



GREAT BARRIER REEF FOUNDATION TRADITIONAL OWNER

THE NATURE-BASED ECONOMY READINESS GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

FAST FACTS

What is the purpose of this grant program?

The Traditional Owner Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grant Program supports Traditional Owners to understand and develop capability to access nature-based economic opportunities that care for Country whilst also supporting strong livelihoods. Nature-based economies are ways of earning income or creating value or wealth by looking after nature and using natural resources in a sustainable way e.g. ranger programs, plant foods businesses, nature tourism, environmental monitoring, and engaging with carbon markets.

Detail about this grant program can be found on pages 1-2.

What can these grants be used for?

The grants can be used to help Traditional Owners to get ready for, and build strong foundations for, nature-based economic opportunities. This can include gathering mob to discuss nature-based economic ideas, visiting businesses engaging in activities that your community is keen to learn about, setting up governance to manage businesses and money, training in business or finance, developing a nature-based economic plan for your community, getting advice on elements of nature-based business ideas you may already have started to implement or developing stronger finance or administration systems.

A more comprehensive list of example activities can be found on pages 4-5 and a list of eligible and ineligible activities on pages 7-8.

Who can apply?

Reef Traditional Owner groups that can demonstrate interest or previous economic activity related to nature-based economies. A map showing the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area can be found at **Attachment A**

Eligibility criteria apply and can be found on pages 5-6.

How much funding is available?

- Level 1 – Up to \$50,000 for projects up to 12 months in duration
- Level 2 – \$50,000–\$150,000 for projects up to 18 months in duration

Details of each level and example activities can be found on pages 1-2.

What date do applications close?

5:00pm AEST, Wednesday 18 March 2026.

Where do I send my completed application form?

Please send completed application forms to: applications@barrierreef.org by 5:00pm AEST, Wednesday 18 March 2026.

Who can answer questions I may have?

All questions should be emailed to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (the Foundation) Grants Office ONLY at grants@barrierreef.org.

Answers to common questions asked during the application period will be provided as 'Frequently Asked Questions' and posted on the Foundation's website at <https://www.barrierreef.org/what-we-do/grants-and-opportunities/nbe-readiness-grant>.

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1. About the Great Barrier Reef Foundation

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (the Foundation) is the lead charity dedicated to protecting the Great Barrier Reef (the Reef) by funding science, technology, engineering solutions, and on-ground action to ensure its long-term conservation.

The Reef Trust partnership (the Partnership) between the Australian Government and the Foundation is centred on a landmark investment of \$443.3 million to build the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef. See the Foundation's website [Great Barrier Reef Foundation](https://www.barrierreef.org/what-we-do/grants-and-opportunities/nbe-readiness-grant) for more information. The Partnership has allocated \$1.5m to the Nature-based Economy Readiness Grant Program and the Foundation has secured a further \$1m from a secondary source to increase the impact of the program.

2. About the Nature-Based Economy Program

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) has secured funding to develop a Reef Nature-Based Economy (NBE) program from 2024 to 2030. Building on lessons from previous co-designed grant rounds, the program will support the growth of sustainable, culturally grounded economic activities connected to Country, to strengthen economic self-determination. It will recognise and uphold Traditional Owner rights, knowledge, and aspirations—creating opportunities that care for the Reef while strengthening community wellbeing and cultural continuity.

3. About this Request for Applications

These guidelines provide Traditional Owner groups/communities with the information needed to make an informed decision about whether to apply for funding under the Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grant Program. Potential applicants should carefully and completely read these guidelines, the questions in the application form, and the sample Funding Agreement Template before deciding whether or not to apply. The complete package comprises:

- ✓ Grant Guidelines
- ✓ Application Form
- ✓ Sample Funding Agreement Template (including terms and conditions of the funding)
- ✓ Risk Assessment Template

Please also see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section on the Grant Program website for additional information that may be relevant to your application <https://www.barrierreef.org/what-we-do/grants-and-opportunities/nbe-readiness-grant>.

Available funding in the Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grants Program

The structure of the Grant program reflects a strategy to provide relevant opportunity and flexibility to the broadest range of Traditional Owner groups wanting to apply for funds to support project work. The Foundation understands that Traditional Owners are operating at many different stages and have made two funding levels available to make this grant opportunity inclusive and accessible.

There will be a sliding scale of information required to assess each funding level. The complexity of the project and the level of detail required for the application increases as the requested funding amount increases.

