

CORDAP - G20 Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform

Coral Accelerator Program (CAP) 2026 - Call for Proposals

Call Timeline	
Call Opens	1 September 2026
Concept Note Webinars (Registration link)	21 September 2026 14:00 UTC
Concept Note Submission Deadline	19 October 2026 18:00 UTC
Anticipated Concept Note Notification Date	17 December 2026
Anticipated Full Proposal Submission Deadline	February 15 2027
Anticipated Notification Date	August 2027
Call Documentation	CORDAP website
Proposal Submission Portal Link	myCORDAP

Note: Dates of activities are subject to change; please check the CORDAP website for the most up-to-date timeline and information.

Overview

The Coral Accelerator Program (CAP) will fund international collaborative research teams with transformational ideas in coral conservation and restoration. Projects will span across the full range of novel, early-phase projects through final, proof-of-concept development and testing. CORDAP in this call will fund projects between one and three years in length and up to a maximum of **\$1Million** per project.

Note: We will also be launching a new call, “**CORDAP High Reward,**” in November/December 2026. More details are provided at the end of this call document (Appendix B).

The total funding allocation available under the CAP 2026 and the new High-Risk, High-Reward calls is **USD 3.2 million**.

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1. Overview and Objectives

CORDAP's overarching mission is to bring together the best ideas, in a transdisciplinary approach, to accelerate international research and development (R&D) for supplying the technologies and innovations required to secure a future for corals and coral reefs. This call will invest in novel, early-phase ideas through final, proof-of-concept development and testing.

We are committed to creating impact, and innovation is especially crucial to filling the significant gap between current and required capabilities. Projects funded under this program are expected to lead to transformational discoveries, innovations, and improvements over the current state-of-the-art. Proposals transcending different disciplines and fields are strongly encouraged and should include end-users and other stakeholders in the research, as well as the design and development of projects.

CORDAP will deliver technologies, methods, and processes that can be applied in coral conservation and restoration efforts across the world through existing, and new, national and international efforts. CORDAP is committed to the principles of co-design and a key criterion in our R&D proposal assessments will be whether suitable partners, groups and end users that can deploy the proposed technologies have been identified and engaged.

We will draw together a multidisciplinary group of scientists, engineers, technologists, and practitioners to collaboratively identify, develop, and deliver innovative, practical, and sustainable solutions to enhance corals and reef survival, conservation, resilience, adaptation, restoration, and rehabilitation.

Our main priorities are to:

- a. Develop new and enhance existing transformational step-change R&D solutions for coral and reef conservation, including conservation, restoration, and adaptation.
- b. Move potential solutions from concept and proof-of-concept to pilot scale testing.
- c. Develop affordable and scalable conservation, restoration, and adaptation solutions that can be deployed across the full socioeconomic spectrum, with associated stakeholders aided by a decision-support system.
- d. Partner with local stakeholders to adapt and develop R&D conservation tools and approaches to protect, restore, and/or foster the environmental resilience and stress tolerance of corals and coral reefs.

2. Eligibility and Application Limits

Each applicant team must consist of:

- a. A minimum of 3 Applicants, one Lead Applicant and a minimum of two Co-Applicants, and
- b. Organizations from at least 2 different countries, one of which must be a low or middle-income country.

The [OECD List](#) of low and middle-income countries should be used to determine eligibility (includes both lower-middle and upper-middle income countries).

An individual can only be a Lead Applicant on one proposal and participate in up to a maximum of two additional proposals as a Co-Applicant.

Any organization can be the Lead Organization on a maximum of two proposals, but can be a participating organization on multiple proposals.

Eligible organizations include not-for-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, higher education institutions, research institutes, and government organizations.

If a for-profit organization wishes to submit as an Applicant Organization requesting funding, then they must be willing to co-invest to the point that they are not making a profit.

If the research activities are to take place in a third country (a country different to that of any of the applicants), it is strongly encouraged to have that country represented in the application.

CORDAP is unable to provide grants directly to individuals. There is no upper limit to the number of organizations in an application.

3. Projects Supported in this Call

3.1 Types of Projects considered in this call

Eligible projects will span across the full range of novel early-phase projects through to final proof-of-concept development and testing.

