2026 CORDAP Coral Decision Support System (CDSS-C) Proposal Template Completion Guidance

Contents

1. Purpose

This document is to assist applicants with the preparation of the CORDAP CDSS-C Full Proposal Submission Form. It provides guidance on structuring your proposal with sections and section headings to use, including Gantt chart and biographical information form. Examples of questions that the proposal should address are also provided for guidance.

Please read the Call Document carefully before completing your proposal.

The application should include all the sections outlined below in a single PDF file, which will be uploaded to the online submission system.

Maximum Project Value: US$1.5M
Project Duration: Between 12 and 36 months
Team composition criteria: A minimum of three applicants, a Lead applicant and at least two Co-Applicants.

Deadline for submission of Full Proposals: May 20th 2026 6pm UTC

Review Criteria

The primary review criteria for proposals is the potential and likelihood of significant impact on global coral conservation and restoration, using the following categories:

- Innovation or novelty of the idea, and quality of the project plan
- Quality of the applicant team and their capacity to deliver results
- Potential for significant Impact, including intervention plan and timing to impact
- Alignment with objective of the call for tenders
- Project resourcing (cost/benefit)
- Broader impact (breadth of socioeconomic applicability)

Document Format

- **Page limits**:
  - Project Narrative: 8 pages maximum (excluding references),
  - Project Management Plan: 3 pages maximum (including Gantt chart)
  - Intervention Concept Summary: 2 pages maximum
  - CV's: 2 pages maximum per CV
- **Upload:** Merge the above sections into a single PDF for upload.
- **Fonts and font size**: Arial, Courier New or Palatino: 11 points or larger; Times New Roman, Calibri: 11 points or larger.
- **Margins:** At least 1.5 cm on all sides. Single line spacing or larger.

2. Technology Readiness Levels

The definitions outlined below can be used to describe the state or level a technology, method, or process is at the start of your project, and what stage you intend to develop it to. It can also assist in identifying the steps to final implementation, and the people and/or groups who need to be involved in those stages.

The lowest level, TRL 1, can be just an idea and indicates that information already learned from basic scientific research is taking its first step from an idea to a practical application of a lesson learned.

A technology that has achieved TRL 9 is one that has been incorporated fully into a larger system. It has been proven to work smoothly and is considered operational.

Level 1 - Basic Research: basic principles are observed and reported
Lowest level of technology readiness. Scientific research begins to be translated into applied research and development. Examples might include fundamental investigations and paper studies.

Level 2 – Applied Research: technology concept and/or application formulated
Once basic principles are observed, practical applications can be formulated. Examples are limited to analytic studies and experimentation.

Level 3 – Critical function, proof of concept established
Active research and development is initiated. Laboratory studies aim to validate analytical predictions of separate components of the technology/system. Examples include components that are not yet integrated or representative.

Level 4 – Laboratory testing of prototype component or process
Design, development and lab testing of technological components are performed. Here, basic technological components are integrated to establish that they will work together. This is a relatively "low fidelity" prototype in comparison with the eventual system. This can also apply to the integration of methods into a larger system.

Level 5 – Laboratory testing of integrated system
The basic technological components are integrated together with realistic supporting elements to be tested in a simulated environment. This is a "high fidelity" prototype compared to the eventual system.

Level 6 – Prototype system verified
The prototype, which is well beyond that of level 5, is tested in a relevant environment. The system or process demonstration is carried out in an operational environment.

Level 7 – Integrated pilot system demonstrated
Prototype is near, or at, planned operational system level. The final design is virtually complete. The goal of this stage is to remove engineering and manufacturing risk.

Level 8 – System incorporated in commercial design
Technology has been proven to work in its final form under the expected conditions. In most of the cases, this level represents the end of true system development.

Level 9 – System proven through successful operation and ready for full scale deployment
Here, the technology in its final form is ready for full deployment/implementation.

Level beyond 9 – Technology/Method in Use and Available
The product, method, process or service is launched, marketed to and adopted by a group of end users/customers (including NGO's. community groups, public authorities).