Table 1. Available funding levels and example activities under each

Funding Level	Eligible Activities	Available funding
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">for projects that run up to 12 monthsto help Traditional Owner groups build ideas, explore nature-based economies, develop roadmaps or plans	Up to \$50,000

Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for projects to run up to 18 months to develop systems, processes or partnerships for, or strengthen existing nature-based economic initiatives that Traditional Owners group are involved in 	\$50,000–\$150,000
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Co-contributions

The Foundation encourages all applicants to develop and maintain partnerships and to demonstrate value for money through the integration of co-contributions and co-investment where possible, including quantifiable in-kind and cash contributions.

Administration Costs

Projects funded under the Grant Program must not have administration costs that exceed 10% of the funding allocation. Further guidance on administrative cost activities is detailed within the eligibility criteria of these guidelines.

Duration and timeframes

Projects should be ready to start by 1 July 2026 and will have end dates negotiated on a project timeframe suitable for the delivery of outcomes in line with the maximum length under each funding level (i.e. up to 12 months for Level 1 projects and up to 18 months for Level 2 projects). Variations and/or extensions to projects are reviewed by the Foundation on a case-by-case basis and must be requested prior to the project end date.

Monitoring and Reporting

Successful grant recipients will be required to collect and report on project progress and expenditure of funds using reporting templates provided by the Foundation. Progress reporting may be quarterly or six monthly, and a final project report and financial acquittal will be required within 30 days of the project end date. The information sought in these reports will be aligned with the Nature-Based Economy Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, to help the Foundation gauge how well the Program has achieved its objectives.

For the purposes of preparing an application for this grant round, applicants should ensure that project budgets account for time and resourcing required to meet monitoring and reporting obligations, which may include collection of data points throughout the project for reporting purposes.

Key Dates for Applicants

Table 2. Key dates for the NBE Grant Round.

Applications open	Monday 9 February 2026
Online information session (webinar)	17 February 2026, 11am
Applications close	5:00pm AEST, Wednesday 18 March 2026
Successful applicants announced	Week of 20 April 2026
Funding Agreement (contract) negotiated	Late April 2026
Projects start	No later than 1 July 2026
Last possible end date	31 December 2027

Information Session

During the period while applications are open, the Foundation will host a public information session (a webinar) to provide an overview of the process, documentation, expectations and other grant project requirements e.g. organisational policies, insurances and risk assessment. The webinar will also provide an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions.

Attendance is recommended but not mandatory. Questions can be emailed to grants@barrierreef.org, and if received before Tuesday 17 February 2026 will be addressed during the information session, where possible.

A recording of the webinar and all questions and answers will be posted on the Foundation's website shortly after the event.

Table 3. Information session.

Time	Commencing at 11am AEST
Date	Tuesday 17 February 2026
Format	Webinar (via Microsoft Teams)
Webinar Registration Link	https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/984976a6-0d10-44fc-a406-1727ec767a3b@8d01dd1f-4b20-4406-a047-8d15797ba229
Notes	Please log on at 10.55am to ensure access to the platform. Registrations can take 5 minutes to go through once the meeting has started.

4. About the Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grant Program

Scope

The Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grants Program (the Grant Program) provides a total of \$2.5 million in grant funding to eligible Traditional Owners to build readiness for development of and participation in Nature-based economic opportunities.

Nature-based economies are ways of earning income or creating value or wealth by looking after nature and using natural resources in a sustainable way. They are built on the idea that caring for Country can also support strong livelihoods. Some examples are:

- Fee-for-service ranger programs – where rangers are paid to manage land and sea, control weeds, monitor wildlife, and protect cultural sites.
- Plant foods and nature tourism businesses – like bush food enterprises or cultural tours that share knowledge and connect visitors to Country.
- Environmental monitoring – collecting data about the health of ecosystems to support science and government planning.
- Carbon and biodiversity markets – earning income by protecting or restoring landscapes, which helps reduce carbon in the atmosphere or protect threatened species.

These activities support jobs and businesses while keeping culture strong and Country healthy.

In partnership with Traditional Owners from our Technical Working Groups and Traditional Owner Advisory group, the Foundation adopted a co-design approach to plan our previous Traditional Owner grant rounds. The experiences and collective learnings provided by grant recipients, have been considered in the design of this Traditional Owner focussed grant opportunity.

