Request for Proposals for
Regenerative Tourism Catalyst Grant Program
2024

Background

In 2021, the United States established a new multi-agency partnership to foster small island leadership in combating the climate crisis and promoting resilience in ways that reflect their unique cultures and sustainable development needs. This partnership supports the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) and other key initiatives such as the U.S.- Caribbean Partnership to Address the Climate Crisis (PACC2030). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) partners with the U.S. Department of State (DoS), along with The Ocean Foundation (TOF), to support a unique island-led initiative – the Local2030 Islands Network – through technical collaboration with and support for small island developing nations to advance the integration of climate data and information for resilience, and the application of effective coastal and marine resource management strategies to support sustainable development.

The Local2030 Islands Network is a global, island-led network dedicated to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through locally driven, culturally informed solutions. The Network brings together island nations, states, communities, and cultures, all tied together by their shared island experiences, cultures, strengths, and challenges. The Four Principles of the Local2030 Islands Network are:

- Identify local goals to advance SDGs and strengthen long-term political leadership on sustainable development and climate resilience
- Strengthen public-private partnerships that support diverse stakeholders in integrating sustainability principles into policy and planning
- Measure SDG progress through tracking and reporting on locally and culturally informed indicators
- Implement concrete initiatives that build island resilience & circular economy through locally appropriate solutions, particularly at the water-energy-food nexus for increased social and environmental well-being.

Two Communities of Practice (COP)—(1) Data for Climate Resilience and (2) Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism—are supported under this multi-institutional partnership. These COPs foster peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. The Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism Community of Practice builds off key priorities identified by islands through the Local2030 COVID-19 Virtual platform and ongoing engagement with islands. Pre-covid, tourism was the fastest growing industry in the world accounting for about 10% of the world's economic activity, and is one of the main generators of employment for islands. However, it also has major impacts on natural and built environments, and the wellbeing and culture of host populations. The COVID pandemic, while devastating to the tourism industry, has also allowed us to repair the damage we have done to our environment and communities and pause to think about how we can build a more resilient economy for the future. Planning for tourism must not merely reduce its negative impacts but purposely aim to improve the communities in which tourism occurs.

Regenerative tourism is considered the next step in sustainable tourism, especially considering a rapidly changing climate. Sustainable tourism focuses on minimizing the negative impacts for the benefit of future generations. Regenerative tourism seeks to leave the destination better than it was while improving the quality of life of the local community. It sees communities as living systems that

are distinct, constantly interacting, evolving, and essential for creating balance and building resilience for improved well-being. At its core, the focus is on the needs and aspirations of the host communities.

Small islands are among the most vulnerable to climate impacts. Many are facing compound and cascading challenges related to changes in sea levels and coastal flooding, shifting temperature and rainfall patterns, ocean acidification, and extreme events such as storms, droughts, and marine heat waves. As a result, numerous island communities, governments, and international partners are seeking pathways to understand, predict, mitigate, and adapt to climate change in the context of enhanced resilience and sustainable development. As populations with the most exposure and vulnerability often have the lowest capacity to respond to these challenges, there is a clear need for increased capacity in these regions to support these efforts. To assist in building capacity, NOAA and the Local2030 Islands Network have partnered with the Ocean Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, to serve as the fiscal host for the Regenerative Tourism Catalyst Grant Program. These grants are intended to support island communities in implementing regenerative tourism projects/approaches including those discussed during the Community of Practice gatherings.

Eligibility and instructions to apply are included in this request for proposals.

About The Ocean Foundation
As the only community foundation for the ocean, The Ocean Foundation's 501(c)(3) mission is to support, strengthen, and promote those organizations dedicated to reversing the trend of destruction of ocean environments around the world. We focus our collective expertise on emerging threats to generate cutting-edge solutions and better strategies for implementation.

Funding Available
The Regenerative Tourism Catalyst Grant Program will award approximately 10-15 grants for projects up to 12 months in length. **Award Range: USD $5,000 - $15,000**

Program Tracks (Thematic Areas)
1. **Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism**: introduce and promote the concept of sustainable and regenerative tourism by planning for tourism that not only reduces its negative impact but purposely aims to improve the communities in which tourism takes place. This track could include engagement with industry stakeholders.

2. **Regenerative Tourism and Food Systems (Permaculture)**: support activities that promote regenerative food systems that also support tourism activities including connections to cultural aspects. Examples could also include improving food security, promoting cultural food practices, developing permaculture projects, and designing food waste reduction practices.

3. **Regenerative Tourism and Seafood**: activities that support seafood production, capture, and traceability through regenerative tourism activities associated with recreational and commercial fisheries or aquaculture operations

4. **Sustainable Regenerative Tourism and Nature-based climate solutions including Blue Carbon**: activities that support the IUCN Nature Based Solutions Global Standards including improving

ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, enhancing conservation, or supporting blue carbon ecosystem management/conservation.