3. CORDAP Proposal - Proposal Sections

Applicants must use the CORDAP DSS-C Full Proposal Submission Form provided, including completing the Gantt Chart and CV for each Applicant and collaborator. The sections to be competed in the template are outlined below with guidance on what must be addressed in in each section.

a. Abstract (Project Summary)

Please provide a summary of the proposed project (Limit 350 words).

b. Public Summary

Provide a short overview of the project (limit 150 words) and its expected impact suitable for a public audience. Please avoid use of technical jargon.

c. Project Narrative (8 pages maximum)

Please provide concise details of the proposed project. These should include:

a) Background (What is the problem you are trying to solve and why is this important?)
b) How is it done today? What are the current limitations and what is new in your approach?
c) Strategy and Work Plan (Overall, approach, risks to success, address the technical feasibility of the project. This includes identifying and addressing the technical risks, required expertize and technical resources to implement the results.)
d) Expected outcomes (How will you know if the project is successful?)
e) Impact, Knowledge Transfer, and Success (Who will use the outcomes and how will they use them? How scalable are your results and can they be transferred to other regions?)
f) IP: Describe the intellectual property situation with the project (Does it rely on background IP, is this background IP available and will it, and project IP, satisfy CORDAP IP policies?)
g) Communications plan: outline communications and outreach activities planned for this project.

Please structure your proposal under the heading below, addressing all points.

Background and Motivation

- Provide a brief statement of the key problem(s) to be tackled.
- Give a detailed description of the state-of-the art, giving an overview of existing solutions and approaches. Explain why existing solutions are not sufficient.
- Support your statements by references to existing relevant literature.

Aims and Objectives

- Describe the overall aim and detailed objectives of your project.
- Demonstrate the novelty or uniqueness of any solutions (tools, technologies, methods or new interventions) you propose.
- The objectives must form mutually integrated parts of one and the same project.
- Note that ambitious projects are welcome, however you should be mindful of what is achievable and feasible in the timeframe and with the resources available (both requested in this proposal and any cost share or other leveraged funding).
- Where a system is being put in place, outline the plans to resource of fund this in the long term, potential funding sources etc.

Strategy and Work Plan (Research and Technical Development Plan)

- The Research and Technical Development Plan is a clear description of how you propose to accomplish your objectives.
- The plan must include both unambiguous deliverables and milestones, with delivery dates and owners.
- Your plan needs to address the technical feasibility of the project.
- This includes identifying and addressing the technical risks, required expertize and technical resources to implement the results.
- Outline what each team member brings to the project, why this is the best team for this project and the roles of each.

Impact, Knowledge Transfer, and Success

- Describe the potential impact and benefits of a successful project?
- Who is likely to use the outcomes/knowledge developed by this project?
- How will they use it, and how ready are they to use the knowledge?
- How will the knowledge be made available /transferred to these stakeholders?
- Are the project developments scalable and/or transferable to other regions?
- Identify any limitations in this regard.
- How would you define success?

- Communications plan and activities: Outline any communications and outreach activities planned for the project.

Intellectual property

- Outline the IP (patents, copyright, trade secrets, trademarks) situation with the proposed project.
- Will the project likely result in the creation of Project IP?
- Does the proposed project rely on Background IP, owned by either applicants or a third party? If so, outline how this IP will be made available to ensure CORDAP's IP principle and policies are upheld, in particular how IP, products or technologies developed from this project (including necessary Background IP) will be made globally available for coral restoration activities.

d. Project Management Plan (3 pages maximum)

Overall Project Management and collaboration plan

Where the 'Strategy and Work Plan (Research and Technical Development Plan)' address the scientific and technical aspects, risks and challenges of the project, this section deals with the operational plan.

- Describe how the project will be implemented in terms of management, coordination, execution, and monitoring of task implementation.
- Describe how the assessment of progress and success will be done, including milestones.

Risk Assessment and Management

Provide a full risk assessment with contingency measures or approaches.
Examples of risk can include:

- Early R&D deliverable failure (if something major does not work early in the program that subsequent tasks are dependent on, what is the plan?),
- Not gaining approvals - regulators, stakeholders, ethics etc.
- Third party does not deliver
- Cost increases

Summary of Deliverables

- Please outline the key deliverables in the table below. Key deliverable are those outputs directly related to the goals, objectives and milestones of the project. (Please add or remove rows as required).