The Grant Program is focussed on supporting Traditional Owners to build foundational awareness, ideas, systems and processes, and structures to actively participate in and develop their own aspirations for the Reef Nature-Based Economy. Reef Traditional Owners have diverse interests, capacities, aspirations and histories in culturally grounded economic activities. The Grants Program provides the opportunity for Traditional Owners to build on what they have, are doing already, or are interested in, towards economic self-determination that is grounded in Country, community and culture.

Objectives of the Nature-Based Economy Readiness Grant Program

The aim of the Grant Program is to achieve benefits for both Traditional Owners and the Great Barrier Reef. Achieving this aim may look different for every applicant. Projects should align with one or more of the objectives shown below. Examples of activities have been provided for each of the objectives, but the list is not exhaustive – Traditional Owners can look at how their own priorities and aspirations might fit into these funding areas.

Objective 1: Explore economic development ideas that are nature-based

This might look like:

- hold on-country workshops or conversations to explore nature-based economic opportunities that may be relevant for your community
- engage a specialist to assist your community through exploring ideas
- meet with other communities that are running nature-based economic initiatives that you want to observe, share and learn from
- assistance with writing-up ideas that you have thought of, so that you can seek funding or partnership
- assistance to identify community aspirations or goals for economic development
- activities that build an understanding of the requirements, risk and potential costs, income and other benefits generated through entering nature-based economic opportunities.
- supporting Traditional Owners to explore and learn about environmental financing investment opportunities e.g. Blue Carbon, or biodiversity markets
- identifying and discussions with partners that you may wish to work with for economic development through nature-based Economy

Objective 2: Access training, learning and development opportunities that will assist in strengthening sustainable economic activity

This might look like:

- training in project or organisation administration as a foundation to support economic activities
- training or development in grant-seeking, reporting or acquittal of funding
- development activities that build capacity or training programs and key educational pieces that focus on increasing skills and capabilities of your community to start a nature-based economic project or activity
- getting a consultant to support business or finance training or mentoring

Objective 3: Build business, administrative or project readiness for Traditional Owner groups.

This might look like:

- recruiting staff that can support overall project management, co-ordination, administration and reporting, grant applications, office set-up
- Setting up systems or processes for banking, finance or administration to assist in the operation of a business or project
- getting advice on intellectual property and cultural knowledge protection
- setting up business basics like workplace health and safety manuals, standard operating procedures
- review or development of Healthy Country Plans that include monitoring plans
- purchase of equipment that enhances or improves capacity for business readiness, project readiness or data management.

Objective 4: Build governance readiness for economic development and business activity

This might look like:

- assistance to develop the appropriate governance model for your community
- registering governance groups and getting help with the paperwork
- activities that build your community's shared understanding of good governance for culture, community, and economy
- doing courses or shared training on governance
- Setting up governance systems and processes
- developing and documenting governance arrangements that can facilitate projects or business decision making

Objective 5: Create a simple business plan or economic roadmap

This might look like:

- getting assistance to develop a business plan for an existing idea
- getting assistance to develop an economic roadmap for your community, identifying what opportunities are available that match your community's interests, strengths and context
- training or facilitation of workshops to test and turn ideas on economic opportunities into plans.

5. Eligibility criteria

Who can apply?

The Nature-based Economy Readiness Grant Program targets coastal Traditional Owner groups (with established or emerging governance arrangements) that have responsibility for caring for sea Country in the Great Barrier Reef. A map showing the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area can be found at [Attachment A: Map of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area](#) .

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet all the following eight criteria:

1. Applicants who apply for this must be a Traditional Owner legal entity, **or** Traditional Owner groups without legal entities at the closing date for applications must be represented or auspiced by a legal entity who may apply on their behalf (this includes but is not restricted to a peak body or regional natural resource management organisation). The legal entity will be legally responsible for meeting the contractual obligations of the agreement with the Foundation. Traditional Owner groups can nominate what type of entity they would like to use to engage with the project for instance:
 - a) an incorporated association
 - b) a body corporate
 - c) a company
 - d) a cooperative society an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander corporation or incorporated association, or
 - e) a trust duly constituted.
2. Be a Traditional Owner group for the area where the work / project is proposed (or have culturally appropriate permissions where the project may cover multiple estates)
3. Have legal access to the area(s) where the project will take place.
4. Accept the terms and conditions of the application and the specified terms in the agreement templates.
5. Confirm that that all actual, perceived and/or potential conflicts of interest are declared, and a management plan is proposed.
6. Hold or be willing to hold the required insurances: Workers Compensation; Public Liability (minimum required: \$20,000,000 per occurrence); Professional Indemnity Insurance (minimum required: \$5,000,000) and Motor Vehicles and Plant and Equipment Insurance (if applicable).
7. Have developed and implemented comprehensive WHS policies and procedures for the project, or is willing to undergo a WHS risk assessment, take all reasonable steps to manage identified risks, and undergo specific training or qualifications that the Foundation recommends prior to commencing the project.
8. Have a project that is ready to commence by 1 July 2026.

