

Ocean Stewardship Fund 2026-27

Science and Research Fund: Request For Proposals

A grant funding opportunity for strategic and applied research to help MSC certified fisheries reduce their impacts on endangered, threatened and protected species

Fund	Science and Research Fund
Funding available	GBP 50,000
Project duration	Maximum two years, starting between April and June 2027
Eligible applicants	Academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, independent researchers, fishing industry associations, producer organisations, or fishing companies working in association with MSC certified fisheries
Research theme	Reducing the impacts of fisheries on endangered, threatened and protected species
Deadline	23:59 UTC, 18 October 2026
Queries	Potential applicants are advised to contact their local MSC representative for guidance Further questions are welcome at OSF@msc.org

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1. Purpose of the Science and Research Fund

The Science and Research Fund (SRF) is part of MSC’s Ocean Stewardship Fund. The SRF supports strategic and applied research that advances sustainable fisheries management in MSC certified fisheries.

For the 2026/27 funding round, the SRF is welcoming Expressions of Interest for research proposals that contribute to reducing the impacts of fisheries on endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species, and will generate knowledge, evidence, tools or solutions with the potential to benefit multiple fisheries.

Research must be applicable to at least one MSC certified fishery in strengthening its environmental sustainability. Preference will be given to proposals that have the potential to benefit multiple fisheries, generating knowledge and solutions that will accelerate best practice across the wider MSC Program and fisheries sector.

2. How to apply

2.1 Deadline

The deadline for Expressions of Interest is **23:59 UTC on 18 October 2026**.

2.2 Process for applying

Applicants must complete an Expression of Interest Form, which is available to download from the [Science and Research Fund web page](#).

Expressions of Interest must be no longer than 2 pages in length and should be emailed to OSF@msc.org along with the required supporting documentation.

2.3 Questions

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their local MSC representative for guidance and are advised to reach out at the earliest opportunity to ensure that all requirements are met before the deadline.

Further questions should be sent to OSF@msc.org.

3. The Theme of this Request For Proposals

Reducing the Impacts of Fisheries on Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species

For the 2026/27 funding round, the SRF is welcoming Expressions of Interest for research proposals that contribute to reducing the impacts of fisheries on ETP species, and will generate knowledge, evidence, tools or solutions with the potential to benefit multiple fisheries.

ETP species continue to present significant sustainability challenges across global fisheries. Fisheries may face challenges in understanding the nature and extent of interactions with ETP species, assessing impacts, identifying effective mitigation measures and supporting their implementation across fisheries and management systems.

Projects may include activities such as:

- Filling critical evidence gaps relevant to understanding and managing fishery impacts on ETP species, including improving knowledge of the spatial and temporal distribution of interactions, bycatch risk, and the effectiveness of management and mitigation measures.
- Developing and testing new tools, methods or techniques that support monitoring, assessment or management of ETP interactions, or testing applications of existing technology, methods or tools in new fisheries or environmental contexts – provided that the applicant can demonstrate how these solutions will enable practical management action to reduce ETP impacts. Such solutions may include AI-enabled monitoring systems, risk-mapping approaches, electronic monitoring technologies, or data-sharing solutions.
- Testing and validating practical management solutions, including innovative fishing gear, operational modifications, exclusion devices, deterrent technologies and other mitigation approaches that may reduce bycatch and broader impacts on ETP species.
- Developing and evaluating decision-support tools and approaches that help fishers, managers and other stakeholders identify, avoid and mitigate interactions with ETP species while supporting safe, efficient and sustainable fishing operations.
- Supporting the uptake and application of best practice, including decision-support tools, guidance, implementation frameworks and stakeholder-led approaches that facilitate adoption across multiple fisheries, including the sharing, adaptation and application of existing tools, technologies and knowledge in new contexts.

Applications that are most competitive will typically demonstrate:

- The potential to generate benefits beyond a single fishery.
- A credible pathway to informing fisheries management, management decision-making or industry best practice.
- The potential for uptake or application across multiple fisheries, regions or management systems.
- Strong value for money.
- Strong match funding or co-funding.

The Fund is less likely to support projects that:

- Primarily generate academic knowledge without a clear pathway to practical application.
- Focus solely on a single fishery (e.g. shark tagging projects to close data conditions) with limited broader relevance.
- Lack a clear route to uptake, implementation or use by fisheries, managers or other stakeholders.
- Collect data without demonstrating how the resulting evidence will inform decision-making or management approaches.
- Only test solutions in laboratory or experimental environments.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult or otherwise involve local researchers, fishers and other relevant stakeholders based in the area of fishing operations where possible.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Who can apply

- Academic institutions
- Governmental organisations
- Non-governmental organisations
- Fishing industry associations
- Producer organisations
- Fishing companies

There must be a named individual responsible for the project, and the Lead Organisation on the proposal must be the grant holder if the application is successful.