- Must have the potential to be transformational and deliver a step-change in their field.
- Must clearly identify the potential risks and assess whether the project can be realistically completed (i.e. what else is needed to be true for the idea to ultimately be impactful and is this feasible), in addition to the risks of implementing the outcomes (e.g. ecological risk).
- High risk, high reward novel ideas are very welcome. A high-risk, high-reward idea must focus on potential extraordinary outcomes, and we acknowledge this comes with greater uncertainty.
- Full end-to-end conservation and restoration solutions require that many different challenges be solved; proposals can focus on solving a specific challenge within such a larger system, articulating how their project fits into the overall system, and delivering impact through its successful contribution.

Project Type	Description
Novel R&D projects	These include the development and implementation of tools, technologies, methods, or whole new interventions designed to better protect, manage, adapt, or restore corals and coral reefs (innovations in coral and reef monitoring, threat reduction, assisted evolution, or restoration). Given the objective of step changes, the program will require that new and innovative interventions be developed. Improving or scaling up existing interventions This R&D will make a “significant” improvement to an existing intervention, technology, or method, including scaling up. These investments should be designed to create an immediate impact, with the possibility that the improvement can be implemented by existing restoration and adaptation projects. “Significant” is not fixed, but because current methods make impacts at orders of magnitude below our requirements—we need to focus on major improvements. Foundation science to support implementation of interventions

Project Type	Description
	As a mission-driven program, CORDAP typically does not invest in R&D outside of our mission. Nevertheless, there are critical gaps in fundamental knowledge that, if left unaddressed, could limit the impact or increase the risk of restoration and adaptation programs. This investment type accepts proposals to address these shortfalls, and may include: - Quantifying/understanding natural adaptation, coral demographics, and advanced taxonomy to aid intervention designs. - Novel ecosystem design for application where restoring corals and reefs to their former state is no longer feasible. - Models, decision systems, and monitoring technologies to assess risk and to guide deployments and improve effectiveness of deployment investments. - Cryopreservation (biobanking as an R&D or invention production tool) Proposals of this type must articulate how the research will directly inform the implementation of conservation tools, technologies, methods, or new interventions that better protect, manage, adapt, or restore corals and reefs.
Capacity Building	R&D Capacity development and local innovation and implementation Because capacity to take on R&D in many areas is often limited to large-scale research facilities and some practitioner groups, this project type supports innovation by local NGOs, research organizations, and community groups of technologies that can improve, share and/ or scale up their ongoing efforts. This may also include funding for technology training or support for its application in new locations. Translation R&D This R&D adapts an existing technology or intervention to a different context. Technologies and interventions are developed based on local costs, technologies, and labor structures, and will need to be adapted to other socioeconomic conditions. This type supports the translation of R&D methods developed or in development from one context (location, sector, or industry for example) to another to assess their wider transferability.
Cold Water Corals (CWC)	Cold-water corals are far less understood than warm water corals, from where they exist to how they are being impacted and the best methods to protect and restore them. The CORDAP R&D Roadmap for Conservation & Restoration of Cold-Water Corals (Available Here) is the outcome of a scoping study undertaken in this field to assess the current state of knowledge, as well as identify focus areas to align global efforts and identify R&D priority areas. Proposals submitted under this priority area must reference this roadmap and how their proposed research will address identified needs and significantly impact this area. * For the purposes of this call, 'Cold-Water Corals' describes all corals that do not harvest light (are azooxanthellate), indicating the absence of symbiotic dinoflagellates commonly found in "shallow" and "warm" water corals. This definition would typically include deep/cold water corals and exclude the majority of corals found shallower than 30 m depth, while acknowledging the possibility of exceptions to this general classification in biology.

3.2 Program Priority Areas

The following are areas CORDAP considers ‘high need’ at this point. They are applicable to the full spectrum of Project Types outlined above. Proposals that either fall outside of or only indirectly address these priority areas are still eligible for funding but may be considered lower priority for funding than those with a direct impact on the priority areas. Innovative ideas for restoration and adaptation interventions capturing the best “outside-the-box” ideas are encouraged.