Who is NOT eligible to apply?

The following groups or organisations are not eligible to apply:

- regional natural resource management organisations (unless auspicing a Traditional Owner group(s))
- peak industry groups or umbrella bodies (unless auspicing a Traditional Owner group(s)), or
- all levels of government.

The following are not eligible to apply for a grant and are ALSO not eligible to auspice a project:

- Individuals, or
- organisations that have, at the application closing date, any overdue final reports or acquittals for other Foundation grant programs.

What activities and expenses can and cannot be funded?

Only projects that clearly meet the objectives and outcomes of this Grant Program will be eligible for funding under the Grant Program.

To be **eligible** for funding the project must meet the following:

- project activities must be focussed on developing skills and capacity for Traditional Owners directly connected to Nature-based economic opportunities or initiatives
- project reports from existing grants with the Foundation must be completed and information shared with the Foundation, and
- projects must be completed within the timeframe specified each of the funding levels (see Table 1).

Whilst not exhaustive, the list below provides examples of the categories of activities and expenditures that would be considered eligible or ineligible for funding as part of an application under the Grant Program. A list of example activities that might be undertaken in projects funded was included in the earlier section on funding levels.

Activities or specific expenditure may be **ineligible** because the Foundation determines it does not directly support the achievement of the planned project outcomes or is contrary to the spirit and intention of the grant.

Eligible activity types and expenditure

- Project management costs required to deliver the project
- Project delivery costs including staff, Elders fees, contractors, consultants, materials and appropriate travel and accommodation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Data analysis and synthesis
- Communication and engagement including workshops, cultural camps etc.
- Administrative costs* required to deliver the project but must not exceed 10% of the funding allocation

**Administrative costs include but are not limited to, office accommodation, office equipment hire, phone/internet costs, electricity costs, printing/photocopying, insurance costs, accounting costs*

Ineligible activities

- Projects that have commenced prior to funding allocation under this grant program
- Project proposals by the applicant with the purpose of distributing funds to other parties who are not contractors to the project and who have not been clearly identified in the grant application
- Projects that relate to on-ground activities outside the World Heritage Area as defined by the map provided in Attachment A of this Guidelines document.
- Activities that are likely to have an adverse environmental impact
- Costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application (including this application) or related documentation
- Administrative costs that exceed 10% of the funding allocation

Note: Items that were not budgeted in original application will not be funded.

Are there other reasons that would make a project not suitable for funding

Yes. A project would be considered *ineligible* in the following situations:

Other reasons for ineligibility

- the assessment panel cannot relate the project to the objectives of the Grant Program or are contrary to the spirit and intention of the Grant Program
- the funding requested is for the purpose of distributing funds to other parties who are not contractors to the project and who have not been clearly identified in the grant application
- the project involves major construction work or an acquisition of land or other real property
- the project involves asset purchases over \$10,000
- the grant requested by the applicant is a duplication of funding with other investors for delivering the same activities by the same applicant.
- The project involves the repatriation of human remains and significant objects from international and Australian museums and institutions
- the project involves funding to support the public display of objects (such as museum facilities or displays within cultural centres)
- the project involves Native Title and Cultural Heritage work—heritage surveys and connection reports conducted specifically in support of Native Title claims including heritage surveys or site clearance in relation to development proposals
- activities that would be considered part of a local, territory or state government's normal responsibilities or activities that are required under Commonwealth, state or local government law.

Are there funding limitations on activities?