4.2 Eligible projects

All submissions must align with the theme of this call and be applicable to at least one specified MSC certified fishery to be eligible for SRF funding. The certified status of fisheries can be confirmed on the MSC's [Track a Fishery](#) database.

4.3 Restrictions

- MSC employees, trustees, agents, current contractors, and relatives of employees or trustees are ineligible.
- Applicants can submit only one Expression of Interest for consideration.
- Applicants must not have received SRF funding within the last three years before the time of application.
- Applicants should note that their role in the project may potentially preclude their involvement in subsequent assessment of any beneficiary fisheries linked to the proposal where this would create a self-review conflict of interest.

5. Funding available

5.1 Grant size

The maximum funding available is £50,000 per SRF application. The total funding request must include the 12% indirect cost recovery allowance and must not exceed £50,000 or the equivalent amount in other currencies.

5.2 Duration

Projects must start between April and June 2027, and must be no longer than two years in duration.

5.3 Number of expected awards

The SRF has limited funds available and will only fund the strongest applications that most closely meet the SRF criteria.

5.4 Eligible costs/activities

- Cost of hiring a consultant to undertake all or part of the project.
- Internal staff salary costs directly incurred in delivery of the grant.
- Costs involved with data collection.
- Cost of implementing a new assessment tool.
- Costs involved with holding a meeting or workshop, such as travel, catering and venue hire.
- Hire or purchase of essential equipment.
- Essential fixed asset costs. Any fixed assets or equipment purchased with SRF funds must be used to support fisheries in accordance with the charitable purposes of the grant after the funding term ends.
- Up to 12% indirect cost recovery to support overhead costs.

6. Application requirements

6.1 A two-stage application process

This Request For Proposals is being held in two stages:

- An Expression of Interest
- A Full Proposal (for shortlisted candidates only)

6.2 Expression of Interest Form Template

Expressions of Interest must be completed in English within the Template provided and be no more than 2 pages in length.

The Expression of Interest Form is available to download from the [Science and Research Fund web page](#).

6.3 Supporting documents

Applicants must submit proof of the legal status of the Lead Organisation alongside their Expression of Interest. This document may be submitted in the applicant's language of origin if not available in English.

6.4 Submission instructions

Expressions of Interest must be submitted to OSF@msc.org by **23:59 UTC on 18 October 2026**.

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their local MSC representative for guidance and are advised to reach out at the earliest opportunity to ensure that all requirements are met before the deadline.

7. Shortlisting criteria

7.1 How are Expressions of Interest shortlisted?

SRF applications undergo a competitive review process. The SRF has limited funds available for each funding round and can only fund the strongest applications that most closely meet the SRF criteria.

Criterion	What reviewers will consider
Strategic value	Whether the proposal addresses an important issue, need, or gap with respect to fisheries' impacts on ETP species
Potential to create change	Whether there is a clear pathway for implementation in fisheries' management and/or practice and the likelihood of implementation
Potential to generate benefits beyond a single fishery	The number and diversity of fisheries that would benefit from the proposal
Match funding	How much additional funding could be leveraged or mobilised for progress on the application's research focus if the proposal received funding from the SRF

The decision of MSC in respect of shortlisting Expressions of Interest is final. MSC reserves the right to request modifications to applications, in consultation with applicants, before reaching a decision on whether to shortlist an application. The details of application assessments remain confidential.

8. Timeline

Stage	Date / details
Applications open	00:00 UTC, 4 September 2026
Expressions of Interest deadline	23:59 UTC, 18 October 2026
Shortlisted candidates notified	Early November 2026
Full Proposal deadline	Mid-December 2026
Award decisions	March 2027
Project start	Projects must start between April and June 2027

9. What happens if an Expression of Interest is shortlisted?

Shortlisted candidates will be notified in early November 2026 and will be invited to submit a Full Proposal by mid-December 2026.

Further guidance will be provided for shortlisted candidates at this time.

10. What happens if a Full Proposal is funded?

Successful SRF applicants will be notified by email before the end of March 2027. A draft Grant Agreement will be shared. The Grant Agreement will set out the terms and conditions of the grant awarded, the grant disbursement schedule, and conditions required to release stage payments.

