



# Blue Economy Accelerator Programme

*For MSMEs in the Blue Economy with  
a Reef-Positive Focus*

2026



GLOBAL FUND FOR  
**CORAL REEFS**

# Introduction

Around the world, the Blue Economy is emerging as one of the most powerful economic frontiers of our time. As an archipelagic nation whose reefs, seagrass beds, fisheries, and coastlines form the backbone of our identity and livelihoods, the ocean is more than a resource. It is our greatest natural advantage.

According to global and regional studies, reef-dependent economies stand to generate billions in sustainable economic value when small businesses are equipped to innovate in ways that restore, protect, and responsibly use marine ecosystems. Yet, despite this enormous potential, Bahamian micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) often lack access to the technical training, mentorship, financial support, and environmental guidance needed to build ocean-friendly, investment-ready enterprises.

This is why the **Blue Economy Accelerator Programme** was created. Not simply to teach entrepreneurs how to operate in the marine sector, but to shape a new class of businesses that grow because they protect the very ecosystems that support them. *Businesses that see reef health as core infrastructure. Businesses that understand that sustainability is not a constraint, but a competitive advantage.*

The programme exists to ignite reef-positive innovation across the country by equipping Bahamian MSMEs with the tools, networks, and capital needed to turn conservation-aligned ideas into viable, scalable ventures. As we launch this specialized national accelerator, we shift the narrative from “extracting from the ocean” to “building with the ocean.” A thriving ocean means a thriving economy.

***The Ocean Advantage: Where Innovation Meets Sustainability***

# What is a reef-positive business?

"Reef positivity" refers to doing business in a manner that protects coral reefs rather than harming them. It focuses on reducing pressure on marine ecosystems while supporting long-term economic growth.

Reef-positive businesses:

- Support reef restoration or protection
- Integrate conservation into operations
- Protect the natural assets
- Measure and manage impact
- Create a competitive advantage through attracting eco-conscious customers, partners, and investors

## Eligible Blue Economy Business Categories

Applicants must operate within or support The Bahamas' marine and coastal economy, including:

- Tourism & eco-tourism
- Marine recreation & reef-safe hospitality
- Fisheries & seafood products
- Aquaculture, mariculture & seaweed farming
- Coral reef restoration & marine conservation
- Waste reduction & pollution solutions
- Marine technology & reef-safe equipment
- Coastal infrastructure & marina services
- Marine education & ocean literacy

# Programme Summary

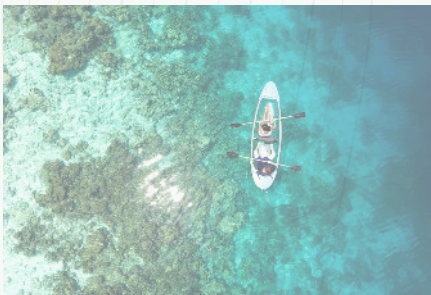
The Blue Economy Accelerator Programme is designed as a high-touch, 8-week experience that merges business development, conservation science, funding access, and ecosystem-building. Each element has been crafted to ensure that participating MSMEs emerge more capable and aligned with reef-positive principles.

The programme includes four core components:



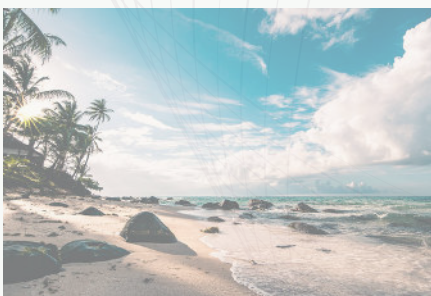
## Training

Participants will complete a structured curriculum that blends entrepreneurial training with marine and environmental education, as well as funding readiness prep.



## Mentorship

The mentorship experience helps participants refine their business model, integrate reef-positive practices, and prepare for the Final Pitch Competition.



## Networking

Connecting entrepreneurs to the right people is essential for growth. Throughout the 8 weeks, the Accelerator creates multiple opportunities for relationship-building, visibility, and collaboration.



## Funding Opportunities

The programme supports entrepreneurs through both seed capital and long-term financing pathways, ensuring that MSMEs have access to both early-stage and scalable capital.