Activities with funding limitations

- Administrative support and operational expenses (e.g. office accommodation, office equipment hire, phone/internet costs, electricity costs, printing/photocopying, insurance costs, financial accounting/auditing will only be supported up to 10% of the total requested project funding.
- Audit/acquittal costs will not be funded in excess of \$3000.
- Hire or lease of vehicles will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that this is essential to completing specific project phases or outputs detailed in the project plan.
- Purchase of plant and equipment up to the value of \$10,000 may be funded only where essential to the achievement of project outcomes.
- Salary expenses will only be funded where these expenses are attributable to a discrete project with measurable outcomes detailed in a project plan. Funding for salaried positions related to the normal ongoing operations of an organisation will **not** be funded. Applications may include requests for funding to engage consultants or contractors with relevant knowledge and/or specialist expertise needed to complete the project. Where an application is made for funding of salaries and/or labour expenses, the application must demonstrate value for money and include a description of the activities to be undertaken by the project personnel, consultants or contractors and the skills and qualifications required for the role.
- Reasonable travel costs are accepted to support travel that is complementary to the outcomes of the project. Costs associated with overseas travel will **not** be funded.

6. How applications are assessed

The Grant Program is a merit-based, competitive process with defined funding limits. Only the strongest proposals that best meet the assessment criteria will be funded.

In order to give your application the best chance for success please consider the following:

- answer every question in the application form
- the applicant should be the owner of the bank account into which the grant (if successful) will be paid. The legal entity will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Foundation and will be legally responsible for the proper acquittal of any funds awarded. Persons signing applications and funding acceptance forms must be duly authorised to do so by their group or organisation.
- the start date for the project should take into account project preparation time.
- projects can run no later than 31 December 2027 (or as stipulated by the timeline of the type of grant applied for, e.g. Level 1 grants must be completed no later than 12 months from contract start date).
- the amount applied for should be exclusive of GST. If you are registered for GST, the Foundation will add 10% to your grant.
- the assessment panel may have little or no knowledge of what you do. As decisions are based on the information provided, ensure that your application is clear, comprehensive and concise.
- applications that include false or misleading information may be excluded from further assessment.

Applications will be assessed through the following stages.

Stage one—Eligibility assessment / application screening

Each application will be screened against the eligibility questions listed in the table below to check that:

- the applicant organisation is eligible to apply,
- the application has been completed in full and all essential information has been provided, and
- the applicant does not have any outstanding obligations for other projects funded by the Foundation.

Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be progressed to **Stage two**.

Stage one eligibility criteria
Has the applicant accepted the conditions of application?
Is the Traditional Owner applicant a legal entity?
Has the applicant confirmed that all actual, perceived and/or potential conflicts of interest relating to the grant project have been declared?
Does the applicant hold, or are they willing to hold, the required insurances?
Is the grant funding which has been applied for within the limits described for Level 1 or Level 2?
Does the applicant's project proposal clearly relate to helping the Reef?
Is the Traditional Owner group/s for the area/s within which the project is proposed managing the project or have they provided written endorsement for the applicant to conduct the project?

Stage two—Assessment against criteria

Eligible applications will then be assessed by an assessment panel against the following criteria:

Criteria	Description of Criteria	Weighting
1. The project is Traditional Owner-led <i>(section 3.3 of Application Form)</i>	The applicant has described how members of their Traditional Owner group(s) are taking part in the project including how were they involved in developing or planning how the project would be designed, and how they will be involved or employed in the project?	20%
	The applicant has indicated how Traditional Owners are leading and responsible for project delivery and outcomes in the project summary and activity descriptions.	
	The applicant has provided letters of support from Elders and/or community leaders that show consultation of agreement with the project (this is an important piece of the assessment).	
2. Project summary— including the need for and potential benefits of the project and project outcomes <i>(section 2.3 of Application Form)</i>	The applicant has provided a summary of the project outlining what they plan to do and how the work will be done. Summary includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project objectives and need • expected outcome(s) • activities proposed to meet each of your objectives • an explanation about whether the project builds on earlier project/s or will establish the foundations for future success • identification of the specific activities that require funding • identification of any other funding sources you have for the project an explanation of the importance of Nature-based Economy to your Traditional Owner group and how this project contributes to helping Country through economic development.	16%
	The applicant has clearly identified which level of grant category is being applied for (Level 1 or Level 2) and demonstrates an understanding of the activities allowed under the grant.	
	All partners are listed and the applicant has identified how these partnerships add value to the project (e.g. detail partner expertise, contributions and identify any additional cash or in-kind support).	
3. Project plan <i>(section 3.1 of Application Form)</i>	In the Project Plan the applicant has outlined the stages, activities and resources required to complete the project. The level of detail provided matches the cost and complexity of the project.	16%
	The applicant has identified any approvals which are needed for the project (e.g. government or local government permissions, landholder consent etc).	
	The applicant has demonstrated value for money and integrated other funding or co-investment** opportunities, including quantifiable in-kind* and cash contributions.	