- 1. Assisted Evolution.** Climate change related stress is forecast to grow and if we are to avoid restored corals/reefs subsequently bleaching, then we need to incorporate assisted evolution methods into our restoration activities. Assisted evolution is intervening to help species adapt to a changing environment more quickly than they would via natural selection. The CORDAP R&D Technology Roadmap for Understanding Natural Adaptation & Assisted Evolution of Corals to Climate Change ([Available here](#)) is an outcome of a scoping study undertaken in this field to assess the current understanding of natural adaptation, existing activities and subsequent R&D priorities to increase the rate of knowledge generation. The study highlighted the need for studies that seek to improve areas such as our understanding of trade-offs, effect durations across generations and genetic correlations with key tolerance and fitness traits. Proposals submitted to the call in this priority area must reference this roadmap, and how their proposed work will address identified needs and significantly advance the state of the art. The roadmap indicates assisted evolution areas that are suitable for projects in this call. Consideration should also be given to experimental design and expanded use of any data generated.
- 2. Aquaculture / Automation.** In situ and ex situ coral aquaculture production and deployment (out planting) is a primary mechanism to restore sites and to deploy enhanced corals for assisted evolution interventions. Current methods and systems are both resource and time expensive, with several orders of magnitude improvements required if goals are to be achieved. This extends across developed and developing countries, where we need to make every person more effective. Five broad areas for investment have been identified, infrastructure for coral production, management and workflows, integrating resilience, efficient out planting and monitoring. Each area has multiple specific priorities. Proposals submitted in this area must reference the CORDAP R&D Technology Roadmap for Exploring the Frontier of Coral Aquaculture. ([Available here](#)).
- 3. Preserve and conserve existing corals.** Most existing deployments and R&D focus on replacing corals, however, saving and retaining existing corals is preferable to replacing them. We urgently need innovative new ideas—for example, field methods to apply treatments at scale to existing corals, innovative ways to improve local water quality, biomarkers for resilient corals, and the like.
- 4. Limit early life mortality.** Corals commonly have high mortality during their early-life phases, which limits the efficiency of existing restoration methods. We need new methods that promote coral settlement and reduce early life mortality. These could include substrates and treatments that mimic natural substratum, competitor inhibitors or survival and growth supplements. These could be applied as part of a mariculture process or in the field to improve natural recruitment.
- 5. Intervention planning, risk, and monitoring.** (e.g. decision-making, modelling). Achieving restoration and adaptation goals will require effective decision making, by guiding limited resources to the areas of highest impact. This ranges from broad regional planning decisions to site selection for specific restoration activities. These decisions range from determining if the best action is to further reduce

stress on a coral reef to investing in a coral reef adaptation intervention. Making these decisions and tracking their impact requires monitoring programs and the data/knowledge they generate.

A better understanding of intervention risks, and their mitigation, can enable the acceleration of new technologies, especially if unknowns are preventing implementation or there might be high residual consequences for environmental protection goals. Proposals submitted to the call in this priority area must reference the CORDAP Technology Roadmap on Managing the Ecological Risks of Coral Reef Interventions ([available here](#)), and how their proposed work will address identified needs and significantly advance the field. The roadmap indicates risk areas that are suitable for projects in this call. Consideration should also be given to potential risks to the ecosystem from conducting the proposal as part of responsible research and innovation. Proposals from across the decision support, ecological risk, and monitoring domain are welcome.

6. **Blended artificial and natural reefs.** Many islands and coasts will be submerged unless they are defended by artificial structures, including hybrid reefs. Research in this field would identify ways to create such structures that can be integrated into existing reefs, with minimal damage, creating a rapid change in surge protection and actively enhancing the restoration and recovery of adjacent coral communities. Stronger proposals will look to blend between the artificial structure and corals to create living structures.
7. **R&D capacity development.** Current methods of restoration and adaptation alone will not conserve reefs until the end of the century and will require rapid growth in R&D capability to generate the required knowledge, methods and systems. Likewise, as novel methods are introduced we need to develop the capacity to incorporate them further afield and plan for their implementation.
8. **LMIC or Developing country R&D methods.** R&D in developing countries is often hampered by limited capacity, including supporting infrastructure. We must support the development of R&D from low to middle income countries while considering these limitations. These projects can be practitioner-oriented, possibly low- or high-tech, novel or translational, must be affordable, and meant to improve or scale up, or a combination of these. Organizations in developing countries that have produced innovations or technologies that have potential for wide applicability and are ready to be shared with others are also encouraged.
9. **Reef Associated Organisms.** In this priority area, the focus is on the restoration of species that are associated with coral reefs, such as herbivores, to enhance overall reef health.
10. **Water Quality.** In this priority area, the focus is on addressing water quality challenges that impact coral reef ecosystems, including innovative approaches to improve water quality and enhance overall reef health.

