



# BESF

BARBADOS ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY FUND

# CALL FOR APPLICATION



# Barbados Environmental Sustainability Fund Inc. (BESF)

## First Call for Student and Postdoctoral Researcher Applications

### Background

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Established in 2019, the Barbados Environmental Sustainability Fund Inc. (BESF) was formally incorporated as a non-profit company pursuant to the Charities Act of Barbados in 2022. The BESF is a private company whose Mission is to source and provide financial resources and technical support to enable environmental conservation and sustainability in Barbados.

### Call for Applications

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The BESF is accepting applications from Students and Postdoctoral Researchers for tuition or research grants, provided these requests align with its strategic thematic areas. This a competitive process that is open to:

**Students** Barbadians enrolled in a local, post-secondary academic institution, applying for a tuition grant or research grant of up to \$10,000 BBD. Students must be enrolled in an academic programme that is relevant to one or more of the BESF strategic thematic areas and have completed the first year of their programme.

**Postdoctoral Researcher** Barbadians who have received a doctorate degree, or professional equivalent, within the past four years and is affiliated with an academic institution (local, regional, or international) applying for a research grant of up to \$30,000 BBD. The academic research must be in one or more of the BESF strategic thematic areas and undertaken in Barbados or is directly relevant and beneficial to environmental conservation and sustainability in Barbados.

The Call for Applications is open from **29 August 2024 through to 29 September 2024**.

Note, only applicants that pass the eligibility screening will be considered for the awarding of grants. The results of the selection process are final and cannot be appealed.

## Eligibility Requirements

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Eligible students must:

- Be a Barbadian national.
- Be enrolled at a Barbadian, post-secondary academic institution pursuing an academic programme that is relevant to one or more of the BESF strategic thematic areas.
- Have completed the first year of the academic programme.
- Be able to provide a letter of endorsement from the institution's Principal/Dean/Programme Coordinator, or a research proposal signed by the Research Advisor.
- Provide a copy of their most recent academic transcript.
- Provide a copy the institution's tuition quotation for the intended academic programme and period (for tuition grant requests, only).

Eligible postdoctoral researchers must:

- Be a Barbadian national.
- Have completed the doctorate degree, or professional equivalent, within the past four years.
- Provide a copy of the doctorate degree certificate.
- Be affiliated with an academic institution and provide a copy of a Letter of Appointment.
- Provide a copy of the research proposal signed by the Academic Advisor.
- Undertake the research in Barbados or demonstrate that the research is directly relevant and beneficial to environmental conservation and sustainability in Barbados.

## Focal Areas

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The BESF is accepting applications for tuition or research grants that align with one or more of its strategic thematic areas:

- Biodiversity conservation and management.
- Disaster risk management.
- Climate resilience through mitigation and adaptation.
- Renewable and non-renewable natural resource management, including fisheries.
- Renewable energy.
- Forestry, tourism and agriculture.
- Marine, coastal and terrestrial protected areas (PA).
- Ocean and coastal research.
- Integrated solid waste management.
- Integrated water resources management.
- Green and blue economy initiatives.
- Sustainable livelihoods and human well-being.

The BESF will also support applications that have one or more of the following cross-cutting themes:

- Financial tools, mechanisms and instruments.
- Environmental standards and legislation.
- Capacity building.

- Knowledge management.
- Research.
- Gender and vulnerable groups.
- Environmental education and stewardship.
- Communications, outreach, public relations.

## Grant Size and Duration

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Applicants can apply for tuition or research grants as follows:

Category	Grant Amount (BBD)
Student	Up to \$10,000
Postdoctoral Researcher	Up to \$30,000

Grants will typically be awarded for a maximum of a 2-years, and up to 3-years in special cases.

## Eligible Expenses

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### Tuition

The tuition grant covers the cost of classroom instructions at an eligible academic institution for the period of enrolment requested. It also extends to covering the following costs of attendance: enrolment fees and required course textbooks.

