

Reef Trust Partnership

Accelerator Grants: Community Climate Action for the Reef

Application Guidelines

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation extends its deepest respect and recognition to all Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and Catchment as First Nations Peoples holding the hopes, dreams, traditions and cultures of the Reef.

About the Accelerator Grants: Community Climate Action for the Reef

The goal of this grant round is to accelerate community climate action for the Reef, championed by Traditional Owners, community organisations, local councils, local businesses, and youth.

We're seeking projects that grow capacity and enable Reef catchment communities to care for the Reef and deliver community benefits through:

- **Practical, targeted actions that drive efforts to reduce community carbon emissions through behaviour change and social innovations; and**
- **On-ground actions that mitigate climate change and build resilience by protecting, enhancing and restoring coastal habitats (seagrasses, mangroves and other tidal wetlands).**

The grant round is open to projects in various stages to demonstrate the potential for impact and scale, as well as build pathways for future partnership and funding opportunities. GBRF will work closely with projects demonstrating strong impact potential to explore and build further investment opportunities.

The program aims to grow capacity and readiness for scalable community-led action and strengthen diverse ways for communities to engage. Project partners will have opportunities to further strengthen technical design, collaboration, shared measurement and storytelling.

Across all applications, we encourage projects that deliver local benefits, are guided by local knowledge; embed genuine engagement with Traditional Owners as custodians and the first scientists caring for country and Reef; and provide leadership pathways with youth (under 25) who will inherit a world shaped by climate issues and are our next generation of Reef champions.

Available Funding

A total of up to \$2.7 million is available through the grants program.

There are three types of grants:

- **Enabling grants** (Maximum funding up to \$100,000) Projects will build readiness to implement high-impact projects (including but not limited to scoping and technical design, feasibility assessments, collaborative planning, strategy development, or targeted capacity building that offers clear outcomes and builds pathways for future work).
- **Expansion and innovation grants** (Funding from \$100,000 up to \$300,000) Projects will expand proven ideas or trial new ideas to accelerate activities.
- **Major project grants** (Minimum funding \$300,000 and maximum up to \$600,000) Projects will demonstrate integrated and collaborative approaches with multiple project partners, ideally through a coordinated place-based or sector-based approach. Major projects must include some emissions reduction activities.

For **practical, targeted actions that drive efforts to reduce community carbon emissions through behaviour change and social innovations** – activities may include, but are not limited to: local circular economy projects, reducing food and organic waste, enabling renewable energy use, reducing energy use, improving energy efficiency, permaculture practices with wide community benefits.

For **on-ground actions that mitigate climate change and build resilience by protecting, enhancing and restoring coastal habitats (seagrasses, mangroves and other tidal wetlands)** – activities may include, but are not limited to: encouraging behaviours to reduce local pressures on coastal habitats, building resilience in coastal habitats, creating living seawalls, restoring high-value mangrove or seagrass areas.

Applicants are encouraged to focus on high-impact and highly accessible community actions.



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Proposed grant program outcomes

The *Accelerator Grants: Community Climate Action for the Reef* program supports the following outcomes:

- Deliver tangible and scalable community-led climate actions for the Reef
- Mobilise community engagement by building pathways that make it easier for more people to get involved, or grow their level of engagement
- Strengthen community capacity and opportunities to champion climate action for Reef protection
- Pilot collaborative ways to measure outcomes
- Share a powerful collective story of hope and action for the Reef

These collective outcomes contribute towards:

- The [Reef 2050 Plan](#), including:
 - Work Area 1: Limit the impacts of climate change
 - Work Area 5: Protect, rehabilitate and restore
- [Sustainable Development Goal 13](#) – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, in particular Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation

Potential applicants should read these Guidelines, as well as the EOI Form, before deciding whether to submit an application.

Key dates

Guidelines available and call for Applications open*	3 August, 2023
Opportunities for project discussion meetings with GBRF (30min sessions)*	21-25 August, 2023
Call for Applications close	13 September, 2023
Successful projects notified	October 2023
Project design online workshops for successful Applicants (1-2 hours, as required to refine individual project plans for contracting or bring together partners to explore collaboration opportunities)	October 2023
Projects completed by	31 October 2025

*In an effort to provide effective and tailored support for the grant round, all applicants will have the opportunity to discuss their application with GBRF representatives during the open call for applications.