Awardees are required to provide at least one narrative and financial interim report approximately midway through the project, including performance against the outputs and outcomes outlined in the Full Proposal. Awardees must also provide a final narrative and financial report at the end of the project, including performance against the outputs and outcomes, a summary of expenditure and any supporting communications assets such as images or videos.

Awardees will be expected to share all project data, research and knowledge produced as a result of the project with local researchers, fishers, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders. This includes providing open access to any published research articles resulting from the project.

Awardees will also be expected to keep MSC informed of their communication plans and provide MSC with timely contributions towards any published content relating to their project or the SRF as a whole.

11. How would the funding be disbursed?

The Grant Agreement would define the grant disbursement schedule and the conditions required to release stage payments, such as interim and final reports. The disbursement schedule would be informed by the phasing of costs supplied by the applicant in their Full Proposal.

Grant payments would be issued in three stages:

1. Upon signing of the Grant Agreement
2. Upon satisfactory receipt of the Interim Grant Report
3. Upon satisfactory receipt of the Final Grant Report

MSC would retain a minimum of 10% of the total grant for disbursement at the end of the project, upon receipt of a satisfactory Final Grant Report.

12. Privacy and personal data

Applicants will be required to confirm that they have read and understood the Ocean Stewardship Fund Privacy Policy when they submit their Expression of Interest.

The Ocean Stewardship Fund Privacy Policy is appended.

13. Further questions

Please email any further questions to OSF@msc.org.

14. Applicant checklist

- The Lead Organisation has capacity to enter into a legally binding Grant Agreement and will host the grant funds if the application is successful.
- The Lead Organisation has not received SRF funding within the last three years.
- The project is linked to at least one specified MSC certified fishery.
- The project aligns with the SRF theme of reducing the impacts of fisheries on endangered, threatened and protected species.
- The project can start between April and June 2027 and be completed within two years.
- The funding request does not exceed £50,000 including indirect cost recovery.
- Official documentation confirming the legal status of the Lead Organisation has been attached.

Additional support available:

MSC certified fisheries are also eligible to apply for a loan guarantee through the Walton Loan Guarantee Facility. Established with funds from the Walton Family Foundation, the Loan Guarantee Facility provides partial guarantees to lenders to unlock loans for fisheries making improvements to meet or maintain MSC certification.

For more details, contact: lgf@clarmondial.com

Ocean Stewardship Fund – Privacy Policy

Revised June 2026

Introduction

This policy sets out how the Marine Stewardship Council (**MSC**) collects, processes and stores your personal data when provided to the MSC as an applicant to the MSC Ocean Stewardship Fund (**OSF**). This policy is intended to be read and understood by those individuals, who are therefore referred to in this document as “you”. The MSC and MSC OSF is referred to as “we” or “our” in this policy.

The MSC is headquartered at Marine House, 1-3 Snow Hill, London, EC1A 2DH.

The MSC is a data controller of your personal data. This policy affects your legal rights (including the right to object to some of the MSC’s processing of your personal data) and obligations so please read it carefully.

If you have any questions, please contact us via OSF@msc.org.

Personal data we collect

Personal information, such as contact information, address, telephone numbers and email addresses of all applicants are submitted to the MSC via an application process administered by the MSC OSF.

Why do we collect and use this your personal data?

- When you apply to the OSF, we review your application to help us make a decision. If your application for an OSF grant is successful, details concerning the grant, including your name, may be made publicly available on the MSC’s website and other media outlets, e.g. annual report, a press release.
- If your application is unsuccessful, we will retain your data for a limited period necessary for audit, legal and reporting purposes, after which the data will be securely deleted.
- We do not use your data for general marketing. We may contact you about your project where relevant.
- If you no longer want to receive communications from the MSC about potential communications opportunities to help promote your OSF project, please email OSF@msc.org.

Personal data collection for specific OSF initiatives

- For the Transition Assistance Fund, Science and Research Fund, Student Research Grants, and Innovation Fund, the MSC may also use this information to contact you about potential communications opportunities to help promote your OSF project. This will include:
 - actively promoting your project to the media, seeking opportunities for journalists to interview you that could involve sharing your contact details with them once additional written permission is gained from you (via email, for example).
 - actively approaching you for additional videos, photographs or updates around your project for our communications channels, on our website, through emails, newsletters, social media and in press releases or other marketing activities in relation to your project that promote the MSC and/or the OSF.