Criteria	Description of Criteria	Weighting
4. Project budget (value for money) (section 3.4 of Application Form)	The applicant has developed a budget in line with the size and nature of the project and has provided clear and accurate descriptions of costs and where appropriate has provided quotes or cost estimates based on previous work.	16%
	The applicant has demonstrated value for money and integrated other funding or co-investment** opportunities, including quantifiable in-kind* and cash contributions.	
	In cases where assets over \$5,000 and expenses relating to services and/or consultants over \$15,000 are included, the applicant has provided evidence of a quote.	
	The applicant has shown all figures as <u>GST exclusive</u> .	
5. Capacity of the organisation to deliver the project (section 4.1 of Application Form)	The applicant has outlined the governance arrangements that are in place that will help guide and implement the project.	16%
	The applicant has clearly described the available resources and capabilities held by the Traditional Owner group/s that are relevant to the delivery of the project, including any relevant skills and experience that will assist in successful project implementation.	
	The applicant has provided examples of relevant project work that have previously completed, and any lessons learnt that might be applied to help support the successful delivery of this project.	
	The applicant has selected a project team (key personnel) with relevant expertise and capabilities for their role.	
6. Ability to communicate project outcomes with Traditional Owners and the broader community (section 5.1 of Application Form)	The applicant has described how community members will participate, share and promote the work of the project.	16%

***In-kind support** can include volunteer time (valued at \$45.63/hour as per Volunteering Queensland figures), partner support or external support.

****Co-Contribution** is an investment that is cash or a contractually recognised in-kind service/expense such as; staff salary, volunteer time, specialist advisory services, landholder time for events and work, administration costs (office costs, electricity, water, gas etc), building costs (meeting rooms, office, labs) and equipment.

Stage three—Approval by Delegate

The assessment panel will make a recommendation to the GBRF Delegate to approve those applications which meet the criteria in Stages one and two, for funding.

Stage four—Notification of applicants

Applicants will be informed in writing whether their application is successful or not.

Successful projects will be publicly announced and may be published on the Foundation's website. Published details may include:

- name of the successful Traditional Owner group (and the auspicing organisation if applicable)
- location of the successful applicant
- project term
- title and description of the project and its intended outcomes, and
- amount of funding being awarded.

The Foundation will keep all confidential information of the applicant which is obtained as part of the grant application process confidential. However, the Foundation may disclose confidential information to its personnel, contractors or advisors for the purposes of administering this grant program; or as required by law; or where the Foundation is required to comply with any provision of the Partnership Agreement in respect to confidential information.

The Foundation may also share applications with relevant Queensland or Federal Government agencies if there is the potential for an otherwise unsuccessful application to be funded directly by Government.

Applicants should advise if they do not wish their application to be shared in this way.

7. How to apply and lodge an application

Applications for the Nature-based Economy readiness Grants Program open on Monday 9 February 2026 and close at 5.00pm AEST, **Wednesday 18 March 2026**.

Applicants are required to complete an application form and submit supporting documentation online to applications@barrierreef.org by the closing date.

Only ONE application form may be submitted by each group. If multiple applications are submitted, only the first one received will be assessed and considered.

Except in the case of unintentional errors and omissions, or verified online technical difficulties, applicants will not be permitted to amend their applications after they have been received.

The submission of additional information relating to an application after the closing date, can only be made if requested by the Foundation. In the event of the applicant having made an unintentional error or omission, the Foundation will decide whether to accept an amendment or additional information on a case-by-case basis.

Facilitating Traditional Owner leadership in the application

One aim of the Grant program is to support and facilitate Traditional Owner economic self-determination.

To be successful, applications must demonstrate Traditional Owner leadership in the conception and design of the proposal and demonstrate how the proposal aligns with Traditional Owner goals and aspirations. This can be demonstrated through letters of support from members of your Traditional Owner group but can also be including your Traditional Owner organisation.

Applications that do not adequately demonstrate community support will receive a low score in the assessment process.

Conflict of interest

Applicants are required to declare as part of their application, any actual, perceived and/or potential conflicts of interest that would, or may impact on, or prevent the applicant proceeding with the project or any funding agreement an applicant may enter into with the Foundation.