Gantt chart

- Provide the implementation timelines (use the Gantt chart template provided).

e. Intervention Plan (2 pages Maximum)

This section is designed to identify how the outcomes **of your project** may ultimately be used, what further R&D is required to make this happen, and to confirm that the concept description and usage scale aspirations align.

1. Provide a general description of the intervention concept this project relates to. If the project deliverables could be used in many different intervention concepts, note this, and then pick what you see as the predominant or highest value concept.
2. For the selected intervention concept describe the scale of deployment you see it operating at (this could be a number of corals per year or some other metrics)?
3. Document the major steps that comprise the intervention concept
4. For each major step then further document:

a) A description of the step, and the associated infrastructure/labor expectations in order to achieve the deployment scale described above.
b) Does it already exist and is already operational, or is separate R&D required in this area.
c) Is it being progressed by this R&D proposal?

Ideally, the TRL scale should be used to describe b) and c) above (Reference guidelines provided)

4. Budget (and Budget Justification)

Please complete and upload the Full Proposal Budget Template Excel file. Please complete the table ,Outline the budget breakdown by Task present in another sheet of the excel file, in which the tasks should match those detailed in the Gantt chart.

In the budget justification section (online form), please detail the justification for your requests, highlighting the rationale for budget splits between partner countries, justification for the personnel requested, equipment required etc.

Please differentiate between field work and other travel requests, noting that excessive travel budget requests will be removed.

Please indicate if this project or proposal has been submitted or is under review with any other funding body. This does not include leveraged funding, cost-share or contributions to this project outside the requested budget. Any leveraged funding, cost-share or contributions to this project outside the requested budget should be noted, as beneficial to your proposal.

Eligible Costs

1. Requested costs must be related to research, development and integrated educational activities directly related to the project.

2. **Equipment:** It is expected that participating organizations will already be largely equipped to pursue their current research. Purchase of equipment essential for the project which is proposed is eligible. The maximum allowable cost for any single unit of equipment is US$ 80,000.
3. **Materials and supplies:** Costs of general consumables, computer software necessary for the scientific collaboration.
4. **Services:** Consulting services and printing, access charges, computer services specific to the project, including rental fees and other miscellaneous expenses.
5. **Personnel:** Project Staff salaries. All staff and staff salary requests must be adequately justified. Salary costs sought for support staff should be commensurate with the level of skills, responsibilities, and expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities.

Ineligible Costs

Costs for administrative personnel, routine business operations, and professional development are not allowed.

5. Letters of Support

You can include genuine letters of support to strengthen your proposal. Letters of support can be from groups that will benefit from your project, demonstrating how they will benefit. In addition they can demonstrate national, regional or local backing where required for field work and/or testing or activities.

If backing up contributions or additional support for the project, the letters of support should clearly describe what type of support will be provided, and how it will be provided.

Letter of support should be combined into a single PDF and uploaded in the 'Upload PDF' section of the submission portal.

6. Statements of Intent

A completed and signed Statement of Intent is required from each applicant organization. These should then be merged and upload as a single PDF.

7. Suggested and Excluded Reviewers

You may include up to three potential reviewers whom you feel could expertly review your proposal. Note you should not list people you are working or collaborating with, in the same organization nor have published with them within the previous 3 years. It will be at the discretion of CORDAP whether to approach these individuals or not.

You may also include up to three potential reviewers whom you do not wish us to consider as reviewers.

8. Required Document Upload Checklist:

1. Full Proposal Template (Single PDF including Research Narrative, Project Management, Intervention Plan (if applicable) and bio information forms (CV))
2. Full Proposal Budget Template
3. Statement of Intent to Collaborate (from each applicant organization, combined as a single PDF)
4. Optional: Letters of Support (single PDF upload of any, or all, letters of support combined)

All call and policy documents can be downloaded from the Funding Awards and Proposal documents pages on thecordap.org website.