### Research Projects

Expenditures must be linked to project performance and necessary for the implementation of project activities. All expenditures must be incurred by the project end date, as defined in the Grant Agreement. Funding under the BESF can be used for:

- Contracting of specialists, individuals or corporations for specific products through a professional services contract.
- Services other than consulting services based on physical work that can be measured and for which standards exist, such as mapping, aerial photography, or satellite imagery.
- Field equipment and, where reasonable, office and computer equipment.
- Small constructions that do not have negative environmental or social effects.
- Fees for instructors or facilitators; training-related travel expenses; course registration fees from academic institutions; rental of training facilities; material for training, preparation, reproduction and distribution.
- Rentals, travel expenses, consumables and office supplies.
- Salaries and general administrative expenses, provided they do not exceed a threshold of 20% of the total project budget.

Indirect costs may be approved. These are overhead expenses incurred by an organisation as a result of project implementation, but which cannot be easily attributed to a specific project. These overheads are generally shared among projects and/or other operations (e.g., accounting and administrative services, utilities, technology support, facility maintenance, etc.). For indirect costs to be allowable:

- Applicants must present a well-documented indirect cost rate (e.g., organisation policy, audited financial reports).
- It must not be included in costs assigned to another budget line (e.g. salaries and general administrative costs).
- The rate must not exceed 10% of the total eligible direct costs.

Non-eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- The purchase of land, the resettlement of people or the removal or alteration of any physical or cultural property under any circumstances.
- Activities relating to the extraction or depletion of non-renewable natural resources (including forests, trees, minerals and oil/gas).
- Infrastructure or other activities that impact livelihoods or restrict access to natural resources.
- Operating or administrative costs of ministries, departments or agencies of the Government.
- Salaries for any of the grantees' staff, with the exception of such salaries related to positions established specifically for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the project.

## Co-financing

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Co-financing is optional for small grants and can take the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

## Grant Payments

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### Tuition

Successful applicants are required to sign a one-time Tuition Grant Agreement, which is co-signed by the Principal or designee of the academic institution. However, a new agreement must be signed if the student takes a break in studies for a period of more than one year.

Grants are issued once the academic institution has confirmed student registration; and disbursements are made per semester. Confirmation must be received by the BESF at least one week prior to the payment due dates. Tuition fees are paid directly to the academic institution on behalf of the student. Depending on the nature of the approved costs of attendance, funds may be disbursed directly to the student via cheque or direct deposit to the student's bank account.

If a cheque is issued, it should be cashed within 180 calendar days or the service provider may place a stop payment on the cheque.

Banking details must be provided by the academic institution and student (if required).

Subsequent payments will only be made once continuous attendance has been confirmed by the academic institution.

### Research Projects

Successful applicants are required to sign a one-time Grant Agreement, which is co-signed by the Principal or designee of the academic institution.

Disbursements are made based on the terms outlined in the Grant Agreement and issued directly to the academic institution on the applicant's behalf. The academic institution agrees to the following requirements:

- Establish a separate interest-bearing bank account at an authorised financial institution before the receipt of the first tranche of funds from the BESF;
- Deposit all disbursements received from the BESF into the Bank Account established within two (2) business days of receipt from the BESF;
- Keep separate, accurate and up-to-date accounts of BESF funds in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and standards;
- Maintain books, records, documents and other evidence pertaining to all costs and expenses incurred and revenues acquired under the Grant to the extent and in such detail as will properly reflect all costs and expenses representing the Grant awarded. These records shall be maintained for a period of six (6) years after the final expenditure report is submitted;
- Ensure that internal controls are instituted with respect to the disbursements of funds under the Grant to safeguard all funds;
- Provide an independently verified financial statements accounting for all expenses incurred, financed under the Grant, in the execution of the Project at the completion of all activities; and
- Comply with all statutory requirements as regards legal, tax, accounts, audit or examination of accounts, annual reports and annual returns applicable under the laws of Barbados.

