

**BLUE GRANTS APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

1. ACTIVITIES THAT SeyCCAT MAY FUND

SeyCCAT is a conservation and adaptation trust fund. All proposals submitted to the fund must have as their main purpose the conservation and/or management of marine and coastal biodiversity and/or ecosystem based adaptation to climate change in the Seychelles.

Proposals may cover any part of the territory of Seychelles, terrestrial, coastal and marine, but may not cover areas outside of the territory of Seychelles. Proposals may, however, include regional or transboundary co-financing.

The Board of Directors, guided by recommendations from the Grants Committee, will review its priorities for funding annually, based on funds available, historical distribution of grants both geographically and thematically, national priorities, opportunities to leverage funds against other bi-lateral, multi-lateral, and private grants, etc.

**The provisional list of Strategic Objectives** that SeyCCAT may fund is as follows (this is not exclusive):

1. Support new and existing marine and coastal protected areas and sustainable use zones;
2. Empower the fisheries sector with robust science and knowhow to improve governance, sustainability, value and market options;
3. Promote the rehabilitation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that have been degraded by local and global impacts;
4. Develop and implement risk reduction and social resilience plans to adapt to the effects of climate change;
5. Trial and nurture business models to secure the sustainable development of Seychelles’ blue economy.



**For each of SeyCCAT’s requests for proposals** (see section 4), a priority strategic objective (or objectives) will be defined. SeyCCAT’s assets originate from differing sources with differing priorities: the Debt Swap proceeds can be used to fund any of the five strategic objectives, where as assets derived from the Blue Bond are tied to:

* 1. Expanded sustainable-use marine protected areas (US$1.5 million over 6 years) (SWIOFish3 Component 1 funding/proceeds) – SeyCCAT Strategic Objective 1).
	2. Improved governance of priority fisheries and sustainable development of the Blue Economy (US$1.5 million over 6 years) (SWIOFish3 Component 2 funding/proceeds) - SeyCCAT Strategic Objective 2, SeyCCAT Strategic Objective 5).

Further, for Blue Bond proceeds, the priority Blue Grants Funding is to facilitate (a) the operationalization of sustainable-use marine protected areas and (b) the implementation of the Mahé Plateau fisheries management plan and the transition from open-access to better controlled fisheries.

For Strategic Objective 2, applicants are to address the ‘Principles for Investment in Sustainable Wild-caught Fisheries’ ([www.seyccat.org/resources/#significant-reports](http://www.seyccat.org/resources/#significant-reports))

For Strategic Objective 5, applicants are to address the ‘Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles’ ([www.seyccat.org/resources/#significant-reports](http://www.seyccat.org/resources/#significant-reports))

1. WHO can apply?

Any Government agency, locally-registered NGO or CSO, parastatal organization or citizen of Seychelles may submit a proposal to SeyCCAT. Proposers must have legally existed and operated in the Seychelles for a minimum of one year.

Overseas-based organizations are not eligible, although proposals from and led by eligible local organizations may include overseas-based partners.

The Board of Directors may decide to restrict the participation of any of the above classes of persons or organizations in any Call for Proposal, and this shall be indicated in the scope of the Call for Proposals.

Proposers will be required to include details of qualifications and experience to ensure that a sound judgment can be made concerning the proposer’s ability to deliver the project.

1. Grant categories, EXCLUSIONS and co-financing
	1. Categories

There are two categories of grant that may be applied for:

* **Small-medium grant** up to SCR 100,000 [approximately US$7,500]. These grants will be awarded on the basis of an approved concept.
* **Large grant** between SCR 100,000 [approximately US$7,500] and SR 1,000,000 [approximately US$75,000]. These grants will be short-listed on the basis of the concept (stage 1), and then awarded on the basis of a full proposal (stage 2).

Normally each Call for Proposals will be open to applications for both categories of grant, unless the Board of Directors determine otherwise, in which case this will be indicated in the scope of the Call for Proposals.

Applications that fall outside the given categories will not be considered.

For SeyCCAT grants funded by Blue Bond proceeds, the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and Process Framework (PF) posted on SeyCCAT’s website must be observed, including in particular:

*Excluded activities:* SeyCCAT will post the Exclusion List on its website and include it in the grant application materials in order to advise potential applicants of activities not eligible for Blue Grants. Grant applications received by SeyCCAT will be reviewed to ensure that they do not contemplate activities on the Exclusion List.

*Screening by SWIOFish3 Project Implementation Unit Environmental and Social Specialist:* The environmental and social specialist attached to the *SWIOFish3* Project Implementation Unit (“PIU”) created in the government of Seychelles in connection with the SeyCCAT Blue Grants Fund will review all “Blue Bond” Blue Grant applications using the Screening Templates to evaluate environmental and social issues and risks relating to the activities proposed in the grant application, and will make binding recommendations to the Blue Grants Committee regarding its findings.