4. Funding Terms and Conditions

CORDAP policies and Terms and Conditions govern all award personnel and activities and can be found in the CORDAP Award Terms and Conditions Manual, available on our website [Funding Awards](#) page.

4.1 Intellectual property

- CORDAP does not seek to own any of the IP resulting from its funded activities. Ownership vests need to be agreed upon by the organizations collaborating on the research.

- Owners of IP resulting from CORDAP-funded activities must provide a free license for all commercial and non-commercial coral conservation use, including free license to any background IP the project relies on.
- CORDAP-funded developments and technologies should be made available and accessible at an affordable price to all coral conservation projects.
- Publications and underlying data generated by CORDAP-funded activities must be made openly accessible, allowing others to build upon and re-use this knowledge and information.

At Concept Note submission, Applicants are asked to briefly outline the IP situation with their proposal, indicating that the Project IP and Background IP can adhere to the [CORDAP IP Policy](#).

4.2 Open Access Policy

CORDAP expects that publications, knowledge and data, arising from CORDAP funded projects will be made freely available as soon as possible and licensed in ways which allow others to build upon and re-use this content.

- **Publications, and underlying data, will be immediately, freely and openly accessible to all**
Publications must be made freely available from the final publication date, without any embargo period. It should be available to anyone, anywhere for free. This includes access to any underlying data sets. Preprints of submitted manuscripts are encouraged to facilitate prompt dissemination of research findings.
- **There should be no barriers to the re-use and dissemination of CORDAP funded publications**
Publications must be published under the Creative Commons attribution license (CC BY) or an equivalent license. This will permit all users to copy, redistribute, transform, and build on the material in any medium or format for any purpose (including commercial) without further permission or fees being required.
- **CORDAP will pay necessary reasonable fees.**
Reasonable fees required by a publisher or repository to enable immediate, open access to the accepted articles is considered an eligible cost in an Award. This includes article processing charges and other publisher fees.
- **Research data and software should be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR).**
All publications must be long-term archived and freely discoverable through commonly available free digital open access repositories to those that may wish to read, share and reuse the outputs of CORDAP funded research.
Authors should submit datasets to an appropriate public data repository. Data should be submitted to discipline-specific, community-recognized repositories where possible. Where a suitable discipline-specific resource does not exist, data should be submitted to a generalist repository (such as Zenodo, Dryad, Science Data Bank, Open Science Framework, Figshare etc.).

4.3 Consortium Agreement

Successful Applicant Organizations will be required to sign a legally binding Consortium Agreement (Research Collaboration Agreement) among themselves before project funds are disbursed. This is not required for Concept Note nor Full Proposal submission.

The Consortium Agreement sets the framework for a successful project implementation and is a private agreement between the participants to set out the rights and obligations amongst themselves. (It does NOT involve CORDAP itself.) It should complement the award agreement and must NOT contain any provision contrary to it, or to CORDAP's terms and conditions.

The Consortium Agreement details project implementation and division of tasks, internal organization and management of the consortium, project budget and distribution of funding, additional rules on rights and obligations related to background and results, and liability. In addition, indemnification and confidentiality arrangements between the participants, intellectual property management, future exploitation and dissemination of results, boilerplate provisions: duration, termination, communication, applicable law and settlement of internal disputes etc. must be addressed in the agreement.

A CORDAP model Consortium Agreement for applicants to adapt to their project is available for on our webpages [here](#).

Applicants can contract commercial/non-commercial organizations as required by the project.

4.4 Ethics

The Applicant and Applicant's Organization must ensure that, before the research commences and for the full award duration, all the necessary ethical, legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and all the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained.

If any research is to be carried out in a third country, the Organization must ensure that all activities are carried out in the spirit of their own Organization and national regulations and complies at all times with the relevant laws and regulations in the host country. In addition, any projects must be carried out with the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of any communities affected by the project activities.