Through this dialogue, GBRF can suggest ideas to consider for project design or provide more detailed feedback on specific questions.

Summarised and de-identified information from these discussions will be shared via public FAQs for the benefit all applicants.

At anytime during the grant round, questions can be emailed to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) Grants Office at grants@barrierreef.org.

Background

This is a critical decade for responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, and shaping a better future for Reefs and communities. This will require a suite of actions at multiple scales, including significant national and international action to reduce emissions.

Accelerating local leadership and mobilising community-led change can deliver outcomes at a local scale and contribute to empowering a broader movement to reduce emissions, mitigate impact and build natural and social resilience in the face of a changing climate.

This grant round responds to a growing urgency and appetite for community-led climate action. It applies learnings and demonstrated support for collective approaches focused on community-led climate action emerging from Community Action Plans, local action projects and citizen science projects. It also recognises feedback that growing capacity and coordinated approaches can offer greater benefits.

The United Nations Development Programme defines climate action as “*stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including: climate-related hazards in all countries; integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity with respect to climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.*”

A range of community-led initiatives and ideas exist, yet more scalable, nature-based pathways are needed for accelerating their pathway to impact. This grant program aims to be part of the solution by unlocking strategic evidence-based initiatives led through local knowledge and capacity. The projects will grow the collective capacity of people and nature to combat climate change to help protect the Reef.

There are two identified focus areas for the grants, intended to support a diverse array of actions.

A focus on **empowering emissions reduction with practical, targeted actions through behaviour change and social innovations** aims to respond to strong interest and identified need. Most Reef catchment residents (79%) recognise climate change as a serious threat facing the Reef, and 83% felt a strong moral obligation to reduce their personal impacts on the Reef ([Hobman et al. 2022](#)). Yet, we need to strengthen ways to support participation and leadership, as well as clearer calls to action for behaviour change to make it easier for people to act. Few people (4-8%) connect climate-related actions as important for Reef conservation ([Dean et al. 2020](#)), but climate messages that talk about the Reef have been shown to strengthen intentions to adopt energy reduction behaviours ([Waters et al. 2022](#)).

[Project Drawdown](#) (2021) indicates that global emissions can be reduced by 25-30% through individual and household actions. Infrastructure and technical solutions are critical for supporting this outcome, as are our individual choices around topics such as food, waste, travel and energy. Behaviour change can help to drive community-level actions and push for broader systems change.

A focus on **on-ground actions that mitigate climate change and build resilience by protecting, enhancing and restoring coastal habitats** recognises that the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem is one of the world's most powerful blue carbon sites and plays an important role in mitigating the impacts of climate change ([DCCEEW 2022](#)). Coastal habitats such as seagrasses, mangroves and tidal marshes are highly effective carbon sinks. For example, it is estimated that seagrass meadows in the Great Barrier Reef host an estimated 11% the world's seagrass blue carbon.

Their capacity to sequester carbon is recognised as a key to part of the solution to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Caring for these habitats offers additional benefits for Reef and wildlife protection, as well as providing a range of environmental, social, cultural, and economic values.



The grant program model

This grant seeks to accelerate action beyond this project funding. It is designed to work in partnership with the successful project partners to boost and amplify efforts, build readiness to scale, and maximise collective impact.

An online project design workshop with successful applications is included in the grant process to enhance the collective approach for design.

Successful projects will have an opportunity to actively contribute to and benefit from the design and delivery of the program through:

- **Growing leadership capacity** – Successful project partners will have the opportunity to access mentoring, training and tailored support through a panel of providers. The intent is to accelerate well-designed and impactful approaches for practical community-driven climate action initiatives and build broader capacity for driving change.
- **Shared measurement and collective communication** – Successful project partners will be invited to participate in refining and trialling measurement and communication frameworks to deliver a cohesive story of collective impact.
- **Taking steps towards reducing project emissions** – GBRF encourages projects to have a simple plan for reducing their project emissions and planning for critical project travel to be offset.
- **Building pathways for growth** – The intent for this grant is to enable projects that could be further developed, scaled or replicated in the future. GBRF will work closely with successful project leads demonstrating strong impact potential to explore and build further investment opportunities.

