

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FUND 2022-2024

Program Overview and Grant Application Guidelines

I. Introduction

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) established the Sustainable Fisheries Fund (SFF) in 2002 to promote ecologically sustainable fishing practices by supporting fishery improvement efforts of small-scale and strategically positioned fisheries, using the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification process as the primary tool. Since then, the sustainable seafood movement has evolved to include more pathways to MSC-level sustainability performance, including Fair Trade certification and Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs).

Today, seafood industry stakeholders, advocates, journalists and others have helped establish a new and important focus on ensuring human rights in international fisheries and have built broad agreement on the need to embed social responsibility within the concept of sustainability alongside ecological responsibility.

Throughout this evolution, across 20 years of programming, SFF has served as a partner to sustainability-oriented fisheries seeking to improve their practices, helping to offset costs of assessments, improvement projects, and certifications. Through its project-scale grantmaking, SFF has also worked to strengthen and expand certification-based fishery sustainability initiatives and the FIP framework, to help markets drive positive change worldwide.

In 2022, toward the goal of further centering social equity and human rights within fisheries sustainability, RLF is relaunching SFF to support FIPs worldwide to implement, in parallel with environmental improvements, the [Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy](#) (HRSRP) adopted by FisheryProgress in May 2021.

II. SFF Grantmaking Strategy

SFF seeks to improve the environmental sustainability and the social responsibility of international seafood production through grantmaking that leverages and strengthens existing independent, sustainability-focused fishery certification and transparency programs.

SFF's current focus is to provide support for FIPs worldwide that address social responsibility through implementation of the HRSRP, and fulfill the following criteria:

Committed to sustainability

Fisheries that are the focus of a project should be able to demonstrate commitment to the following goals and principles, and a pathway to achieving them:

- Improving the environmental sustainability of the fishery, including establishing healthy, productive fish populations, minimizing fishing impacts on the surrounding ecosystem, and implementing an effective fishery management system;
- Respecting and protecting the human rights of workers within the fishery, through identifying, publicly documenting, and addressing risks to human rights and social responsibility within the fishery.
- Supporting active participation in the FIP by fishers, workers, and/or their representatives;
- Addressing social equity in the communities of the fishery the applicant proposes for improvement, as applicable;
- A commitment to transparent public reporting of environmental- and social performance, findings, and corporate governance.

Prospective grantees should familiarize themselves with FisheryProgress reporting requirements (available at [Resources for FIPs](#)), as well as the [HRSRP](#). Questions about these requirements may be submitted to FisheryProgress (contact@fisheryprogress.org). Applicants interested in coaching support for FIPs implementing the HRSRP can inquire with the FIP community of practice (contact@fipcop.org).

Represent the diversity of global fisheries

SFF seeks to support broad, international uptake of the HRSRP in order to institutionalize human rights and social responsibility as intrinsic to fisheries sustainability across global seafood markets and accelerate creation of a knowledge base in HRSRP implementation across geographies and fishery types.

To support these goals, SFF will prioritize grantmaking that builds a diverse portfolio of FIP investments. Characteristics that will be taken into account include (but are not limited to): geography, target species and gear types, market destination, size of organization serving as FIP lead, financial need, proportion of market (local or international) represented by the fishery, supply chain segment, and FIP participants (e.g., cooperative, single company, trade association, worker representative, non-governmental organization (NGO), government agency, etc.).

Apply leverage to markets

A proposed project should be working toward increased sustainability through public reporting on [FisheryProgress](#), and ultimately increase the market impact of fisheries that are certified as sustainable by MSC or Fair Trade. Such fisheries, which may be small or large-scale, include those that exhibit any of the following qualities:

- Supply seafood that is traded domestically or internationally in transparent markets;
- Are seafood sources for brands sold by major retailers and food-service businesses;
- Supply regionally significant seafood;
- Encourage improvement and certification by other similar fisheries, either through competitive pressure or demonstration of application of MSC or Fair Trade standards;
- Are fisheries whose certification or human rights and social responsibility risk assessment would increase confidence in fishery improvement and certification processes among stakeholders such as government agencies, seafood buyers, and consumers.

Capability and dedication to achieve and sustain environmental and social improvements

An applicant for SFF funding should be able to demonstrate:

- The capability and relationships needed to carry out essential elements of the project, such as convening members of the fishery and other stakeholders, coordinating with government agencies, and managing project finances;
- The potential to sustain improvements beyond the conclusion of the grant period;
- Its integrity as a grantee partner, through explanation of how SFF grant funding will be used for charitable purposes, and its commitment to documentation of completed activities and expenditures at the conclusion of the grant period.