## **Documentation requirements**

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### Students

Applicants are required to submit:

- Copy of National ID
- Letter of Endorsement from current Academic Institution
- Copy of most recent academic transcript
- Quotation of the institution's tuition fees (for tuition grant requests)
- Full research proposal, signed by the Research Advisor (for research grant requests)

### Postdoctoral Researchers

Applicants are required to submit:

- Copy of National ID
- Copy of doctorate degree certificate
- Letter of Appointment from the affiliated Academic Institution
- Full research project proposal, signed by the Academic Supervisor
- CV of each team member and their respective roles
- List of up to 5 of your publications and/or recent presentations

Applications with incomplete documentation will not be evaluated.

## **Submissions**

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Applicants will be required to create an account by registering to the platform; and it is via this online portal that all applications and required information/documentation will be submitted. The platform will also facilitate two-way communication between the applicant and BESF.

Hand delivered or emailed applications or other documentation will not be accepted.

The BESF will be utilising an online Grant Management Platform to manage the entire grant-making programme, including the submission of applications. The platform allows users to submit applications, upload supporting documentation, track the status of their applications, and communicate with the BESF Secretariat. Access the platform here: <https://besf.submit.com/>

Applicants are required to register to the platform and apply by filling out and submitting the appropriate form. For guidance on utilising the BESF Grant Management Platform access a manual here: [Grants Management Platform: Application Guidelines](#)

Hand delivered or emailed applications or other documentation will not be accepted.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

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The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

### Student Tuition

- Personal Statement and Academic Merit (max 15 points)

*(reflects a highly motivated individual with a sincere interest that aligns with the BESF's vision; grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (B) or Higher; Letter of Endorsement indicating student merits the tuition grant (e.g. due to their demonstrated abilities and potential for learning)).*

- Relevance and Impact (max 15 points)

*(student's degree/academic programme is relevant to the BESF strategic thematic areas; extent to which the tuition grant could support environmental conservation and sustainability in Barbados; extent to which the grant is likely to advance the student's longer-term education and/or career goals.)*

- Cost (max 10 points)

*(the requested funding amount is \$10,000 BBD or less; the outline of the tuition cost reconciles with the requested amount.)*

Only applications with a score of at **least 30 points** will be considered for a grant award. As this is a competitive process, and based on the funding available for the Call, the TAC will make recommendations to the BESF Board of Directors for the awarding of grants.

### **Student Research Grant**

- Personal Statement and Academic Merit (max 15 points)

*(reflects a highly motivated individual with a sincere interest that aligns with the BESF's vision; grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (B) or higher; Letter of Endorsement indicating student merits the research grant (e.g. due to their demonstrated abilities and potential for learning)).*

- Relevance, Understanding of Research, and Impact (max 30 points)

*(student's degree/academic programme is relevant to the BESF strategic thematic areas; extent to which the research proposal aligns with one or more of the BESF strategic thematic areas, including cross-cutting themes, where applicable; quality of the proposal summary and the full uploaded proposal (signed by the Academic Advisor) demonstrates an understanding of concepts, methodologies, and project implementation; extent to which the student has a direct and integral role in the overall research project; likelihood that the research could lead to publications or other knowledge products; extent to which the research project is likely to have tangible positive impacts on conservation and environmental sustainability in Barbados)*

- Schedule and Budget (max 15 points)

*(project duration is for 24 months or less; requested funding amount is \$10,000 BBD or less; proposed research project budget is realistic and demonstrates cost effectiveness.)*

- Compliance and Risks Register (max 15 points)

*(demonstrates understanding of institutional research ethics and plagiarism policies and mechanisms to ensure compliance; research project complies with the BESF Environmental and Social Policy and Exclusion List; potential project risks are identified and realistic mitigation measures provided).*

- Innovation, Sustainability, and/or Replicability (max 15 points)

*(extent to which the research project is original or innovative; extent to which the impact of the research project can be sustained after closure; extent to which the research project can be replicated or scaled)*

- Experience and Capacity (max 5 points)

*(experience of the student and/or the Research Advisor in implementing grant-funded research projects is demonstrated)*



Only applications with a score of at **least 75 points** will be considered for a grant award. As this is a competitive process, and based on the funding available for the Call, the TAC will make recommendations to the BESF Board of Directors for the awarding of grants.

