



ISTS Community Grants Program: Turtles and Communities Call 2026

Objective of the grant

The ISTS Community Grants Program helps **ISTS members involved with local communities** achieve their sea turtle related research, conservation, and education goals.

The program has a total of US \$ 6,000 for grants of up to US \$ 1,500 each to support projects aimed at generating knowledge, applying and/or assessing conservation measures, and supporting community outreach, awareness and education initiatives. Building capacity for local leadership and community-based conservation relevant to sea turtles and their habitats are also major aims of the program.

The program finances a wide range of sea turtle related activities, such as:

- Community-based collaborative cultural activities and events (e.g., turtle festivals, wall paintings, beach cleanups, educational activities, etc.)
- Construction and maintenance of small to medium-scale infrastructure for research and conservation of turtles with community participation, such as protected hatcheries, educational trails, signage at nesting beaches, etc.
- Restoration of nesting beaches, including the reconstruction of dunes, planting of native species, and control of invasive and/or introduced exotic species.
- Creation or expansion of educational displays, materials, and turtle exhibits in the communities.
- Other innovative initiatives that promote education and activities aimed at protecting sea turtles.
- Community empowerment activities to improve local livelihood through sea turtle conservation.
- Capacity building of local community educators.

The program does NOT finance:

- Salaries, bureaucratic paperwork, permits, licenses, and ongoing expenses of the applicant's organization
- Purchase of real estate and/or land or property rentals
- Attendance at technical meetings, workshops, conferences, or Symposia.

- Membership fees
- Computers, laptops, tablets, phones, printers, cameras, any electronic equipment, or office materials

2. Who can apply

All **active members of the ISTS** who have paid the **annual membership fee (the year of the project actions)**.

Individuals or groups (communities, school groups, fishermen's associations, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.) who are **citizens, residents and/or belong to a registered organization of the project country** can apply as long as the proposal is submitted by an active member of the ISTS, who will be responsible for the project.

Priority will be given to applicants from **low-income countries** (according to current World Bank listing).

3. What is the application procedure?

- Complete the application form (Word doc) and email it to communitygrant@internationalseaturtlesociety.org by **September 13, 2026**
- Only applications **in English** will be accepted
- Please provide three **references**, including their name, affiliation, and a brief sentence describing how they are familiar with your work. At least two of the references should be from individuals based in the **project country**.

4. What are the criteria for selection?

- *Feasibility*: The project and personnel are likely to achieve the proposed objectives.
- *Relevance*: Project objectives complement the ISTS Mission and Vision and contribute to meeting a specific conservation need.
- *Sustainability*: The project will have a long-term impact.
- *Visibility*: Outcomes of funded projects should be visible to the wider community and positively enhance the interaction of the local community with sea turtles.

5. Who will evaluate?

Five Board Members

6. Communication timeline for participants and grant delivery

- Program launch and call for proposals - **July 2026**.
- Proposal deadline – **13 September 2026**.
- Internal evaluation period for proposals - one month
- Acceptance announcement – **18 October 2026**
- Project period of 12 months- Presentation of the final technical and financial report - **14 December 2027**.

- Applicants will be asked to submit a final report before applying again.

7. Obligations of the applicant.

- Spend the money according to the approved budget.
- Final report of activities and expenses.
- Photos and additional materials produced by the project.
- Acknowledgement of the ISTS support received on social media, websites, publications, reports, signage, educational materials, presentations at meetings, etc.

8. Presentation format for technical and financial report

Use published template.