Catalytic investment

SFF funding must serve to stimulate formation and advancement of FIPs, including implementation of the HRSRP. In some cases, this may also include progress toward MSC or Fair Trade certifications that might not otherwise occur.

III. Eligible Applicants

Eligible projects

SFF grantmaking will advance integration of the HRSRP into new and existing FIPs worldwide working within the [FisheryProgress](#) framework. This includes support for the creation and launch of new FIPs, and support for existing FIPs now required to implement the HRSRP in addition to existing workplans.

For both new and existing FIPs, SFF grants will support implementation of all required and voluntary components of the HRSRP, based on the results of a FIP's mandatory self-evaluation. For example, SFF will support FIP completion of HRSRP Component 1 (establishing or improving a grievance mechanism, making fishers aware of their rights); Component 2 (completion of a risk assessment using the Social Responsibility Assessment Tool, public reporting of results, and development and implementation of a follow-on workplan); and Component 3 (voluntarily exceeding minimum requirements in Components 1 and 2), irrespective of the results of the Component 1 self-evaluation required of all FIPs.¹

SFF seeks the following types of projects for potential grant funding:

- Design, and launch of basic and comprehensive FIPs, consistent with [Conservation Alliance FIP guidelines and definitions](#),² and with explicit integration of required and optional components of the HRSRP.
- For active FIPs listed in good standing on FisheryProgress (active status and up-to-date on reporting requirements), SFF will support specific activities related to completion of required and voluntary components of the HRSRP.

SFF will prioritize proposals from FIPs with demonstrated financial constraints such as limited access to private sector finance for investment in social and environmental improvement, or project costs that represent a relatively large proportion of grantee revenue. SFF will also prioritize proposals from FIPs that explicitly commit to undertaking both HRSRP Components 2 and 3, whether on a mandatory or voluntary basis.

SFF will also consider proposals for projects with the following components, if pursued along with implementation of the HRSRP:

- MSC pre-assessments;
- MSC full assessments and re-assessments of strategic importance, on a limited basis;
- Fair Trade audits; and,
- Other fishery improvement activities consistent with overall SFF guidelines, including stakeholder participation and capacity building efforts that advance marine conservation and address social responsibility and human rights.

SFF will consider proposals from applicants proposing work for multiple FIPs as part of a cohort. However, all requirements related to fulfillment of the HRSRP apply.

¹ "Human Rights and Social Responsibility Policy," FisheryProgress.org. Page 6, "Overview." https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/FP_SocialPolicy_English_5.7.21.pdf

² Core components of FIPs include: participation by private sector actors in the supply chain; public commitment by FIP participants to financially invest in fishery improvements; defining of a near-term project scope, with a set of time bound objectives; development and implementation of a workplan to improve the fishery, with an associated budget and deadlines; and regular tracking and reporting of progress, including: 1) publicly reporting progress on actions and their results with supporting documentation every six months on [FisheryProgress.org](#); and 2) updating indicator scores and providing supporting evidence for score changes every 12 months.

Eligible organizations

Proposals will be accepted from the following types of entities:

- Fishing, fish-worker, or seafood organizations;
- Fishery management agencies;
- Academic or research organizations;
- Nonprofit and other non-governmental organizations working in partnership with fisheries or agencies;
- Private consultancies contracted by fisheries to support FIPs and advance sustainability certifications;
- Other types of organizations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Past SFF grantees whose grants have been closed with an approved final report are eligible to apply for funding. Such applicants must identify past SFF funding.

Match requirement

Match funding of at least one-to-one is required for all projects (for example, \$10,000 in external funding to match a \$10,000 SFF grant).

For small-scale or especially financially challenged fisheries, SFF will consider in-kind effort as part of the required match on a case-by-case basis. All other applicants are expected to demonstrate a cash match. Proposals from large and/or well-capitalized fisheries will improve their competitiveness by demonstrating a cash match that exceeds the one-to-one ratio (for example, \$20,000 from fishery participants in parallel with a \$10,000 SFF grant).

Note: Funding from SFF funders (The David and Lucile Packard Foundation) may not be considered part of the applicant's match for the project.

IV. Application Process

SFF will receive grant applications and issue grants for select eligible projects twice per year in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

In order to apply for a grant, applicants must complete and submit SFF's application worksheet, [available online](#). The worksheet includes a template for a project budget and must include as attachments specific documents demonstrating the applicant's financial and organizational soundness (listed below). For reference, the components of the application worksheet, including the list of required attachments, are provided below in Section V.

