



**National
Marine Sanctuary
Foundation**

**Saint Thomas, United States Virgin Islands
2022 Scaling Up Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas
Grant Program
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**

WELCOME

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (Foundation) is pleased to offer an opportunity to apply for the *Scaling Up Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas Grant Program* with funds provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Foundation is working with NOAA and affiliated partners to implement coral restoration at priority sites in St. Thomas, USVI. These grants will enable the continual upscaling of reef restoration efforts in support of the upcoming USVI Coral Reef Restoration Plan, anticipated to be released at the end of 2022.

The USVI Coral Reef Restoration Plan defines the territorial goal for coral reef restoration as follows: “To combat coral reef degradation caused by environmental change and human impacts, we will reestablish and/or maintain the ecological function at several (5-10) priority coral reef restoration sites across the territory within the next 10 years.” The plan will also specify ideal restoration sites spanning across the islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix, with large-scale restoration concretely planned for both acroporid and non-acroporid coral species at a few selected prioritized sites. **The sites identified as priorities for restoration in St. Thomas are: Coki and Flat Cay.** While much work has been completed to prepare and plan for restoration at these sites, additional investment and capacity is needed to scale up work and efficiently meet the USVI coral restoration goals.

NOAA and the Foundation are interested in funding opportunities that directly increase the ability of an organization to contribute to coral restoration progression in St. Thomas by providing the means for internal organizational capacity building and restoration implementation. Funds will support organizations (1) with a demonstrated expertise in coral reef restoration and (2) who are either already actively, directly/indirectly engaged in, or have concrete plans to be engaged in coral reef restoration at one or more of the priority sites in St. Thomas.

Please carefully read the information that follows, as this program represents a new funding opportunity, collaboratively put forth by the Foundation and NOAA. In managing a grant program focused on building partnerships, the Foundation is pleased to work with NOAA partners to support a wide range of opportunities in coral restoration through the *Scaling Up Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas Grant Program*.

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE SCALING UP CORAL RESTORATION AT PRIORITY SITES IN ST. THOMAS GRANT PROGRAM

While still at its beginning, coral restoration in St. Thomas and the USVI continues to attract attention from a variety of public and private funding sources; these funding opportunities are typically explicitly aimed at tangible restoration projects, and are not necessarily intended to support the underlying capacity or organizational needs of a partner required to accomplish restoration at a larger scale. As additional funding opportunities become available for restoration work in St. Thomas, NOAA and the Foundation want to ensure that participating restoration organizations are well equipped to compete for future larger-scale restoration funding opportunities.

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to help USVI partners bridge the gap in their coral restoration capacity, and start coral restoration projects at priority sites in St. Thomas. This first round of funding will establish the Grant Program focused on Scaling Up Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas with the explicit goal of building capacity directly within restoration partner organizations and implementing coral restoration at priority sites in St. Thomas. The primary goal of coral restoration in the USVI is to upscale restoration work and restore the ecological function of local prioritized reef sites identified by federal and local government agencies and NGOs.

The grants will be awarded through an open, competitive process. For this grant program, the Foundation anticipates collectively awarding more than \$800,000 between 2022 and 2024 to directly seed and enable organizations to contribute to the USVI's coral reef restoration goals over a one to three year period at priority sites in St. Thomas. These grants will address a range of potential, immediate capacity needs present within an organization and scale up coral restoration implementation efforts. See below for proposal requirements and examples of the organizational capacity building needs this program will support.

REQUIREMENTS, FUNDING AVAILABILITY, AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Requirements

Proposals must showcase how the funding of proposed capacity building and restoration implementation needs/projects will directly support the organization's ability to contribute to the USVI coral reef restoration goal of restoring ecological function at priority sites in St. Thomas at a large-scale. Proposed projects should reflect immediate capacity building needs that could be fully executed within 12 months of funding and/or restoration implementation projects that could be implemented over a period of one to three years. Example capacity building and restoration implementation categorical project areas are listed below.