*Guidelines on Generic Impacts and Risks*: In addition, SeyCCAT will post the Guidelines on Generic Impacts and Risks of SWIOFish3 activities on its website in order for Blue Grant applicants to consider whether it will be necessary to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or prepare a supplemental safeguards instrument (an Environmental Management Plan) in connection with the activities they are proposing, and to provide guidance for the preparation of that supplemental safeguards instrument, which would need to be reviewed and cleared by the PIU’s environmental and social specialist.

*Guidelines for Construction Health and Safety*: Any civil works undertaken as part of a “Blue Bond” Blue Grant-funded project must incorporate the Guidelines for Construction Health and Safety in civil works contracts and comply with those requirements. SeyCCAT, and the PIU, will monitor that compliance.

*Environmental and Social Compliance Reporting*: SeyCCAT with the PIU will carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of each “Blue Bond” Blue Grant-funded project and report regularly to the PIU and IBRD on environmental and social safeguard matters relating to each project using the template of the Environmental and Social Compliance Report.

The maximum duration of grant awards is 12 months for a small-medium grants and 24 months for a large grant. At the request of the grantee, these grant periods may be extended for 6 months and 1 year, respectively.

* 1. Exclusions

The Board of Directors may introduce exclusions that will not be considered for funding. Initial exclusions are as follows:

* Funds may not be used, directly or indirectly, to pay for Government administrative or operating costs (however funding of enforcement and monitoring staff, especially new hires, is acceptable).
* Funds may not be used for activities solely concerned with helping a profit or non-profit making entity increase its production and revenue.
* Funds may not be used for the following (specific exclusions):
* Individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses, or individual scholarships
* Debts and provisions for losses or debts
* Interest owed
* Items or costs incurred by or through projects already financed under another framework
* Purchases of land or administrative buildings
* Purchase of automobiles
* Currency exchange losses
* Taxes
* Credits to third parties
* Management fees applied by the proposer may not be more than more 10% of the total grant amount requested from SeyCCAT.
* Contingency costs should not be included.

In addition, no activities included in the Exclusion List may be considered for funding or engaged in as part of the activities funded by a “Blue Bond” Blue Grant.

* 1. Co-financing

Co-financing is not mandatory for small-medium grants, but in kind co-financing is encouraged.

Applicants for large grants are encouraged to provide co-financing to an amount equivalent to that being requested from SeyCCAT. Indicative co-financing must be provided at the concept stage, and an attestation of the available co-financing must be submitted with the full proposal.

Co-financing may be cash or in-kind, but in-kind co-financing must be realistic and documented.

Co-proposals with Environment Trust Fund of MEECC are not allowable, nor are ETF proposals allowable as co-financing.

SeyCCAT grants may be proposed as co-financing in proposals to other funding agencies. SeyCCAT advises only leveraging its funds against other proposals on a singular basis, i.e. not to cite SeyCCAT funds as co-finance for multiple projects.

1. CALL FOR PROPOSALS
	1. Schedule

A Call for Proposals will be made every 6 - 12 months. The responsibility of issuing the Call for Proposals lies with the SeyCCAT Secretariat.

The Grants Committee will meet every six to twelve months to evaluate proposals submitted. There will be additional meetings to evaluate large grants submitted. The initial sequence of Grants Committee meetings is anticipated to be as below (subject to change at the discretion of the Board):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Date*** | ***Activity*** | ***Action*** |
| October | Call for Proposals |  |
| December | Grants Committee meeting to evaluate concepts for small-medium and large grantsBoard meeting (physical or electronic) | 1. Recommendations for approval of small-medium and large grants sent to Board of Directors
2. Large grants are short-listed and proposers requested to prepare full proposals
 |
| March | Grants Committee meeting to evaluate full proposals for large projects | 1. Recommendations for approval of large projects sent to Board of Directors
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| April  | Board meeting (physical or electronic) | 1. Announcement of projects
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| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Date*** | ***Activity*** | ***Action*** |
| April | Call for Proposals |  |
| June | Grants Committee meeting to evaluate concepts for small-medium and large grantsBoard meeting (physical or electronic) | 1. Recommendations for approval of small-medium and large grants sent to Board of Directors
2. Large grants are short-listed and proposers requested to prepare full proposals
 |
| September | Grants Committee meeting to evaluate full proposals for large projects | 1. Recommendations for approval of large projects sent to Board of Directors
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| October  | Board meeting (physical or electronic) | 1. Announcement of projects
 |

Per this schedule, the Board of Directors would meet to approve these grants. Decisions could also be made electronically if the Board of Directors schedules are restricted.

* 1. Formats

Concept notes

All proposers, for any size of grant, must first submit a concept note that provides key information on the proposer, a brief description of the activities proposed for financing and the objectives they address, a summary of the execution approach and a cost estimate. Proposers for large projects will also be encouraged to provide indicative co-financing information with the expectation that co-financing will be at a ratio of 1:1 with SeyCCAT financing; small projects are encouraged to identify at least some co-financing which may be in-kind.

Please refer to the format (template) for a Concept.