4.5 Data Privacy

All responses to this Call for Proposals will be treated in confidence and no information contained therein will be communicated to any third party without the permission of the Applicant except insofar as what is specifically required for the consideration and evaluation of the proposal. Applicants will be asked during the submission stage if they assent to their proposal being shared with other potential funding partners should it not be funded in this call.

The [CORDAP Privacy Policy](#) explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about you as an Applicant or Awardee for CORDAP funding programs or as any other person that interacts with our Organization.

5. Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Process

All proposals received will be checked for compliance with the Funding Call criteria, policies, terms and conditions.

Applicants will first submit a Concept Note proposal (Pre-Proposal) will be evaluated by a CORDAP Panel of Experts.

Applicants who are successful in the Concept Note phase of the call will be invited to submit a Full Proposal, which will undergo an international peer review followed by panel assessment.

All proposals will be evaluated against the criteria below, applicants should ensure their proposal addresses all relevant review criteria:

Review Criteria	Examples of the types of evidence we would expect to see.
Potential of the project to make step changes, be transformational in its field.	An outline of where the field is now, and what transformation or change will this project deliver. Use of metrics/measures of success to describe the level of impact.
Ability of the Applicant teams to deliver the goals of the proposed project and applicant diversity.	Team skills linked to project needs with all needs covered. Relevant experience of the Team
Innovation or novelty of the idea	Why this is a new idea, how it is done today. Is it new globally or just in your location? Detail how this is predominantly an R&D project with scalable and replicable outcomes.
Targeted impact and pathway and timing to impact	What else needs to occur before this R&D can create its full impact - both within the field and/or other technologies/processes methods that may need to be developed before this innovation can be implemented. Describe how the outcomes of the project could be scaled up. What could limit its ability to be scaled up.
Alignment with priority R&D investment themes or areas	State how the project impacts on priority area(s). Reference to relevant parts of the Technology Roadmap where applicable.
Management, coordination, and cost effectiveness of the project	Clear project plan with accountability structure Practicality of the project versus alternative ways to progress (why this is the best option).
Analysis of project risks, and site selection process outlined	Outline why the proposed deployment site and its local conditions are appropriate, and the best site for this innovation. Risk mitigation measures. Alternative pathways for projects with high-risk activities.
Broader impact and socioeconomic applicability.	Additional benefits that this project will deliver to LMIC countries. Contributions or cost sharing into projects led by non-LMIC countries.

6. Proposal Budget

The maximum allowable budget per project is **\$1 Million**. Budgets must be prepared using the supplied budget template.

6.1 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 project.
4. **Services:** Consulting services and printing, access charges, computer services specific to the project, including rental fees and other miscellaneous expenses. Open access publication fees.
5. **Personnel:** Project Staff salaries. All 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.

6.2 Ineligible Costs

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

6.3 Indirect Costs (Overhead Costs)

The maximum total cost for indirect costs should not be more than:

- 20% of the applicable direct research costs if the applicant is based in a low- or middle-income country
- 10% of the applicable direct research costs if the applicant is based anywhere else.

To determine eligibility for the higher rate of indirect costs, please refer to the [OECD List](#) of low and middle-income countries.

The following budget items are not eligible in calculating indirect costs: Capital equipment and capital expenditures over \$5K, rental costs, student tuition fees, scholarships and fellowships, and external services.

The rates provided above are the maximum rates allowed under the foundation's policy. An Awardee, or Co-Applicant, organization with an actual indirect cost rate lower than the maximum rate provided above should not increase the funding request to the maximum allowed.

It is important to note that CORDAP is a charitable entity, funded by voluntary contributions, and does not have the financial capacity to match the indirect-cost rates that national science funders may pay to its awardees.

6.4 Cost Share (Cash and In-Kind Contributions)

Contributions, both cash and in-kind are encouraged in projects in order to maximize the leveraging of CORDAP funding. At the Concept Note submission stage, applicants should outline what contributions they intend to make towards the proposed project. It should be noted however that cost share contributions are not mandatory on applications but will be taken into consideration in evaluating the overall impact of the project, in particular where significant funding is requested for developed countries within the project. In-Kind contributions should be described and not stated in monetary terms or figures.