Lawful processing of your personal data

We process your personal data for the purposes and lawful bases set out below:

Purpose	Lawful Basis
To assess and evaluate the eligibility and suitability OSF grant applications	Our legitimate interests in administering the OSF and promoting the mission of the MSC.
To contact OSF grant recipients	The performance of a contract between the MSC and the OSF grantee recipient.
To make publicly available the names of successful applicants along with any grant outputs and impacts, by publishing such information in press releases, annual reports, on the MSC website and other channels to recognise your achievement	The performance of a contract between the MSC and the OSF grantee recipient.
To administer OSF grants and wider OSF administration, including programme evaluation and reporting obligations	The performance of a contract between the MSC and the OSF grantee recipient.
To keep an accounting record of all financial transactions made to successful applicants	Necessary for compliance with a legal obligation in respect of compliance with UK law. If a legal obligation does not apply, or compliance is required under non-UK law, we rely on our legitimate interest in complying with applicable law. This is a recognised legitimate interest when we do this to prevent, detect, or investigate a crime.
For regulatory, legal, auditing and compliance purposes, including enforcing our terms where necessary.	Necessary for compliance with a legal obligation in respect of compliance with UK law, and our legitimate interests in administering the OSF.

Who do we share your data with?

- We do not sell your personal data. We only share your data where necessary for service provision, legal obligations, or programme administration.
- Our suppliers, such as our IT services contractors, may have access to your personal data, to the extent necessary to fulfil services to us. These suppliers are bound to uphold data privacy protections.
- Under certain circumstances, we may disclose your personal data as permitted under applicable laws and/or regulations, for example, to protect a third party's rights, property, or safety.

Where we hold and process your personal data

- In general, most personal data held by the MSC are stored on secure servers in the European Union (the EU) or in the UK (on Microsoft Azure Servers (UK) and Amazon Web Services (AWS) Europe (London Region)).
- IT service contractors may also engage with third-party sub-processors in connection with the provision of services to the MSC for the administration of the OSF. Third-party sub-processors will enter into written agreements with data protection obligations no less protective than those in this Privacy Policy.
- Where personal data are transferred outside the UK / EEA, we ensure appropriate safeguards are in place, such as adequacy regulations or approved contractual clauses.

- If you require any additional information about how your personal data are processed, please contact us via OSF@msc.org.

Cookies

Please refer to the [MSC's Website Privacy Policy](#) for information on the use of cookies.

Your rights

You have the following rights in relation to your personal data, subject to applicable law:

- **Access:** You have the right to request a copy of the personal data we hold about you.
- **Rectification:** You have the right to request that inaccurate or incomplete personal data is corrected.
- **Restriction:** You have the right to request that we restrict how we process your personal data in certain circumstances.
- **Data Portability:** Where processing is based on your consent **or** a contract and carried out by automated means, you may request your data in a structured format or ask for the data to be transferred to another organisation, where technically feasible.
- **Erase:** You have the right to request deletion of your personal data where there is no lawful reason for us to retain the data.
- **Objection:** You have the right to object to processing based on legitimate interests and to processing of your personal data for direct marketing purposes.
- **Withdraw consent:** Where we rely on your consent, you may withdraw it at any time.
- **Not be subject to automated decision-making:** MSC does not use automated decisions producing legal or significant effects without human review.

These rights may be limited, for example if fulfilling your request would reveal personal data about another person, or if you ask us to delete information which we are required by law or have compelling legitimate interests to keep.

Please note, we reserve the right to charge an administrative fee if your request is manifestly unfounded or excessive.

Privacy complaints

If you have any complaints in relation to this policy or otherwise in relation to our processing of your personal data, you have the right to complain to us via email at OSF@msc.org. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **30 days**, and to take appropriate steps to respond to the complaint.

If you are unhappy with how we handle your complaint, you may also complain to the UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). More information about making a complaint to the ICO can be found [here](#).

Retention

- Data will be held for the duration of the application process, or until the MSC receives a request to remove an applicant's information.
- Unsuccessful applicant information will be archived on the OSF Grants Portal **2 years** after the completion of the application process, enabling applicants to retain their account should they wish to re-apply in a future funding round.
- Successful applicant information will be archived **7 years** from the conclusion of the project or, with respect to the Recertification Assistance Fund, the date of payment.
- All archived data on the OSF Grants Portal will be **hard-deleted 12 months** after archival.

General

- Our website may contain links to third-party websites. We are not responsible for the privacy practices or content of those websites. We encourage you to review their privacy notices before providing any personal data.
- We may change the terms of this policy from time to time. If we make material (potentially adverse) changes to how we treat personal data, we will, to the extent necessary, endeavour to notify you either via email (if we have appropriate contact details) or by putting a specific notice on our website.
- You are responsible for regularly reviewing this policy so that you are aware of any changes to it. If you continue to use our website or accept grant funding after the time that we state the changes will take effect, you will have accepted the changes.