



## **ISTS Innovation Grants Program**

### **Call 2026**

#### **1. Objective of the program**

**The ISTS Innovation Grants Program facilitates the development of new tools and resources that will help ISTS members and the broader sea turtle community mitigate threats to sea turtles and address their conservation needs.** Outcomes of the Innovation Grants Program will help achieve the ISTS vision of globally robust populations of sea turtles fulfilling their ecological roles within a healthy environment, in harmonious coexistence with all Peoples.

The program has a total of US \$ 6,000 for grants of up to US \$ 2,000 each to support projects aimed at developing practical tools, resources, and approaches that will address threats, and conservation needs of sea turtles. Supporting projects that might not be funded by other grants programs and building capacity for local initiatives are also major aims of the program.

The Innovation Grants Program will fund projects at any stage that develop, test, and/or validate tools (including prototypes), approaches, technologies, and other resources that will aid in assessment and mitigation of threats to sea turtles and their habitats, including:

- Cheaper, more robust, and/or simpler alternatives to currently available field and laboratory tests, equipment, or kits
- Practical interventions to mitigate threats to sea turtles, including interactions with fishers, light pollution, exposure to chemical pollutants, depredation
- Free and open source software and statistical packages
- Free mobile and web applications
- Innovative education materials, including simulations and animations, that demonstrate the impact of threats on sea turtle populations to groups/persons directly associated with threats and/or conservation needs and that are likely to facilitate a change of behaviour or practices.

The program does **NOT** fund:

- Projects that aim to develop products of limited scalability and availability
- Projects that aim to develop products not directly relevant to mitigating threats to sea turtles and their habitats
- Research on sea turtle biology and ecology
- Salaries, bureaucratic paperwork, permits, licenses, and ongoing expenses of the applicant's organization
- Patent and trademark applications
- 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, or office materials

## **2. Who can apply?**

All active members of the ISTS who have paid the annual membership fee can apply for the ISTS Innovation Grants Program.

Individuals or groups (communities, school groups, fisher's associations, cooperatives, NGOs, etc.) can apply as long as the proposal is submitted by an active member of the ISTS, who will be responsible for the project.

## **3. What is the application procedure?**

- Complete the application form (Word doc) and email it to the ISTS Board at [innovationgrant@internationalseaturtlesociety.org](mailto:innovationgrant@internationalseaturtlesociety.org) **by 10 September 2026.**
- Applications should be prepared in English.

## **4. What are the criteria for selection?**

- **Feasibility:** The project and applicant are likely to achieve their proposed objectives.
- **Relevance:** Project objectives complement the ISTS Mission and Vision and contribute to addressing a specific threat(s) or meeting a specific conservation need(s).
- **Sustainability:** The project will have a long-term impact.
- **Scalability:** The project product can be adapted to a bigger scale and different conditions than just the local context in which it was developed.
- **Availability:** Outcomes of funded projects should be freely and openly available to the wider sea turtle community.

## **5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assisted Writing Policy**

**AI must not be used to generate scientific content, project ideas, research plans, budget justifications, or to identify or generate references and citations. References used must be correct and relevant. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all proposal content is accurate and represents their original work.**

## **6. Who will evaluate the applications?**

A committee of at least three Board Members who are not associated with the applicants.

## **7. Communication timeline for participants and grant delivery**

- **Program launch and call for proposals** – July 2026
- **Proposal deadline** – 10 September 2026
- **Internal evaluation period for proposals** - ~One month
- **Acceptance announcement** – 15 October 2026
- **Project period of 12 months**- Presentation of the final technical and financial report – 15 December 2027

**Applicants must submit a final technical and financial report before applying for another ISTS grant.**

## **8. Obligations of the applicant.**

- Spend the money according to the approved budget.
- Submit their final report of activities and expenses.
- Share photos and additional materials relevant to the project.
- Acknowledge ISTS support for the project on social media, websites, publications, reports, signage, educational materials, presentations at meetings, etc.

## **9. Presentation format for technical and financial report**

Use the provided template.