*Please note that the list below is neither exhaustive nor definitive for purposes of this grant; **submitted proposals should directly reflect an organization's specific capacity building needs and restoration implementation plan.***

Example Capacity Building Projects

- Nursery Infrastructure (*In- or Ex-Situ*)
 - Expand current nursery capacity
 - Create new nurseries
 - Collection and propagation of brood stock
 - Maintenance of coral nurseries

- Operational Infrastructure or Technologies
 - Coral Transport / Handling
 - Data Management
 - Monitoring
 - Genetics Management
 - Other

- Personnel

Example Restoration Implementation Projects

- Coral Nurseries (*In- or Ex-Situ*)
 - Expand nursery capacity
 - Collection and propagation of brood stock
 - Maintenance
- Restoration at Priority Reef Sites in St. Thomas
 - Outplanting corals from nurseries (*In- or Ex-Situ*)
 - Transplanting at-risk corals
 - Transplanting cuttings from previous outplants
 - Maintenance
 - Monitoring
- Operational Infrastructure or Technologies
 - Coral Transport / Handling
 - Data Management
 - Monitoring
 - Genetics Management
 - Other
- Personnel

Proposals may include as many capacity building and restoration implementation projects as are pertinent to an organization's needs, as long as all other requirements and eligibility criteria are met. Proposed capacity building and restoration implementation projects should be thoroughly detailed; depending on the capacity needs proposed within an application, the Foundation may request additional information or project details. *For more details please see below section 'How To Apply' for submittal information.*

Proposals submitted to the Foundation can fall into two categories:

- Coral Restoration Organizational Capacity Building and Coral Restoration Implementation: funding for grants to build capacity and implement coral restoration over a three year period. The project budget should include no more than 50% towards Capacity Building over the life of the proposal.
- Coral Restoration Implementation Only: funding for grants to implement coral restoration at priority sites in St. Thomas for a period of one to three years

Funding Availability and Period of Performance

This award covers a three year period for a total of \$825,000 in Federal Funds. The majority of awards under the Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas Grant Program will fall in the \$100,000 to \$275,000 range annually for a period of one to three years; however, upper or lower limits to award size are not specified, as this opportunity specifically seeks to fund coral restoration capacity building and implementation needs. Funds will be awarded on a yearly basis based on successful progress of project work and availability of appropriated funds. The Foundation expects to issue awards during the summer of 2022. Project start dates can be flexible, with the earliest project start date of August 1, 2022. Projects should be completed latest by May 31, 2025.

Applicants may apply for funding for both coral restoration capacity building and coral restoration implementation; however, proposals should clearly differentiate between capacity building and restoration implementation. Note that separate budgets must also be submitted for each category, capacity building or restoration implementation. Additionally, proposals may detail more than one capacity building project need/project per category.

Match (cost-sharing) and leveraged resources are not required, but are strongly encouraged. Match is the non-federal share of costs that the grantee or the grantee's partners contribute to accomplish the purposes of the grant. Additional points will be awarded in review of proposals for organizations that can show partial or full match. Match may include in-kind contributions of personnel (salary/fringe) by the grantee and goods and services by the grantee and/or partners. Leveraged resources are new resources brought to the project that support growth and scale and can be in the form of in-kind and cash contributions.

ELIGIBILITY

In general, the Foundation will assess the eligibility criteria below to ensure the proposal is eligible for this program before sending the proposal to reviewers:

- The applicant is either already directly or indirectly involved in coral restoration in the USVI or can provide concrete plans to be engaged in restoration at one or more priority sites in St. Thomas; and
- Demonstrated long-term interest in coral reef habitats and/or coral restoration at one or more priority sites in St. Thomas (maybe just USVI not St. Thomas specific)
- The applicant is a formal or informal education institution, small business, non-profit, or a Tribal, state, or local government;
- The applicant does not have a paid staff member serving on the Foundation's Board of Trustees;
- The applicant is not a federal government agency, a foreign entity, or an individual;
- Project work is conducted by a U.S. organization in the United States or territories;
- If applicable, the applicant can provide a federal tax i.d. #, and independently audited financial statements for the applicant or its fiscal sponsor;