In 2022, SFF will receive applications during two windows:

Window 1: April 1 – May 8

Window 2: September 1 – October 1

All applications will be reviewed by RLF staff and may be subject to additional review by RLF's external partners. Following initial review, RLF staff will contact competitive applicants directly and may request additional information or revisions to the proposed project before advancement to consideration for a grant award.

V. Application Requirements and Guidelines

The application worksheet is [available online](#) and must be downloaded and completed in English. The worksheet's required components are provided here for informational purposes.

Applicant overview

Please describe:

- Type of organization proposing a FIP for SFF grant funding, and FIP participants (e.g. cooperative, trade association, single company, worker representative, NGO, government agency, etc.);
- The city and country where the applicant is based;
- Size of applicant organization and summary of qualifications of lead staff relevant to carrying out the project; and
- The applicant's readiness to undertake environmental and social improvement in its fishery.

Fishery improvement project (FIP) description

Please provide or describe:

- Link to FisheryProgress FIP profile (if applicable);
- The geographic area of the fishery or the FIP, the fishery's target species, and gear type;
- Market and value chain context: Typical buyers and/or processors for fishery landings and any existing commitments from buyers; typical market destination (local, domestic or international); proportion of market supplied by the fishery; and how the target markets are tracked;
- Time period for which funding is requested, including estimated start and end dates for project. SFF's grant periods are typically one year (12 months). Durations up to two years (24 months) will be considered;
- The type of FIP for which funding is requested (i.e. basic or comprehensive), including major goals and milestones to be achieved during the grant period, and the FIP's long term goals.
- Financial need: why the applicant requires grant funding to complete their project. Evidence to substantiate applicant need is encouraged;
- Project support from other relevant groups or organizations;
- The sources and amounts of required match funding for the project. Match funding can be leveraged from industry, philanthropic, or government sources, or from Fair Trade premiums. Funding from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation grants is not eligible to serve as a match for SFF grants.

For assessments and FIPs, please address the following points:

- What general evidence is there that the fishery can meet the sustainability criteria and standards for FIPs, MSC, or Fair Trade?
- How will the applicant track the progress of the project over the grant period?
- How will the applicant ensure active participation by fishers, workers, and/or their representatives in FIP implementation?
- How will the fishery's workers benefit from the project and its targeted outcomes?
- What companies will be engaged or stand to benefit from the FIP or resulting certifications?

Additional requirements for FIPs:

- Applicants seeking support for the development of a new FIP must identify in their application other similar FIPs known to be underway for the same fishery.
- Funding is contingent upon an explicit commitment to upload all FIP information, relevant findings and products to [FisheryProgress](#), in line with its requirements for

public disclosure.³ The FIP is expected to remain in good standing on FisheryProgress (active status and up to date on reporting requirements) for the duration of the grant. Failure to do so may incur termination of the grant and jeopardize future grant eligibility.

- For all projects, grantees are expected to share assessment reports or updates on the improvement process in interim and final grant reports to RLF.

Project budget and applicant financial soundness

The application worksheet includes a template for a project budget in table format.

Applicants are required to include:

- Total project costs including major project elements such as salaries, benefits, travel, subcontractors, and indirect/overhead costs;
- Amount requested from SFF, and the planned contributions to each budget line from an SFF grant (note that RLF's maximum allowable overhead rate is 15%);
- Match funding, identifying type of contribution (e.g., in-kind or cash), funding source, and whether match funding is secured or pending.

Applicants must attach the following additional documents to support RLF's due diligence to ensure the soundness and solvency of applicant organizations:

- Organizational Budget. Include a detailed budget for the organization for the current fiscal year.
- Financial Statements. Provide a recent audited financial statement or equivalent document (showing assets/liabilities and revenues/expenses). If U.S. based, include a copy of your organization's most recent IRS Form 990.
- List of Board Members. Provide a list of board members with brief biographical summaries of each, if applicable.
- IRS Letter. If a U.S.-based non-profit organization, provide a letter from the Internal Revenue Service confirming that the applicant is a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Fiscal Sponsor Letter or memorandum of understanding (MOU). For projects with a fiscal sponsor, documentation stating the relationship.

This list of required attachments is also included in the [application worksheet](#).

Submission

Applications including all attachments must be submitted via email by the above noted deadlines to SFF Senior Program Coordinator Rebecca Valdez, rvaldez@resourceslegacyfund.org.

³ Prospective grantees should familiarize themselves with FisheryProgress reporting requirements (available at [Resources for FIPs](#)), as well as the [HRSRP](#). Questions about these requirements may be submitted to FisheryProgress (contact@fisheryprogress.org). Applicants interested in cohort coaching for FIPs implementing the HRSRP can inquire with the FIP community of practice (contact@fipcop.org).