



## **First Call for Project Concepts for BPAF's Marine Conservation Program Grants**

**Bahamas Protected Areas Fund is pleased to announce a Call for Project Concepts for grants supporting marine conservation, climate-smart management, and sustainable blue economy initiatives. These grants aim to empower local communities, NGOs, and government agencies in advancing marine protected areas (MPAs), mangrove management, and coastal resilience efforts.**

### **Application Timeline**

- **Opening Date: August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 at 9:00am EST**
- **Closing Date: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, at 11:55pm EST**

### **1. About the Bahamas Protected Area Fund**

The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) was established in 2014 by an Act of Parliament. The purpose of the Fund is to ensure sustainable financing into perpetuity for the management of the Bahamas National Protected Areas System. Management of protected areas as defined under the Act includes activities related to research, education, and conservation. Protected areas include those established by The Government of The Bahamas as well as areas established for various reasons inclusive of biodiversity conservation, protection of carbon sinks, water resources, wetlands and blue holes, degraded or threatened ecosystems as well as those areas established to aid in mitigating for and adapting to climate change, under relevant multilateral environmental agreements or international conventions.

A copy of the BPAF Act can be found at <http://bahamasprotected.com/bpaf-act/>.

The BPAF website is <http://bahamasprotected.com>.

### **2. The Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation (BDCPMC)**

In November 2024, the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund entered into a Conservation Agreement with The Government of The Bahamas and The Nature Conservancy under the Bahamas Debt Conversion Project for Marine Conservation (BDCPMC). One of its components is the establishment of a **Marine Conservation (MC) Program** within Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) to disburse funding received from the Project to enable the achievement of conservation commitments, which are fully aligned with The Bahamas' national marine and coastal conservation priorities.

### 3. Funding Purpose and Priorities

This call for concept proposals is made to support the capacitation activities and programmatic workplans of NGOs with programs or projects that align with the conservation commitments under the BDCPMC. This funding is available to local non-profit organizations, academia, civil society and research institutions.

**The maximum funding available for successful projects will be \$50,000.00 (USD). Additional funding consideration will be given to special strategic projects.**

Concepts will only be considered for activities that focus on at least one of the following seven (7) conservation priorities. Applicants are encouraged to formulate projects that can serve multiple priorities.

#### 1) Community-Based Marine Conservation and Management Grants

Objective: Support local communities and NGOs in establishing and managing community-led MPAs with climate-smart management plans, including zoning, to promote sustainable use and conservation.

##### *Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Development and implementation of community-driven conservation initiatives
- b. Participatory zoning and management planning
- c. Capacity building for local communities and NGOs in marine resource management
- d. Conditions assessments of existing MPAs
- e. Community engagement and awareness campaigns

#### 2) Climate-Smart Management Planning and Implementation Grants

Objective: Assist government agencies, NGOs, and community groups in developing, approving, and implementing climate-smart management plans for MPAs, aligned with milestones for the following areas important MPAs:

#	National Park	Island
1	Fowl Cays National Park	Abaco
2	Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park	Abaco
3	Andros West Side National Park	Andros
4	Conception Island National Park	Conception Island
5	Moriah Harbour National Park	Exuma
6	Inagua National Park	Inagua
7	Bonefish Pond National Park	New Providence
8	South Berry Islands Marine Reserve	Berry Islands, Andros
9	Exuma (Jewfish Cay) Marine Reserve	Exuma
10	No Name Cay Marine Reserve	Abaco
11	Crab Cay Marine Reserve	Abaco

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Preparation and revision of climate-smart management and zoning plans
- b. Capacity development for agencies and NGOs in climate adaptation and resilience planning
- c. Monitoring and reporting on management plan implementation
- d. Technical assessments for conditions and ecological status of MPAs

### **3) National Mangroves Management Plan Grants**

Objective: Support research, monitoring, and zoning efforts for national mangrove conservation.

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Research and ground truthing
- b. Habitat monitoring and data collection
- c. Zoning of mangrove plans

### **4) Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Project Grants**

Objective: Support mangrove/vegetative restoration and invasive species removal in Grand Bahama, Andros and Long Island.

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Mangrove planting initiatives
- b. Removal of causeways

### **5) Blue Economy and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources Grants**

Objective: Promote sustainable blue economy initiatives that align with conservation goals, including eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, and marine resource utilization.