GBRF will explore the best approach to design and support participation with successful applicants, including outlining clear expectations and additional resourcing built into contracts.

Who can apply?

To be eligible to submit an Application, applicants meet the following requirements:

- be operating in Australia and have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- confirmation that all actual, perceived or actual conflicts of interest are declared and a management plan is proposed
- hold or be willing to hold the required insurances: Workers Compensation; Public Liability (\$10,000,000 to 20,000,000 per occurrence); Professional Indemnity Insurance (\$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000) and Motor Vehicles and Plant and Equipment Insurance (if applicable). Minimum insurance requirements may vary depending on the type of project. Exact insurance requirements will be discussed with applicants during Stage three assessment.
- have developed and implemented comprehensive WHS policies and procedures for the project, or are willing to undergo a WHS risk assessment, take all reasonable steps to manage identified risks, and undergo specific training or qualifications that the Foundation recommends prior to commencing the project
- completes all sections of the application form
- and accepts the terms and conditions of the application and the specified terms in the agreement templates

Collaborative applications are encouraged, although applicants may only apply to lead one project.

What can be funded?

Projects must deliver activities to improve the engagement of the broader community in the protection of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA).

A detailed description of the selection criteria is listed under 'How Applications are Assessed'.

In addition to the selection criteria, all projects must comply with any relevant legislation, including the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)* and the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975*. If projects are inside the Marine Park, note that the [Policy on Great Barrier Reef interventions](#) will be a guiding policy when the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority considers applications for activity permissions.

Whilst not exhaustive, the list below provides examples of the categories of activities and expenditures that would be considered eligible or ineligible for funding under the grant program:

Eligible Activities	Ineligible Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management costs required to deliver the project • Project delivery costs including staff, contractors, consultants, materials and appropriate travel and accommodation • Monitoring and evaluation • Communication and engagement • Data analysis and synthesis • On-ground projects that build capacity to protect and restore coastal ecosystems to work towards improving carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation • Projects that apply local knowledge and behaviour change to measurably reduce emissions • Costs to support project approvals • Costs associated with participating in mentoring and tailored project design workshops (to be agreed post-application) • Administrative costs* required to deliver the project, but must not exceed 10% of the funding allocation <p><i>*Administrative costs include, but are not limited to, planning, insurances and audit costs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retroactive project activities that have commenced prior to funding allocation under this grant program (existing projects are eligible to apply for new activities) • Project proposals by the applicant with the purpose of distributing funds to other parties who are not contractors to the project and who have not been clearly identified in the grant application • Projects that relate to on-ground activities outside the Reef Catchment as defined by the Queensland Government (see www.reefplan.qld.gov.au) • Activities that are likely to have an adverse environmental impact • Costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application (including this application) or related documentation • Administrative costs that exceed 10% of the funding allocation • Landholder practice change focused on privately owned land with limited broader community engagement • To complement existing initiatives, the following activities and costs are not eligible in this grant round: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assisted recovery activities for corals ○ Campaigns focused on policy change ○ Assets (e.g. solar panels, batteries, insulation, charging stations) or infrastructure projects (exceptions may be made if there is a strong case around their critical role in enabling community efforts driven by behaviour change and social innovations)

Other activities or specific expenditure may be ineligible because GBRF determines it does not directly support the achievement of the planned outcomes of the project or they are contrary to the spirit and intention of the grant.

How Applications are assessed

This is a merit-based process with defined funding limits. Applications will be assessed as follows:

Stage one – Eligibility

Each Application will be screened to check that the applicant organisation is eligible to apply. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be progressed.

Stage two – Full application assessment against criteria

Full applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria.

Stage three – Project design online workshops for successful applications

Successful applications will be invited to refine project plans and explore opportunities for collaborations (1-2 hours, as required) to finalise details for contracting.