Full proposals

Full proposals will be requested to be prepared for all short-listed proposals in the large grant category. The Grants Committee may request changes to the original concept, without by so doing changing the general nature or objective of the proposal.

The Grants Committee may suggest a partner to assist the proposer in writing the full grant proposal, and may request the SeyCCAT Secretariat, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, to provide the proposer a small proposal preparation grant, not to exceed SCR 20,000,[[1]](#footnote-1) the cost of which will be in addition to the total project cost proposed.

Please refer to the format (template) for a Full Proposal.

* 1. Evaluation of concepts and full proposals

Administrative compliance

Concepts and Full Proposals will be received by the SeyCCAT Secretariat. All proposals received will be required to pass the administrative compliance stage before being forwarded to the Grants Committee. For projects that relate to “Blue Bond” proceeds, the Secretariat will work with the PIU to screen applications for environmental and social issues and risks. The Secretariat will check that submissions are administratively compliant by applying the following procedures:

In the case of initial concepts:

1. Ensure that the subject of the proposal is compliant to the priorities for funding
2. Verify that the proposer is eligible
3. Verify that the proposal has been submitted in complete form before the imposed deadline for receiving grants
4. Check the budget is compliant with the different categories
5. For “Blue Bond” funded projects, verify that no activities to be funded are on the Exclusion List

For both concepts and full proposals:

1. Ensure that all required documentation has been received (if papers are missing the Secretariat will contact the proposer and request the proposal be resubmitted)

Referring to the above, the Secretariat will complete the cover sheet to the Evaluation Form prior to submitting the form and the concept or full proposal to the Grants Committee.

Technical evaluation

The Secretariat will be responsible for circulating a dossier containing all concept notes and full proposals to be evaluated, with attached administrative compliance sheets, to each member of the Grants Committee at least 15 working days prior to the date of the scheduled evaluation meeting.

The individual members of the Grants Committee will complete their technical assessments and scoring prior to the evaluation meeting.

Technical assessment of concepts and full proposals will involve the allocation of scores for elements of the submitted documentation. The evaluation of the concept note focuses on whether the proposal addresses priority issues and its cost-effectiveness – in the case of small-medium projects this is sufficient to make a recommendation for a grant (or not). The evaluation of full proposals looks more closely at the project design, implementation and budgeting.

In broad terms, all proposals will be expected to:

1. Contribute to international and national priorities for conservation and adaptation as outlined in international and national strategic documents such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy, Marine Spatial Plan, Shark National Plan of Action, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, etc.
2. Be new and innovative, or build upon previous projects. Projects that develop synergies with on-going projects funded by SeyCCAT or other sources are recommended, as long as they do not duplicate previous or on-going projects funded by SeyCCAT or other sources.[[2]](#footnote-2)
3. Provide clear and demonstrable benefits (economic, environmental and social) proportional to the grant investment (value for money).
4. Be observant of and compliant with environmental and social safeguards as detailed in the project Safeguards documents.

The evaluation meeting will operate as follows:

1. For each individual proposal:
* Submission by members of their individual scores 5 working days prior to the meeting and compilation into a matrix by the SEYCCAT secretariat before the meeting.
* Calculation of average score by the SEYCCAT secretariat. Proposals scoring below 32.5 marks (concept stage) or 27.5 marks (stage II/full proposal) are automatically then rejected.
1. When all proposals have been scored:
* Ranking of concepts and full proposals (separately)
* Discussion of grants to be awarded. In the case of more proposals being approved than funds are available, the Grants Committee may decide to reject additional grants, or to delay funding until more funds are available.
* Formulation of recommendations to the Board of Directors
1. GRANT AWARDS

The Grants Committee at the end of each evaluation meeting will make recommendations to the Board of Directors for grants to be awarded. For each proposal a short text will be provided giving reasons for a) rejection or b) recommendation for a grant award.

SeyCCAT has a Grant Application Appeal Process mechanism in place, details of which are available to applicants via the SeyCCAT website or through the SeyCCAT Secretariat.

1. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

All projects will be supported by the SeyCCAT secretariat. SeyCCAT will provide supervision in the form of advice and guidance with regard to the application and delivery expectations. In addition, the SeyCCAT secretariat will engage with projects to conduct site visits to understand how projects are progressing, any challenges being experienced, how risks are being managed, and to offer support and guidance where necessary. The SeyCCAT Executive Assistant will provide this function, with support from the CEO and grants committee if necessary.

SeyCCAT shall forward any report from Blue Grants Beneficiaries on compliance with supplemental safeguards instruments to the PIU, provided as per the Grant Agreement. The PIU will compile information provided by SeyCCAT and its Grantees, and its own monitoring reports, and in turn provide regular reports to the IBRD with respect to each project’s environmental and social compliance using the Environmental and Social Compliance Report template.

1. The proposal preparation grant could be up to a maximum of SR 20,000. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Grants Committee will verify this against the ‘List of Conservation and Adaptation Projects in Seychelles’ that has been developed as a guide to grant awards, and will be updated annually. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)