants programme must not exceed USD 80,000. Co-financing of projects is not a requirement but should where available be estimated.
4. The duration of the proposed project should not exceed 12 months.
5. Projects must be completed latest by 31 July 2022.

## **PART 3 – How to apply for funding**

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### **3.1 Application process**

The grant application process has two steps:

- Step 1: Open call for project concept notes.
- Step 2: Development and submission of full project proposals, by invitation only.

Based on concept notes submitted in Step 1, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal in Step 2.

#### Important dates

Announcement / Call for concept notes:	1 March 2021
Closing date for submission of concept notes:	31 March 2021
Invitation for submission of full proposals:	15 April 2021
Submission of full proposals:	15 May 2021
Notification of successful recipients:	31 May 2021

#### Step 1: Open call for project concept notes

The concept note must be written in English (use the template provided in Annex A) and requires applicants to provide an overview of their project. All sections of the concept note must be filled in. Please stay within the length limit indicated on the template. Letters of support, proof of co-financing, licences to operate or other relevant documentation may be included as annexes, if relevant.

The deadline for submission of concept notes is 31 March 2021. Only applications received by UNEP before the deadline will be accepted. Concept notes received after the deadline will be rejected. All concept notes received are subject to review of admissibility, eligibility and technical merit, coordinated by UNEP and ICRI. The proposals will be assessed by a team of UNEP and ICRI experts using a matrix of pre-defined indicators, and the highest ranked proposals will be invited to submit a full proposal

#### Step 2: Submission of full project proposals, by invitation only

Applicants selected based on concept notes will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals must be submitted using the full proposal template (to be provided). The deadline for submission of a full proposal is one month from the invitation to submit a full proposal. Only applications sent before the deadline will be accepted. Proposals sent after the deadline will be rejected. Invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee approval of grant funding.

### **3.2 Contacts**

For more information or to submit concept notes please email:

Gabriel Grimsditch: [gabriel.grimsditch@un.org](mailto:gabriel.grimsditch@un.org)

Francis Staub: [fstaub@icriforum.org](mailto:fstaub@icriforum.org)

with a copy to Mohamed Ahmed: [ahmed.mohamed@un.org](mailto:ahmed.mohamed@un.org)

### **ANNEXES**

A. Concept Note Template

B. [Coral reef restoration: a guide to coral reef restoration](#)

[Protecting Seagrass through payment for ecosystem services: a community guide](#)

[Guiding principles for delivering coastal wetland carbon projects](#)

[Guidelines on seagrass ecosystem restoration for the Western Indian Ocean Region](#)

[Guidelines on Mangrove ecosystem restoration for the Western Indian Ocean Region](#)

[Enabling effective and equitable marine protected areas – guidance on combining governance approaches](#)