Where an applicant subsequently identifies that an actual, perceived and/or potential conflict of interest exists or might arise in relation to their application for funding, the applicant must inform the Foundation in writing immediately.

A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if the applicant or any of its personnel:

- has a relationship (whether professional, commercial or personal) with a party who is able to influence the application assessment process, such as a Foundation staff member
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant in carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain as a result of the granting of funding under the program.

Applicant Checklist

Applicants should take into consideration the guidance and rules provided in these Guidelines and the Application Form.

Applicants are to ensure they:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> have read and understood the guidelines | <input type="checkbox"/> submit the completed application by emailing it to applications@barrierreef.org and attaching all supporting documentation necessary for assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have read, understood, and accept the terms and conditions outlined within the guidelines and under the proposed agreement template | <input type="checkbox"/> provide confirmation that all actual, perceived and/or potential conflicts of interest relating to the project have been declared |
| <input type="checkbox"/> complete the application form in its entirety | <input type="checkbox"/> have not included information that is false or misleading (applications considered to contain false or misleading information may be excluded from further assessment). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> provide current and accurate information | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> only provide attachments that are directly relevant, are concise and clearly labelled | |

Incomplete or late applications

The Foundation will not accept late applications, except in exceptional circumstances which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Unless requested by the Foundation, **no** additional written or verbal explanation, or further documentation, will be accepted after the closing date.

Applications that are incomplete, do not include the required supporting documentation, and/or do not address the assessment criteria may be deemed **ineligible**. The Foundation will decide whether to accept an amendment or additional information on a case-by-case basis.

8. Questions and further information

Applicants may contact the Foundation's Grants Office while preparing applications to ensure their proposal meets basic requirements. Grants Office staff will not be able to provide feedback on draft applications.

Applicants must not initiate contact with any other Foundation personnel regarding the grant program during the application or assessment phase, however questions can be emailed to the Foundation's Grants Office at grants@barrierreef.org.

Answers to questions asked during the application period will be provided as 'Frequently Asked Questions' for the benefit of all potential applicants and will be posted at

<https://www.barrierreef.org/what-we-do/grants-and-opportunities/nbe-readiness-grant>.

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared as a guide only and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the information contained in this publication is accurate at the time of publication.

9. Types of Nature-Based Economic Activity

To help your application, you may be asking **"What types of nature-based economy are Traditional Owners accessing and engaging in at the moment?"**

Great Question. We don't have a complete list – we are hoping that Traditional Owners and other partners in this space will help build a comprehensive list of opportunities. Here are some NBE types that we have gathered together.

Land and Sea Management

- Fee-for-service ranger programs (land and sea)
- Fire management (including cultural burning)
- Weed and feral animal control
- Coastal erosion management
- Marine debris removal and ghost net recovery
- Ecological restoration and revegetation
- Waterway and wetland management

Traditional Knowledge-Based Enterprises

- Bush foods and bush medicine cultivation and sale
- Native seed collection and nurseries

Cultural burning and fire management consulting

- Cultural knowledge education (on-Country learning experiences)
- Indigenous ecological consulting services

Carbon and Environmental Markets

- Carbon farming and sequestration projects (e.g. savanna burning, reforestation)
- Biodiversity offsets and habitat restoration projects
- Payments for ecosystem services (e.g. for water quality or habitat protection)

Tourism and Cultural Enterprises

- Cultural and eco-tourism businesses (land or sea-based)
- Wildlife and reef tours (guided by Traditional Owners)
- Cultural camps and on-Country experiences
- Nature-based art and craft sales
- Cultural event hosting and performance

Science, Monitoring, and Innovation

- Environmental monitoring and citizen science projects
- Sea Country planning and monitoring
- Drone and tech-based land/sea surveys
- Traditional Owner data sovereignty and knowledge-sharing platforms
- Reef health monitoring programs

Sustainable Products and Supply Chains

- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
- Harvesting and processing native foods (e.g. Kakadu plum, wattle seed)
- Ethical trade and certified sustainable products
- Native timber or fibre products



Attachment A: Map of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area boundary



Source: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (2014), *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2014*. Available:

https://elibrary.gbrmpa.gov.au/jspui/bitstream/11017/2856/5/InBrief_accessible_low%20res.pdf, accessed 11/03/2022.



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