

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 USD600,000 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 USD600,000 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.

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