Eligible Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

CRITERIA	DETAILED DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
Capability and partnerships	<p>The applicant has capability relevant to the proposed activity, demonstrated experience in successfully implementing projects of a similar size/scope and established partnerships with relevant organisations. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability – Demonstrated experience, capacity, and capability to deliver the project, as well as readiness to commence the project. • Partnerships – The project demonstrates a strong project delivery team, ideally with project partner collaborations. There are clear project roles and unique strengths to enhance the project outcomes. 	20%
Project rationale, methods and outcomes	<p>The proposed activities and outcomes are clearly described, meaningful, achievable and can be delivered within the timeframe. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale – The project rationale outlines a clear need and opportunity. Please identify alignment with the Reef 2050 Plan, and if the project aligns with a Community Action Plan or other collaborative planning process. • Methodology – The project methods demonstrate understanding of the climate action proposed and key design considerations (including accessibility of actions, genuine community mobilisation and leadership, future predicted impacts of climate change and understanding of permits/approvals as relevant). There is a clear plan for measuring changes. • Outcomes – The project has well-defined proposed outcomes for how activities will contribute to tangible climate action for the Reef and social benefits by engaging and mobilising the broader community, including Traditional Owners and youth. • Future impact – The project offers a proof of concept that could be scaled, replicated, and/or enable future work; and supports enduring outcomes. 	45%
Project value for money	<p>The proposed costs for undertaking the activities are clearly budgeted, include co-contributions wherever possible, and demonstrate value for money. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget – Proposed costs for delivering the project demonstrate value for investment, including co-contributions*. • Complementarity – The project demonstrates complementarity or synergies with other existing initiatives. 	20%
Sustainability in delivery	<p>There are clear examples of sustainable operations that demonstrate a commitment to economic and social benefits for Reef communities. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of sustainable practices in operations (e.g. limiting flights, purchasing green power, generating local employment, inclusive employment practices, purchasing from Reef community businesses). 	15%



Co-contributions

GBRF encourages projects that demonstrate value for money through the integration of other co-funding or co-investment opportunities, including quantifiable in-kind and cash contributions.

Co-contribution is an investment that is cash or a contractually recognised in-kind services/expenses such as; staff salary, volunteer time, specialist advisory contributions, reduced costs for vessel time, administration costs (electricity, water, gas etc.), building costs (meeting rooms, office, labs) and equipment.

In-kind support can include:

- volunteer time (can be valued at \$46.62/hour as per Australian Bureau of Statistics figures, or a value indicated by applicant based on activities)
- partner support
- external support

Applications will be rated by an Assessment Panel against the criteria. All criteria are mandatory and an Application that does not meet the minimum standard for any of the criteria will not progress to the next stage of the assessment process. GBRF shall be the final decision-maker on any Application and it is a condition that the applicant accepts GBRF's decision as final.

Notification of applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing whether their Application was successful or not.

GBRF will keep private all confidential information of the applicant which is obtained as part of the grant Application process. However, GBRF may disclose confidential information to its personnel, contractors or advisors for the purposes of administering this grant program; or as required by law; or where GBRF is required to comply with any provision of Reef Trust Partnership Agreement in respect of confidential information.

GBRF may share Applications with relevant Queensland or Federal Government agencies if there is the potential for an otherwise unsuccessful Application to be funded directly by Government. Applicants should **advise if they do not wish** their Application to be shared in this way.

Developing an Application

Expressions of Interest open on 3 August 2023 and close 11:59pm AEST on 13 September 2023.

Applicants are required to complete an application form and submit supporting documentation through applications@barrierreef.org by the closing date.

Applicant Checklist

Applicants should take into consideration the guidance and rules provided in these Guidelines, and the Application Form.

Applicants are to ensure they:

- have read and understood the guidelines
- have read, understood, and accept the terms and conditions outlined within the guidelines and under the proposed agreement template
- complete the application form in its entirety
- provide current and accurate information
- only provide attachments that are directly relevant, are concise and clearly labelled
- submit the completed application through applications@barrierreef.org
- provide confirmation that all actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest relating to the project have been declared
- have not contained information that is false or misleading (applications considered to contain false or misleading information may be excluded from further assessment).