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Capacity development for NGOs and local communities in blue economy ventures
- b. Innovative livelihood programs supporting conservation goals
- c. Conditions assessments of marine resources for sustainable management
- d. Community-based enterprise development

## **6) Capacity Development and Technical Assistance Grants for NGOs and Communities**

Objective: Enhance the technical and institutional capacity of NGOs and community groups to effectively participate in marine conservation, climate resilience, and blue economy initiatives.

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Training programs on climate-smart management, zoning, and monitoring
- b. Technical assessments and data collection for MPAs
- c. Institutional strengthening for conservation project implementation
- d. Stakeholder engagement and participatory planning

## **7) Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Sharing Grants**

Objective: Support activities that enhance monitoring, reporting, and knowledge dissemination related to MPA management milestones and community conservation efforts.

*Key Focus Areas:*

- a. Development of community-based monitoring systems
- b. Data collection and ecological assessments for conditions and resilience
- c. Knowledge exchange platforms and workshops
- d. Reporting aligned with national and international commitments

## **4. Evaluation Process**

### **1. Phase I – Project Concept Application**

- Call for Proposals will be sent out 30 days before the deadline
- Applicants have 30 days from the start of the call for proposals to submit their concept applications
- Project concept proposals will first be assessed for eligibility based on the information outlined in the sections below
- Only applications that meet the basic criteria will be invited to submit a full proposal in Phase II.

### **2. Phase II – Full Proposal Application**

- Short-listed applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal application, 30 days from notification, that will be independently reviewed by the BPAF Grants Review Committee
- Following this review, the successful full proposals will be approved by the BPAF Board of Directors.

- Once approved by the Board, successful applicants will be notified of the award of a grant and will be required to sign a formal grant agreement prior to the disbursement of any grant funds.

## 5. Eligibility Criteria

Apart from falling within the scope of this special call for proposals, other basic eligibility criteria for grants from BPAF include the following:

1. Grantees must be:
  - a. Legally incorporated NGOs or CBOs and must have been registered with the Registrar General Office for at least one year prior to **August 2025**.
  - b. Local academic institutions and research organizations
  - c. Government agencies and departments
2. Proposed projects must align with the funding purpose and priorities identified in Section 3 above.

**Activities related to the extraction of non-renewable natural resources are NOT eligible for grants from the Fund.**

## 6. Evaluation Criteria

Project concept proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with this BDCPMC First Call for Proposals priority areas.
- Methodology –
  - Clearly articulated project objectives and expected outcomes
  - Implementation plan and timeline
  - Expected project impact/s
  - Realistic budget and narrative - project costs should be reasonable, clearly presented and tied to project activities.
  - Organization capacity and relevant expertise – proposals must demonstrate the organization's ability to execute the project through its internal administrative processes as well as the skills and experience of its staff and/or consultants responsible for executing the project
  - Monitoring and evaluation framework – the proposal must include how the project will be monitored and evaluated for success.
- Alignment with BPAF's Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and Environmental and Social Standards

**All proposals must be signed by the most senior management of the organization or the Chair/President.**

## 7. Reporting

All grant awardees are required to provide periodic progress reports and a final report at the end of the project.

Progress reports will include:

- Narrative Report – a summary of work to date, inclusive of objectives and outputs achieved based on the project’s workplan. It will include
  - Current accomplishments
  - Identification of challenges encountered during the reporting period and solutions for addressing these challenges
  - Activities planned for the next quarter
- Financial Report – A report on expenditure versus the budget for the quarter and cumulative to-date.

Final Narrative and Financial reports must include:

- All deliverables completed through the course of the project
- Lessons learned inclusive of successes and challenges
- Financial audit/report for the entire project

**Successful grantees are advised to allocate sufficient time, personnel and financial resources towards the production of high-quality financial and technical reports.**

## **8. Application Process**

Interested organizations should complete the concept application through the BPAF online portal (<https://bahamasprotected.com/cfp-debt-conversion-marine-conservation-program/>) **no later than 11:55 pm EST on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.**

**Late submissions will not be considered.**

Further information on selection criteria and the application process can also be found on the online portal site.

## **9. Notification of Applicants**

Only applicants selected to proceed to Phase II – the Full Project Proposal Phase, will be notified. BPAF will not be able to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

## **10. Grant Conditions**

Conditions of the grant will be detailed in the grant agreement executed between grantees and BPAF.

## **11. Enquiries**

Enquiries should be directed to [grants@bahamasprotected.com](mailto:grants@bahamasprotected.com).

**Apply Now**