### **Postdoctoral Researcher**

- Personal Statement and Academic Merit (max 20 points)

*(personal statement suggests a highly motivated individual with a sincere interest that aligns with the BESF's mission; doctorate degree awarded in the last four (4) years; demonstrated history of publication in peer-reviewed journals and/or presentations at regional/international conferences (at least five (5) examples); Letter of Appointment from the affiliated academic institution and the position is for a period that covers the duration of the proposed research project)*

- Relevance, Understanding of Research, and Impact (max 25 points)

*research proposal aligns with one or more of the BESF strategic thematic areas, including cross-cutting themes, where applicable; quality of the proposal summary and the full uploaded proposal (signed by the Academic Advisor) demonstrates an understanding of concepts, methodologies, and project implementation; extent to which the postdoctoral researcher has a direct and integral role in the overall research project; likelihood that the research could lead to publications or other knowledge products; extent to which the research project is likely to have tangible positive impacts on conservation and environmental sustainability in Barbados)*

- Schedule and Budget (max 15 points)

*(the project duration is for 24 months or less; the requested funding amount is \$30,000 BBD or less; the proposed research project budget is realistic and demonstrates cost effectiveness)*

- Compliance and Risks Register (max 15 points)

*(demonstrates understanding of institutional research ethics and plagiarism policies and mechanisms to ensure compliance; research project complies with the BESF Environmental and Social Policy and Exclusion List; potential project risks are identified and realistic mitigation measures provided).*

- Innovation, Sustainability, and/or Replicability (max 15 points)

*(extent to which the research project is original or innovative; extent to which the impact of the research project can be sustained after closure; extent to which the research project can be replicated or scaled)*

- Experience and Capacity (max 10 points)

*(demonstrated experience of the postdoctoral researcher and/or the affiliated academic institution in implementing grant-funded research projects; project team qualifications and experience are described, with supporting evidence (e.g. CVs), and are appropriate to support project implementation)*

Only applications with a score of at **least 80 points** will be considered for a grant award. As this is a competitive process, and based on the funding available for the Call, the TAC will make recommendations to the BESF Board of Directors for the awarding of grants.

## Timeline

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Important dates and deadlines for the first BESF Call for Applications – Students and Postdoctoral Researchers:

<b>BESF 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Applications</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Time</b>
Opening of the Call for Applications	<b>Thursday, August 29, 2024</b>	
Deadline for requesting any clarifications regarding applications	Thursday, 19 September 2024	5:00 PM
Deadline for submission of applications	<b>Sunday, 29 September 2024</b>	<b>11:59 PM</b>
Screening and evaluation of applications completed	*Monday, 25 November 2024	
Evaluation results submitted to the Board for selection decision	* Monday, 16 December 2024	
Notification of evaluation results to applicants	* Monday, 13 January 2025	
Signature of Grant Agreements	* Monday, 3 February 2025	

\*Indicative dates, only.

## Inquiries

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Interested applicants may submit inquiries to the BESF Secretariat via email: [technicalofficer@besf.bb](mailto:technicalofficer@besf.bb). We strongly encourage that questions related to the submission of applications be submitted no later than **5:00 PM on Thursday, 19 September 2024**.

## Signing of the Grant Agreement

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Before signing the Grant Agreement, the applicants selected must provide any additional information requested by the BESF and demonstrate compliance with stated requirements.