Incomplete or late applications

Late applications will not be accepted. Unless requested by GBRF, no additional written or verbal explanation, or further documentation, will be accepted after the closing date.

Applications that are incomplete, do not include the requested documentation, or do not address the assessment criteria may be deemed ineligible. GBRF will decide whether to accept an amendment or additional information on a case-by-case basis.

Further information

Applicants may consult with the GBRF Grants Office while preparing Applications to ensure their proposal meets basic requirements. Grants Office staff will not be able to provide feedback on draft Applications.

Answers to questions asked during the Application period will be provided as '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' or Addendums to the Guidelines for the benefit of all potential applicants and will be distributed via GBRF.

Questions can be emailed to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) Grants Office at grants@barrierreef.org

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared as a guide only and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of publication.

About the Partnership and the Community Reef Protection Component

The partnership between the Australian Government and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) is centred on a landmark investment of \$443.3 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Community Reef Protection Component is a \$10 million dollar investment through the Partnership which aims to improve the engagement of the broader community in the protection of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The Partnership defines community broadly as Traditional Owners and GBR stakeholders including, but not limited to, NGOs, businesses, the scientific community, and conservation groups.

We need new ways to mobilise change and to demonstrate the results and contributions that communities are making towards the Reef 2050 Plan. The scale and urgency of action required to forge a better path for the future health of the Reef prompts new approaches for working together to make change happen. Communities are rising to the challenge – wanting to understand, influence and do more on-ground actions.

The actions delivered through this Component seek to strengthen the positive impact that local action has for the Great Barrier Reef and for communities. It is intended to build-on and celebrate work already underway through committed groups and individuals across the Reef and catchments. Yet, it also acknowledges that to meet the scale and urgency of the challenges we face, more must be done and we must find new ways to work together to make change happen. As such, a key focus of the Component is on piloting and learning from different models and tools for enabling community Reef protection work.

Projects will support and enhance community capacity to deliver targeted actions that reduce Reef threats or increase Reef resilience. This will be achieved by making it easier for people to get involved and stay involved in conservation of the Reef (irrespective of where they live); improving sharing, connection and collaboration between individuals, community groups and Reef management; and providing hope that inspires greater action by demonstrating that the collective efforts of many can and will make a difference.

The [Partnership Monitoring and Evaluation Plan](#) identifies the end of partnership outcomes sought from the Community Reef Protection Component. These are:

- Dynamic suite of tools for enduring funding and partnerships for community action are available
- Community action is recognised, valued and celebrated
- Community action is delivering effective outcomes for the Reef and community (including other RTP component outcomes)
- Shared knowledge and decision making enhances governance and delivery models

The Foundation released an [Investment Strategy](#) for the Partnership in its first year, and each year we share an [Annual Work Plan](#) which provides a detailed schedule of work for the year ahead, as a subset of our overarching five-year plan.

Reef 2050 Plan reference

More information about the Reef 2050 Plan can be found at:

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/great-barrier-reef/protecting/reef-2050-plan>

Work areas	Targets
Work Area 1: Limit the impacts of climate change	Australia contributes to an effective global response to climate change through the Paris Agreement, to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.
	The capacity of Reef communities, Traditional Owners and industries to adapt to a changing climate is increased.
	Species and habitats are supported to adapt to a changing climate.
Work Area 5: Protect, rehabilitate and restore	Key habitats are being actively rehabilitated or restored.
Enabler A: Collaboration & Partnerships	Collaboration and effective partnerships between managers, partners and stakeholders are maintained and enhanced.
	Adoption of best-practice voluntary compliance and stewardship behaviours is maintained and increased.
Enabler B: Science & Knowledge	Science and knowledge are advanced, easily accessible and able to be used in decisions.
Enabler C: Monitoring, Evaluation & Adaptive Management	Comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and reporting supports informed and agile management responses.
Enabler D: Investment	Investment supports delivery of the Reef 2050 Plan.