7. Proposal Preparation and Online Submission

The Award Term can be between a minimum of 12 months up to a maximum of 36 months with a total Award Budget not to exceed **USD \$1 Million**.

The Lead Applicant should go to [myCORDAP](#) to register through our online submission system. Once successfully registered you can start your Concept Note application.

Only the Lead Applicant is required to register and can submit an application.

myCORDAP is accessed through the internet; no additional software needs to be installed. You can access the system online from any location. The configuration of some browsers and internet infrastructure (popup blockers, firewalls, etc.) may restrict an individual's access to the internet and as a result to the myCORDAP system. If you are having any such difficulties, please contact your organization's internal IT support team.

Concept Note submission templates (Concept Note Submission Form and Budget Template) can be downloaded from the [CORDAP website funding pages](#), and are available on from the [myCORDAP](#) portal.

The main steps in applying are as follows:

- The research team must designate one member as Lead Applicant, who will be responsible for the proposal submission of the project on behalf of the team, and whose organization will be the Lead Organization for the project.
- The Lead Applicant will need an account on myCORDAP. This will provide access to the online application form and further instructions concerning the online submission.
- The Concept Note proposal along with the required documents must be submitted before the submission deadline. No changes can be made after final submission.
- The Lead Applicant will be notified if the team is invited to submit a Full Proposal application.

8. Award Reporting and Payment Schedule

The Lead Applicant/Lead Organization will receive the CORDAP funds for the entire team (consortium) and has the obligation to distribute the payments received from CORDAP to the other Co-Applicant Organizations.

Awardees will be required to submit brief quarterly traffic light reports and annual progress and financial reports, using templates and forms which CORDAP will make available. All projects will need to develop and maintain a risk register and submit it as part of their annual progress report. Payments will be made upon signing of the Award Agreement, and receipt and approval of annual progress or final reports. Reports

must demonstrate sufficient progress against the project milestones for that reporting period or risk subsequent payments being delayed until progress has been shown. Awardees may also be requested to submit project highlights and contribute to CORDAP's communications, publicity, review and resourcing efforts. Such highlights are vital in raising the profile of CORDAP projects and the continued resourcing of the Platform.

An indicative payment schedule is outlined below. It is recognized that many organizations, particularly in developing countries, may not have the resources to take on much of the project costs in advance. This is reflected in the initial payment; however, this aspect can still be negotiated in justified cases based on available funding.

Payments are lump sum payments. Unspent funds may be carried over to the next period, but a significant underspend may affect the timing of subsequent payments. At the Project close, a financial reconciliation will take place of Project funds spent against the awarded budget. Any unspent funds must be returned to CORDAP at the end of the Project within 90 days.

8.1 Indicative Reporting and Payment Schedule

When	Reporting Deliverable	1 Year Project	Up to 2 years	Up to 3 years
Upon Agreement Signing/before project start date	Quarterly Reports during Year 1	50% of Project total	40% of Project total	30% of Project total
End of Year 1	Quarterly and Annual Progress/Final Report Financial Report	Financial Reconciliation – Payment of remainder of project funds spent.	40% of Project Total	30% of Project Total
End of Year 2	Quarterly and Annual Progress/Final Report Financial Report	NA	Financial Reconciliation – Payment of remainder of project funds spent.	30% of project Total
End of Year 3	Quarterly and Final Report Financial Report	NA	NA	Financial Reconciliation – Payment of remainder of project funds spent.

9. Proposal Submission Checklist

Prior to considering an application, applicants are encouraged to read the [CORDAP Strategic Plan](#), noting that the Project Type descriptions and Priority Areas in the Strategic Plan have been updated, therefore **for this call only the Project Type and Priority Area descriptions outlined in this call document are eligible.**

9.1 Concept Note Submission Stage:

1. Concept Note Proposal Submission Form (including biographical information form).
2. Concept Note Budget Template

9.2 Full Proposal Submission Stage (Invitation Only, documents will be available after Concept Note submission):

1. Full Proposal Template (including Gantt Chart and biographical information form)
2. Full Proposal Budget Template
3. Statement of Intent to Collaborate (from each applicant organization)
4. Letters of Support

All call and policy documents can be downloaded from the [Funding Awards](#) pages on the cordap.org website.

