

School Sustainability and Resilience Fund

Guidelines for Applicants 2026



School Sustainability and Resilience Fund 2026

The School Sustainability and Resilience Fund (**SSRF**) has been established by Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council (**Regional Council**) to raise awareness and understanding of climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability within our communities or to take action in these areas.

The SSRF will be open for applications from Monday 19 January to Sunday 8 March 2026. Funding will be allocated through participatory budgeting (public voting) to determine which projects receive funding (details are provided within this document).

Applicants can apply for between \$1,000 and \$5,000 (excl. GST) for sustainability projects and between \$1,000 and \$10,000 (excl. GST) for climate change and natural disaster resilience projects. Examples of sustainability projects include māra kai (vegetable gardens), fruit orchards, rainwater tanks, worm farms and composting equipment. Projects supporting climate change and natural disaster resilience include (but are not limited to) climate change/natural disaster education, climate/environmental monitoring, active transport, planting native plants/trees and pest animal/plant control.

The eligibility and voting process are set out further below. All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be included in the voting process. Successful applications from the voting process will receive funding to undertake their project. A full timeline of the process is set out below.

Eligibility criteria

Applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility by Regional Council staff in accordance with the criteria set out below:

Applicant Eligibility

Schools, kura kaupapa Māori, kōhanga reo, early childhood centres, kindergartens and tertiary institutions in the Bay of Plenty are eligible to apply to the SSRF. Acceptance of applications from any other education providers will be at the discretion of Regional Council staff. Each educational institution can only submit one application for funding per year.

Project Eligibility

All applications must contribute to one or more of the following categories:

- Raising awareness of climate change or natural hazards.
- Improving long-term resilience to climate change or natural hazards.
- Reducing or mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving environmental sustainability.

Applications may include activities related to building awareness, education, community action, practical projects, research initiatives or similar. Applications better suited to existing council funding streams, such as the Environmental Enhancement Fund, will not be eligible for the SSRF.

Additional Criteria

In addition, applications must meet all the following criteria:

- The project area must be located within the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's boundaries.
- **The requested funding is for no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$5,000 (excl. GST) for a sustainability project, or no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$10,000 (excl. GST) for a climate / natural disaster resilience project.**
- **Labour costs for external labourers / contractors must be no more than 30% of the total budget, and will only be approved if specialist skills are required to deliver the project.**
- The budget must be reasonable and sufficiently detailed. Quotes are required to support project budgets over \$5,000 (GST excl.) or may be requested if staff determine that the costs proposed are unreasonable.
- The project must not commence until funding has been approved (i.e. Regional Council will not fund projects retrospectively).
- The applicant must provide evidence of landowner approval/support for the project.
- Health and safety considerations must be appropriately addressed.
- The applicant must ensure that no other approvals are required (i.e. resource consent) to undertake the project.
- The applicant has not received any other funding from the Regional Council for the same project/purpose.
- **Any changes to the agreed budget or project plan must be preapproved in writing by the Regional Council.**
- The applicant must sign a funding agreement with the Regional Council.
- **The project must be able to be completed and accountability reporting submitted no later than Friday 11 December 2026.**
- The applicant must be committed to maintaining the project.
- The applicant agrees that Regional Council can showcase the project in promotional material and provides photos for this purpose.

Participatory budgeting and funding decisions

Applications that have met all of the eligibility criteria will go through to the participatory budgeting process, which means that the public will vote for their preferred projects online at <https://www.participate.boprc.govt.nz/>. There will be two voting rounds.

Round One

The first round will include all eligible applications and will be open to members of the public to vote for their preferred projects. Each participant who votes will have a set budget or 'wallet' that they can allocate to projects. Each project will have an estimated budget, and when participants vote for a project the value of that project will be deducted from their total budget. Participants will also have a 'minimum' amount that they have to spend, to ensure that they vote for more than just one project.

Round Two

This round provides a 'second chance' for projects who were not voted in during the public voting round. Funding will be allocated by a youth panel, comprised of rangatahi from across the Bay of Plenty. This voting round will not be open to the public.

Contacting successful applicants

Regional Council Staff will notify the successful applicants as soon as possible after the youth panel has completed their funding round. A list of successful applicants will also be published on the Participate website. The successful applicants will be provided with a funding agreement which will outline the terms and conditions for the funding.

Payment

The method and timing of payment(s) shall be at the discretion of the Regional Council; however, every effort will be made to pay recipients by early July 2026. Successful applicants will be required to supply a tax invoice and deposit slip for their nominated bank account.

An accountability report and evidence of expenditure will be required no later than Friday 11 December 2026.

Tips for applications

This is an example of how your project will look on the Regional Council's SSRF Participate Page. It is essential that you provide a well-written project title and description and an attractive, **high-resolution photo (in landscape format)**, as this is what will be used to promote your project to the public.



Outdoor Classroom Update
Project sponsor: Bethlehem Community Pre-School
[Read More](#)

Cost: \$2,402



Outdoor Classroom Update

Bethlehem Community Pre-School would love to be a recipient of a BOPRC Sustainability Grant to use towards the building of two new raised vegetable gardens. Our Tamariki and Kaiako love to garden together and utilise our beautiful outdoor space as a secondary classroom. Having these will make our gardening activities more accessible, maintainable and enjoyable.

Project sponsor: Bethlehem Community Pre-School

Cost: \$2,402

Promotion and publicity

A condition of funding is that the Regional Council has the right to showcase SSRF projects through a variety of means which may include:

- Social media (posts, photos or videos),
- Newspaper advertisements,
- Radio advertisements,
- Description and photos/videos on the Regional Council website,
- Word of mouth by regional councillors and staff (i.e. staff presentations),
- Media releases,
- Council newsletters,
- Public meetings, and
- Other internal opportunities such as roadshows or community open days.

When posting on social media about your SSRF project, we ask that funding recipients tag **@BayofPlentyRegionalCouncil**. Please ensure you have the express permission of any people who are included in photos supplied to the Regional Council.

Regional Council staff can provide tips and tricks on what makes a good social media post and will provide Regional Council logos for use when appropriate.

Application and funding timeframes

Below is an overview of the expected timing and sequence of events of the SSRF. Please note that the exact dates may be subject to change.

- Step 1: SSRF is open and promoted to educational institutions to apply. An online application form will be available on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Participate website. **(19 January 2026)**.
- Step 2: SSR Fund applications close **(8 March 2026)**.
- Step 3: SSR Fund applications are assessed against the project eligibility criteria by Regional Council staff **(9 March – 27 March 2026)**.
- Step 4: Round One of the participatory budgeting process - online voting is open to the public **(30 March – 27 April 2026)**.
- Step 5: Round Two of the participatory budgeting process - Youth Panel (not open to the public) **(6 May – 15 May 2026)**.
- Step 6: Successful applicants are announced **(22 May 2026)**.
- Step 7: Successful applicants must sign a funding agreement before **30 June 2026**.
- Step 8: Project site visits of selected projects in November and December 2026 by Regional Council staff, councillors and funding partners.
- Step 9: Funding recipients must implement their projects and submit accountability reporting by **11 December 2026**.