# Training Course

Training follows an 8-week progression from business foundations and market understanding to conservation practices, financial readiness, and pitch preparation. The sections and modules are as follows:

#	Module Title	Module Description
1	<b>Orientation &amp; Blue Economy Foundations</b>	An introduction to the Blue Economy Accelerator Programme, marine ecosystems, and business innovation opportunities for Bahamian MSMEs.
2	<b>Business Models, Market Understanding &amp; Opportunity Definition</b>	Exploring customer needs, competitive positioning, and reef-positive business strategies to strengthen sustainable Blue Economy business opportunities.
3	<b>Financial Literacy &amp; Revenue Models</b>	Building financial literacy through sustainable revenue models, pricing strategies, financial projections, and funding readiness for Blue Economy MSMEs.
4	<b>Conservation Training &amp; Regulatory Requirements</b>	Developing reef-positive business practices, environmental safeguards, and sustainability metrics to align Blue Economy enterprises with marine conservation goals.
5	<b>Branding, Marketing &amp; Go-to-Market Strategy</b>	Guides branding, marketing, and digital strategies for blue economy market entry.
6	<b>Pitch Development, Financial Projections &amp; Funding Pathways</b>	Prepares participants for investment by refining pitch decks, strengthening impact storytelling, finalizing financial projections, and clarifying funding and growth pathways.

# Training Course cont'd

Training follows an 8-week progression from business foundations and market understanding to conservation practices, financial readiness, and pitch preparation. The sections and modules are as follows:

#	Module Title	Module Description
7	<b>Pitch Contest Preparation</b>	Finalizing participant selection, preparing businesses for pitching, and coordinating award ceremony activities to celebrate programme achievements and partnerships.
8	<b>Pitch Contest, Networking Event and Programme Closing</b>	Celebrating programme completion through pitching, networking, and seed funding awards to showcase investment-ready, reef-positive Blue Economy businesses.

# Structure & Eligibility

The Accelerator will consist of 4 cohorts, with each cohort focusing on a different area of The Bahamas - Central, North and South.

The initial cohort will be based in New Providence, beginning in Q2 2026. Others will follow in Q4 2026, Q2 2027, and Q3 2027.

After the registration period, applications will be scored using a standardized rubric to select the 10-12 cohort participants who show the highest potential and a reef-positive focus.

Upon completion of all programme requirements (training, mentorship, and pitch prep) and submission of deliverables, participants will be eligible to apply for seed funding of up to \$10,000.

The programme will culminate with a Networking Event, Pitch Contest & Grant Announcement, with funding awarded to the 5 most outstanding businesses.

## *Selection Criteria:*

- Be a Bahamian-owned MSME (51% or greater)
- Be operational or pre-revenue
- Operate within or directly support the Blue Economy in The Bahamas
- Commit to full participation in the programme
- Currently or demonstrates potential to integrate reef-positive principles into business operations

## *Funding Eligibility Requirements:*

- The MSME earns less than \$5,000,000 in annual sales.
- The MSME employs fewer than 50 persons.
- Training Completion
- Assignments Submission
- Business License or Proof of Application/Renewal
- Seed Grant Application Form completion
- Vendor Invoices and Wire Instructions

# Cohort 1 Schedule

Cohort 1 will focus on blue economy businesses in New Providence. Estimated dates for the cohort are provided below and are subject to change; date changes will be communicated to programme participants.

Date	Activity
1 <sup>st</sup> June - 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Programme Registration
2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2026	General Information Session
9 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Cohort selection and onboarding
10 <sup>th</sup> June - 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Completion of Baseline Surveys
11 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Mentor Assignment
15 <sup>h</sup> June - 7 <sup>sh</sup> August 2026	Week-By-Week Programme Implementation
18 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Press Conference and Programme Kickoff
5 <sup>th</sup> August - 7 <sup>th</sup> August 2026	Completion of End-of-Cohort Evaluation Surveys
20 <sup>th</sup> August 2026	Pitch Night & Networking event
21 <sup>st</sup> August - 25 <sup>st</sup> September 2026	Seed Grant Application and Disbursement

# Beyond Seed Funding: Access More Funding for Growth

*Choose a funding pathway that fits your business*

**We believe in long-term growth, not just short-term support.**

Eligible MSMEs can access further funding through our extended financing pathways:

- Up to \$20,000 in matching grant funding
- Up to \$80,000 in micro loan funding
- Up to \$250,000 in equity funding
- Up to \$500,000 in guaranteed loan funding

The Microloan and Guaranteed Loan Programmes also provide training and advisory support to eligible MSMEs, including guidance on business plans and financial statements.

## **How It Works**

After applying and confirming eligibility, the SBDC's Investment Committee may approve you for a matching grant, microloan and a government-backed loan guarantee. With this approval, our team will help you apply directly to trusted financial partners.



## **Ready to Grow?**

**Fill out the Service Request Form and get connected with an advisor today!**