At the Full Proposal submission stage, participating applicants and their organizations are required to submit a 'Statement of Intent'. This is a document signed by the participating organizations' authorized representatives confirming that they understand the commitments, project requirements, and CORDAP's Terms and Conditions. If awarded, applicants will be subject to **post-award due diligence**, the requirements for which will be detailed at the Full Proposal stage. Successful applicants will be required to meet the post-award due diligence criteria and requirements established by CORDAP.

9.3 Application Assistance

Potential applicants are first directed to the [Call FAQ](#) and [Submission Assistance](#) document. In addition, webinars will be held (and made available afterwards on the CORDAP funding pages for reference). If your query is not addressed in the sources, please contact the CORDAP funding team at pcn@kaust.edu.sa

Appendix A

CORDAP Coral R&D Capacity Development Guidance

Coral R&D capacity development aims to strengthen the scientific foundation and practical capabilities necessary to address the challenges facing coral reefs, such as climate change. By enhancing research capacity and fostering collaboration, these efforts contribute to informed decision-making and effective conservation strategies for the long-term health and sustainability of coral reefs worldwide.

CORDAP appreciates the significant capacity development needs that underpin the ability of both scientists and marine practitioners to undertake high-quality research on coral conservation and restoration in most areas where corals are located. In a region with no air compressors, for instance, how can local scientists be expected to survey deeper reefs, let alone pitch a compelling scientific proposal based upon vastly understudied habitats? As another example, how could a research team without access to a molecular research lab compete for funding with one that has access to a state-of-the-art one? Since each CORDAP project must feature at least two countries, one means by which this could be achieved is via international collaboration. Although the scientific goals may well be achieved through collaboration (e.g., transporting biopsies for molecular analysis elsewhere), no local capacity may have been developed in the process, and there is certainly long-term value to establishing in-house scientific capabilities. The most competitive CORDAP proposals will be those that not only produce disruptive technologies or approaches for saving or restoring reefs, but also grow the capacity to conduct groundbreaking coral research in all team members' organizations and communities (in particular those located in developing nations, where there is likely to be a greater need for this).

"R&D capacity development," projects are projects whose major focus is on growing the collective ability of a science team, organization, or an entire community to undertake coral research. In many instances this is

distinct from simply growing the capacity of the community, which could involve, for instance, paying marine protected area (MPA) officials to protect a reef from poachers. Although there is a clear need for such protection, it does not lead to increased capacity of the community to undertake coral research. Projects to develop or maintain MPAs, or even simply to collect baseline monitoring data are not eligible in this call, however there are likely other funding sources and mechanisms beyond CORDAP for these activities.

1. What is Coral R&D Capacity Development?

It is important to emphasize the distinction between “capacity development” and “R&D capacity development.” The latter is specifically focused on increasing the ability to undertake scientific research, while the former is more general and could include other, non-research-oriented goals such as community education and outreach. Although CORDAP appreciates that, in most areas, significant capacity development must occur before even the most modest research can be undertaken, the most competitive proposals will instead be those that specifically prioritize growing R&D research capacity. This could include travel to more advanced facilities, training in research methods, adopting new research tools or protocols, or accessing or integrating essential research equipment needed to perform coral conservation or restoration R&D over the duration of the project and in the longer term. It is worth noting here that it is important to think carefully about how you categorize your project with respect to project type, because if you believe your proposed work indeed aligns most closely with R&D capacity development, it will be judged accordingly; importantly, these projects might not have as many novel elements as a “Novel R&D project”.

2. What is a ‘transformative’ or ‘disruptive’ capacity development project?

In addition to funding A) development of novel protocols for conserving or restoring coral habitats (including coral reefs) and B) initiatives that seek to grow local coral R&D capacity using predominantly tried-and-true measures such as community outreach, education, and/or purchasing of key scientific materials, CORDAP will also fund “transformative capacity development projects.” These are projects that present novel means of growing coral R&D capacity and could include, for instance, fundamentally improved means by which stakeholders and community members partake in the project. Innovative ways of rapidly leveraging the power of field or lab data collection to make informed capacity development decisions is another example. Using scientific data to inform coral reef management and restoration decisions will likely be at the core of many, if not most, CORDAP projects. A scientific approach to optimize the capacity development integral to the project could also be important. In other words, CORDAP welcomes projects whose focus is on improving capacity development approaches, provided that the project is still R&D-focused. If you are unsure whether your proposal aligns more closely with novel R&D vs. R&D capacity development, feel free to reach out to us at pcn@kaust.edu.sa and we will be happy to provide guidance. Ultimately, given the high degree of competition in the CORDAP CAP calls to date, it is likely that those projects that feature strong science, conservation/restoration, and capacity development components will be prioritized for funding.

