

CORDAP Decision Support Systems for Corals (CDSS-C 2026)

Call for Proposals

Call Timeline	
Call Opens	18 March 2026
Webinars (Registration link)	April 09 th 2026 12 PM UTC
Proposal Submission Deadline	20 th May 2026
Anticipated Notification Date	August 2026
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

This Call is issued in accordance with CORDAP procurement and commissioning principles and constitutes a **Call for Tenders** rather than a research grant call.

The Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP) invites proposals under a **Call for Tenders** for the development of a **Decision Support System (DSS) for coral reef conservation and restoration planning**. This call is designed to support the development of a single, high-impact, AI-powered end-to-end decision support tool that will be **owned by CORDAP** and made available, free of charge, for global coral conservation, restoration, and management applications.

Unlike the Coral Accelerator Program (CAP), this call includes **only one full proposal submission** and is **not a staged process** (i.e., concept note followed by invited full proposal submission). The scope of this call is intentionally narrow and highly targeted.

The total funding available under this call is **USD 1.5 million**.

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1. Overview and Objectives

The objective of this call is to commission the design, development, validation, and delivery of a robust, scalable, and user-oriented stand-alone **Decision Support System (DSS) for coral reef conservation and restoration planning** that assimilates all available information, data and knowledge to enable evidence-based decision-making across conservation, restoration, adaptation, and risk management contexts. Coral reefs refer, for this purpose, to shallow-water tropical coral reefs.

The DSS is expected to: - Integrate, using AI powered by a conversational interface, diverse data streams (e.g. taxonomic, ecological, environmental, infrastructure, governance, climatic, socioeconomic) and validated knowledge (scientific literature, policy documents, authoritative assessments) - Support quantitative approaches to decision-making across spatial and temporal scales - Enable scenario building, prioritization, planning, and evaluation of coral interventions - Be designed with end-users and stakeholders through co-design principles - Be deployable across different geographic scales in support of decisions referring to coral conservation, restoration and management extending from global, to regional to, national to individual reef scales, and socioeconomic contexts, including LMICs

2. Eligibility and Application Limits

CDSS-C funds international teams. 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 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, be Lead-Applicant or Co-Applicant, then they cannot make a profit out of the developed Decision Support System.

It is strongly encouraged that the country where the research and technology-development activities are to take place be the country of one of the Applicants

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

3. Scope and Projects Supported in this Call

This call is strictly limited to proposals focused on the development of a Decision Support System for corals.

3.1 Project Type Supported

Only **Decision Support System (DSS)** projects are eligible. This includes: - Decision-making frameworks and platforms - Integrated models and analytics - Risk assessment and scenario analysis tools - Planning, scenario development, species and site assessment and selection, prioritization, and monitoring dashboards - Tools that guide allocation of limited resources for maximum coral impact

No other project types, priority areas, or thematic investments are supported under this call.

3.2 Out of Scope

The following are explicitly **not eligible** under this call: - Standalone ecological or biological research - Intervention development unrelated to decision support - Capacity-building-only projects - Monitoring programs without a decision-support component - Tools intended for private ownership or commercialization

4. Funding Terms and Conditions

Funding Available

- **Total Call Budget:** USD 1.5 million
- **Number of Awards:** One (1)
- **Project Duration:** 12–36 months

The selected tender will be funded through a single award agreement with CORDAP.

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.

5. Ownership, Intellectual Property, and Use Rights

This Call is issued as a Call for Tenders and will result in a contractual commissioning arrangement.

This call is issued as a Call for Tenders.

- The Decision Support System developed under this call will be owned by CORDAP, while the team developing the system retains the right to publish it, in part or whole, in the peer-reviewed scientific literature, which CORDAP encourages.
- All foreground IP generated will vest with CORDAP
- Contractors will grant CORDAP full, perpetual, and global rights to use, modify, adapt, and deploy the tool
- Open access and transparency principles will apply to outputs, documentation, and non-sensitive data.
- Further details will be specified in the Award Agreement.

5.1 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.).

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

6 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.

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.

7 Proposal Preparation and Online Tender Submission

This Call follows a **single-stage tender submission process**.

Applicants must submit: - A **Full Technical Proposal** - A **Detailed Budget** - Workplan and milestones - Governance and management structure - Evidence of relevant experience and capacity

No concept notes will be accepted. All submissions must be made through the [myCORDAP portal](#). The complete application package and all related documents will be available on the portal as well as on the **CORDAP funding webpage**.

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 \$1.5M**.

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

Proposal submission templates (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 completed 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 Proposal Budget

The maximum allowable budget per project is \$1.5M. Budgets must be prepared using the supplied budget template.

8.1 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.

8.2 Ineligible Costs

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

8.3 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.

8.4 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 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.

9 Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Process

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

Tenders will be assessed competitively and comparatively against the criteria below.

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- 1. Relevance and Alignment**
 - Clear focus on decision support systems for corals
 - Alignment with CORDAP's mission and global coral needs
- 2. Technical Excellence**
 - Robust system architecture and methodology
 - Appropriateness of models, data integration, and analytics
- 3. Usability and End-User Focus**
 - Co-design approach with practitioners and decision-makers
 - Practical applicability across regions and contexts
- 4. Team Capability and Track Record**
 - Demonstrated experience in DSS development, modelling, and coral or environmental systems
- 5. Deliverability and Risk Management**
 - Realistic workplan, milestones, and risk mitigation strategies
- 6. Value for Money**
 - Cost-effectiveness and efficient use of the USD 1.5M budget

10 Award Reporting and Payment Schedule and Deliverables

The successful tenderer will be required to: - Deliver defined technical milestones and system releases - Provide regular progress and financial reports - Submit full technical documentation and user manuals - Support knowledge transfer and handover to CORDAP

Payment will be linked to achievement of agreed milestones.

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.

10.1 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.

11 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.**

11.1 Proposal Submission package

1. Proposal Template (including Gantt Chart and biographical information form)
2. 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.

Application Assistance and Enquiries

All enquiries regarding this Call for Tenders should be directed to:

CORDAP Funding Team

Email: pcn@kaust.edu.sa

Annex A: Public-Facing Call Summary

CORDAP Call for Tenders: Decision Support Systems for Corals

CORDAP is launching a targeted Call for Tenders to commission the development of a **global Decision Support System (DSS) for corals and coral reefs**. The selected consortium will design and deliver a practical, scalable tool to support evidence-based decision-making for coral conservation, restoration, and adaptation.

Key Features of the Call - Total funding available: **USD 1.5 million** - Award type: **Single commissioned contract (Call for Tenders)** - Project duration: **12–36 months** - Submission process: **Single-stage full proposal** - Tool ownership: **CORDAP**

What We Are Funding - Integrated decision support systems for corals - Planning, prioritisation, and risk assessment tools - Models and platforms that guide effective allocation of resources - User-focused tools co-designed with practitioners and decision-makers

What Is Not Funded - Standalone research projects - Biological or ecological studies without a DSS focus - Capacity-building-only or monitoring-only initiatives

Who Can Apply - International consortia of at least three organisations - Teams must include organisations from at least two countries, one of which must be a low- or middle-income country - Eligibility rules mirror those of the CORDAP Coral Accelerator Program (CAP)

The resulting Decision Support System will be owned by CORDAP and made available for global coral reef applications.

Further details are provided in the full Call for Tenders document.

This Call for Tenders is issued by CORDAP. CORDAP reserves the right to amend or withdraw the call at any time.