TIMELINE

- April 11, 2022 - Request for Proposals Opens - 2 month *application period*
- May 11, 2022 - Applicant Q&A Webinar: 2pm – 3pm EST, register for webinar here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIkceCggDsqEtT_ykaBmp29wHhJ3Fkvs_DJ
- May 27, 2022 - Request for Proposals Closes
- June 1 - 24, 2022 *Foundation review period – applicants may be contacted for interviews or additional information*
- July 8, 2022 - Notification of Awards to Applicants
- August 1, 2022 - Grant Terms Start

HOW TO APPLY

Proposals should be submitted by 11:59pm EST on Friday May 27, 2022. Send all required proposal documents as separate attachments in one email. Required documents are listed below. Email proposals to RFP@marinesanctuary.org. Send your email, with the subject line: **2022 Coral Restoration at Priority Sites in St. Thomas Grant Program: [Name of Organization]/[Title of Project]**.

The grant application and budget template can be found here: **Grant Application with Budget Template** . Please convert your application and any attachments to a single .pdf file, named with this format: ORGANIZATION_NAME-DOCUMENT_TYPE.pdf. Applications should not exceed 20 total pages.

Required documents:

- **Grant Application with Budget:**
 - **Project Summary:** Project Title, start and end date, total budget and requested funding, project summary,
 - **Applicant organization description;**

- **Project Narrative:**
 - Detailed explanation of how the proposed capacity building projects will enable the organization to upscale operations and to be prepared for future influxes of restoration-focused capital;
 - Detailed description of how coral restoration will be implemented at one or more of the priority reef sites in St. Thomas;
 - Success targets: metrics that demonstrate the success of capacity building efforts, and/or restoration.
 - Leveraged Resources: demonstrate any partnerships, collaborations, or additional resources that bring additional program benefits or scale.
- **Deliverables/Timeline**
- **Goals/Outcomes**
- **Budget:** Full budget and related budget narrative. For proposals requesting multiple years of funding, please use the multi-year budget table linked on the application;
- **Project Justification:** A full examination of how the proposed project(s) directly contribute to the advancement and success of coral restoration in St. Thomas, USVI as defined by the USVI coral reef restoration goal: "To combat coral reef degradation caused by environmental change and human impacts, we will reestablish and/or maintain the ecological function at several (5-10) priority coral reef restoration sites across the territory within the next 10 years."
- **Environmental Compliance:** Status and list of required permits allowing for active restoration and/or nursery structures or other environmental compliance documentation required to implement the proposed work and;
- **Letters of Support:** Letters from the community, or partners demonstrating local support for the organization and proposed project objectives. Not required but encouraged.

Additionally, and as applicable to the capacity needs proposed within an application, please include the following:

- *For Infrastructure-based needs*
 - Blueprint of the overall infrastructure design and construction
 - Workflow for the proposed implementation process of said infrastructure
- *For Data Management/Technology needs*
 - Proposed data management workflows and continued maintenance/upkeep associated with the proposed technology needs
 - Description of how the new management workflows and technologies will align with pre-existing Standard Operating Procedures present within the organization
- *For Personnel needs*
 - Position descriptions for each identified personnel need, as well as a clear description of how the proposed personnel roles align with pre-existing roles and responsibilities already present within the organization
 - Clear delineation within the proposed budget of personnel salary needs

The organization representative who submits the proposal via email, as well as anyone copied on that email, will receive a return email within 2 business days from the Foundation confirming that we have received your proposal. All organizations that submit a proposal will receive notification whether or not your project is selected for funding by July 8, 2022. Please direct any questions to Michaela Miller, Conservation Manager (mmiller@marinesanctuary.org). At any time during the review process the Foundation may request additional information or details for any/all proposed capacity needs within an applicant's proposal.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by the Foundation, with support from selected external reviewers. Proposals may also have their projects evaluated by independent external reviewers for technical merit. Projects will be evaluated based on how well they align with the priority restoration sites in St. Thomas, USVI and the USVI coral reef restoration goal.