3. What constitutes a competitive R&D capacity development project?

CORDAP will consider proposals whose primary goal is to increase the capacity of a team or institute to conduct coral reef conservation and/or restoration research. However, this should not be read to mean that providing a “wish list” alone of instruments, infrastructure, personnel, etc. will make for a strong proposal. Instead, these components should be requested and packaged within a well-conceived research plan that outlines clear scientific goals and deliverables. The data and technologies emanating from the projects will not only advance our knowledge of corals and lead to improved ways to save and/or restore their associated habitats, but they can also be strategically exploited to additionally grow local capacity for coral R&D, as well as conservation and restoration (i.e., “disruptive capacity development;” see question #2.).

Examples of characteristics a good R&D Capacity building project will have:

- Works with the technical level of the target audience and builds them to the required level.
- Ensures methods used that are effective for the trainee's situation.
- Identifies and filters out the best candidates for further capacity development.
- Where appropriate, combines interactive theoretical and practical training.
- Builds effective trainers (train the trainer) to amplify the project impact.
- Have integrated longer term support mechanisms and plans.
- In addition to the scientific goals, equipping local communities, universities, and/or NGOs with the knowledge they need to better manage, or even restore, their reefs via incorporation of data emerging from primarily innovative approaches.

Appendix B

Announcing a new category of funding: CORDAP High Reward

CORDAP is pleased to provide early notice of an exciting new funding category: High Reward. The program is intended to support bold, innovative ideas with the potential to become game changers in the global effort to preserve coral reefs. Up to US\$600,000 is provided per project for an initial, stage-gated test of a genuinely transformative idea.

High Reward will operate alongside CORDAP's CAP and CLIP programs. It will focus on ideas that could fundamentally change how tropical and deep-water corals are preserved, restored, adapted or protected, including ideas capable of delivering orders-of-magnitude improvements in cost, scale, speed, capability or impact. Applicants will be expected to define the relevant current baseline, the performance target they believe is achievable, and the environmental and operational conditions under which the proposed solution could realistically be used.

Formal program details are expected in November/December 2026.

What makes this different

High Reward is intended for ideas at the venture end of research and development. The technical risk may be high and many projects may not succeed. That is acceptable. The essential test is that, if an idea does work, it could materially change what is possible for coral reefs.

"The idea does not need to be certain to work. But if it does work, it must have the potential to change the game."

Looking beyond the coral reef community

CORDAP particularly encourages ideas from people and organizations outside the conventional coral reef research community. Advances in engineering, biotechnology, medicine, agriculture, materials science, robotics, artificial intelligence, manufacturing, energy, data science and other fields may offer approaches that have not yet been applied effectively to coral reefs.

Prior coral research experience is not required. However, applicants from outside the coral reef field will need to demonstrate that they understand, or have obtained appropriate advice on, the biological, environmental, operational, and social conditions in which their idea could work.

A staged pathway

Projects will be stage-gated. Applicants will be expected to present a preliminary development pathway with clear tests, and decision points and reasons to stop, redirect, or proceed. Initial funding will be capped at US\$600,000 per project, and applicants should request only what is needed to test the central proposition.

If the initial investment shows that an idea retains genuine promise, CORDAP would work with the proponent to explore funding for the next stage.

What happens next

Further details of the High Reward program, including eligibility, assessment, and submission requirements, will be provided when the program is formally announced in **November/December 2026**.

(www.cordap.org/awards)

Applicants wishing to apply to both competitions (i.e., CAP and High Reward competitions) should tailor their proposals to the characteristics and criteria of the specific competition. If the same (very similar) proposal is submitted to both competitions, applicants should ensure the proposal is still a good fit and meets the criteria for both competitions