5. **Regenerative Tourism and Culture/Heritage**: activities incorporating and using knowledge systems of Indigenous people and aligning tourism approaches with existing cultural/traditional views of guardianship and protection of places.

6. **Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism and Engaging Youth, Women, and/or Other Underrepresented Groups**: activities that support empowering groups to actively plan, promote, or implement regenerative tourism concepts.

Eligible Activities
- Needs assessment and gap analysis (include aspect on implementation)
- Stakeholder engagement including community engagement
- Capacity building including trainings and workshops
- Voluntourism Project Design and Implementation
- Tourism Impact Assessment and planning to reduce impact
- Implementing regenerative/sustainability components for hospitality or guest services

Ineligible expenses or activities
- Construction
- Conference/event travel
- Equipment/vehicle purchase
- Alcohol

Eligibility & Requirements
To be considered for this award, applying institutions must be based in one of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Sao Tome e Principe, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. **Organizations and project work may only be based in and benefit the islands listed above.**

Eligible entities include
- Local government agencies
- Civil society organizations
- Non-governmental organizations
- Research institutions and universities
- Community groups
- For-profit organizations
- Individuals are welcome to apply
- All entities will be vetted according to the Patriot Act requirements.

Timeline
- **Release Date:** February 1, 2024
- **Informational Webinar:** February 7, 2024 (1:30 pm PDT / 4:30 pm EDT / 9:30 pm UTC);
  - **Click here to view the webinar** (*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xWH01bJNbM*)
  - **Click here to view the slides from the webinar** (*https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ur5Ondt67zQRr-It1Mfp0UpZ8PNyPYsq/view?usp=sharing*)
- **Proposal Prep Virtual Session:** March 12, 2024 (4:30 pm PDT / 7:30 pm EDT / 11:30 pm UTC);
  - **Click here to view the session** (https://youtu.be/BRtlkj0dE78)
  - **Click here to view the slides from the session** (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xmzw5pqlZl86umD_RUTRaxPykiHc5Pew/view?usp=drive_link)
- **Support session** offered at April 2024 in-person CoP meeting
- **Proposal Deadline:** June 30, 2024, by 11:59 pm EDT
- **Award Announcements:** August 15, 2024
- **Project Start Date:** September 1, 2024
- **Project End Date:** August 31, 2025

Proposal Requirements
Proposals may be submitted in English using the links below. All proposals **should be a maximum of 12 pages* (Arial, 12pt font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins),** excluding CVs and letters of support, and must include:

1. Applicant Institution Name(s)
2. Point of contact for application including physical and email addresses
3. Description of the organization's mission and structure
4. A detailed summary of how your institution (or partnership of institutions) meets the eligibility requirements, which should include the organization:
   1. Name and type (e.g. nonprofit, university, etc)
   2. Location
   3. Mission / History
5. Proposed regenerative tourism project
   1. Description of the proposed project and the impact it will have on regenerative tourism. Please include the following: Specific geographic location, nature of the problem this project will address, and anticipated outcomes/benefits to the community.
   2. Project Timeline
   3. Personnel, including qualification details (CVs preferred)
   4. Project budget narrative **ONLY including direct costs**
   5. Project budget calculation table (or a separate spreadsheet - see template)
6. A letter of support from an administrator at your institution (or each institution applying) which explicitly states that
   1. Support for the proposed project
   2. Institutional resources and/or initiatives that align with the proposed project
   3. Description of any potential cost-sharing or match
7. Names and contact information of at least two partner organizations or references who have worked with your institution on similar initiatives that The Ocean Foundation can contact
8. Future funding prospects - provide a brief description of how it will be continued or sustained

9. Reporting requirements: Provide a brief description of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan to reflect the success of the proposed project and measure its impact on the local tourism industry

How to Apply

Proposals are due by **June 30, 2024, 11:59 pm EDT,** and should be submitted via this Google Form.

Proposal Templates

- Proposal Narrative Template
- Budget Template - *Do not edit the "Total" column or equations*

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Impact on local or national tourism in support of regenerative tourism. Proposals that focus beyond sustainable to innovative regenerative approaches will receive a higher priority.
- Feasibility
- Sustainability of project post-award
- Community involvement (including women and youth, as appropriate)
- Innovation
- Sharing project lessons/results

Award Notification and Distribution

Applicants can expect a decision notification letter via email by August 15, 2024. Selected applicants will have a further follow-up with The Ocean Foundation to finalize the grant agreement and arrange funds transfer.

Other Requirements

- DUNS registration (please contact TOF for additional information if needed)
- Fly America Act (any travel must follow the guidelines of the Fly America Act—please contact TOF for additional information)

Contact Information

Please direct all questions about this RFP to Ben Scheelk, at bscheelk@oceanfdn.org.