Final awardees must submit one interim progress report on December 30th, 2022, and one final report by June 30th, 2023. Multi-year projects will have to submit interim progress reports on December 30th and June 30th of each year, and a final report due 30 days after the performance period end date. Progress reports and the final report must include photos or video of project activities. The Foundation will provide standard progress reporting forms.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SCALING UP CORAL RESTORATION AT PRIORITY SITES IN St. THOMAS

Applicants may request additional information regarding the St. Thomas, USVI priority site locations, reef site specifications (e.g., habitat types, site segmentation, restoration requirements, current coral and grazer practitioner involvement at reef sites), and/or additional supporting information by emailing Michaela Miller, mmiller@marinesanctuary.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY FOUNDATION

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, founded in 2000 by America's most influential ocean conservation leaders, works with communities and NOAA to conserve and expand these special places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. Sanctuaries and monuments are our essential network of protected waters, owned by every American and championed by us. Connected by currents, they sustain miraculous species, coastal communities, and our shared heritage. The Foundation is a leading voice for U.S. protected waters, and our work extends from the ocean floor to the classroom to Capitol Hill. The Foundation supports a growing portfolio of Community Stewardship, Outreach, and Education programs aimed at providing students, educators, and lifelong learners with opportunities to explore and discover connections to the natural world, no matter where they live.

REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposed projects will be reviewed and ranked based on the criteria below:

A. Importance/Relevance and Applicability of Proposal to USVI Coral Reef Restoration Goals (45 points)

- a. Does the proposed project demonstrate direct connections to the organization's ability to scale up coral restoration and implement coral restoration that supports restoration goals at priority sites in St. Thomas?
- b. Does the applicant fully address all above-mentioned criteria?
- c. Does the program build on (and not duplicate) other work in the area and/or other applicant partners?
- d. Does the applicant demonstrate long-term interest in coral reef habitats and/or coral restoration at one or more priority sites in St. Thomas? Long-term is a minimum of 10 years, as described in the USVI Coral Restoration Plan.

B. Technical Merit (25 points)

- a. Does the application clearly describe how the project will be executed logistically and include details sufficient to determine that it can reasonably be completed in the proposed time frame?
- b. Does the applicant define success targets, plan to collect and report specific information pertinent to track project success, and have clear project outputs and outcomes?

C. Qualifications of Applicants (10 points)

- a. Does the applicant demonstrate previous or current interest in coral reef habitats and/or coral restoration in the USVI?
- b. Is the applicant already actively involved in coral restoration in the USVI or can provide concrete plans to be engaged in restoration at one or more of the St. Thomas priority sites within the first year of the project?
- c. Does the applicant have a commitment to, or experience with, reaching the proposed project goals/objectives?
- d. Does the applicant provide plans to show that they will continue to be engaged in coral restoration work in St. Thomas beyond the scope of this Grant?
- e. Did the applicant provide letters of support from the community, or partners demonstrating local support for the organization and proposed project objectives?

D. Project Costs (20 points)

- a. Does the applicant adequately justify the proposed budget request, with all necessary and associated details? Is there sufficient detail to verify that the budget request is reasonable for the type of objectives proposed?
- b. Is a significant percentage of the budget directly related to project activities and fostering positive outcomes/results?

c. Are requested funds for salaries and fringe benefits only for those personnel who are directly involved in implementing the project? *Note that personnel may also be identified as a capacity need.*

d. In general, and apart from any personnel asks, does the budget adequately detail the amount of time each current staff member will spend on the project; is this a reasonable amount of staff time for such a project?

+2 Points: Projects are models/templates that can potentially be reproduced by other partners

+2 Points: Projects demonstrating any match.