Finding a Potential Funder

Fundraising Guidance Handbook for Blue Charter Action Groups

The Commonwealth
Blue Charter

Finding a Potential Funder: Fundraising Guidance Handbook for Blue Charter Action Groups

March 2021

The Commonwealth

Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

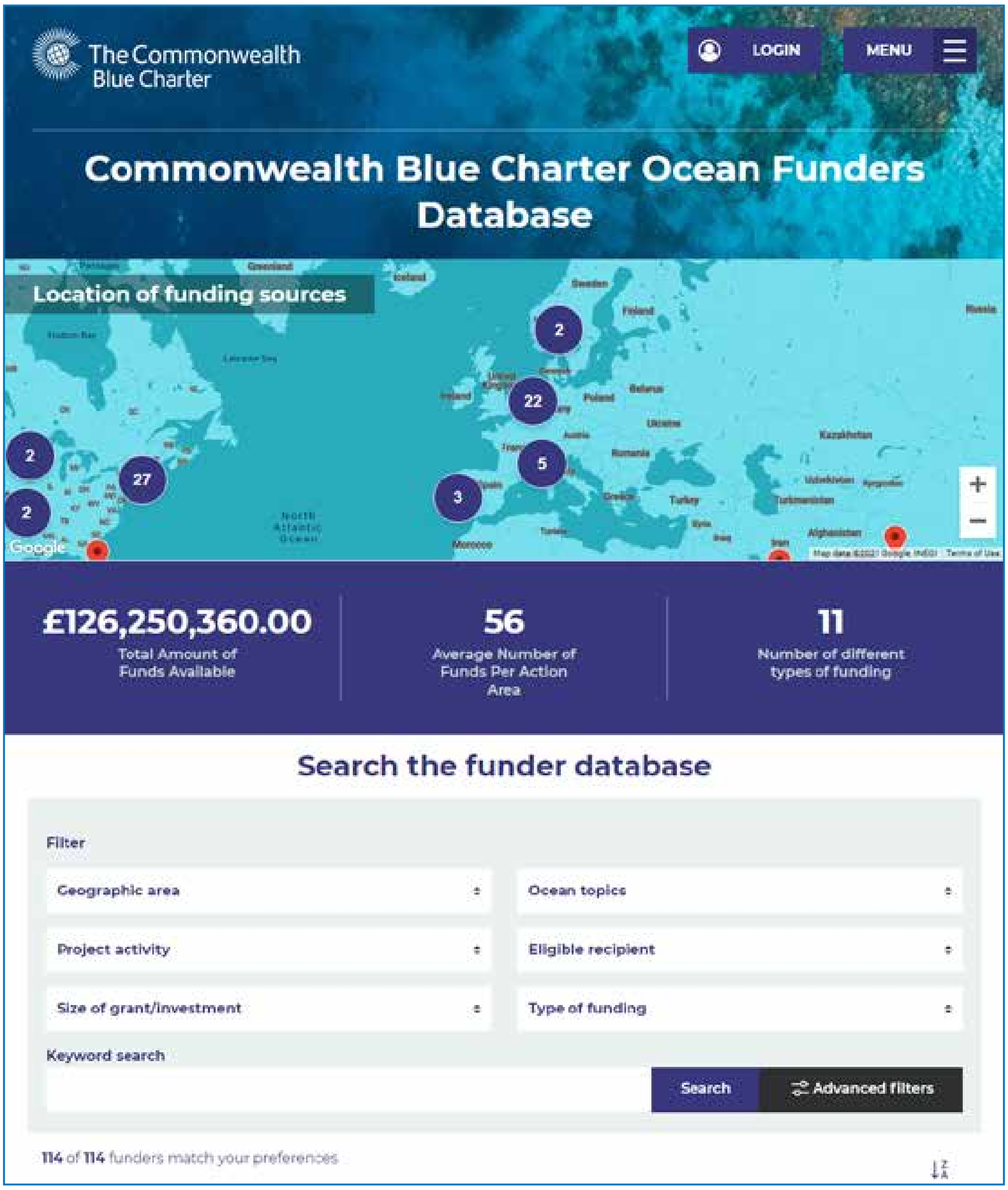
Contents

Introduction

Purpose of this handbook

This handbook accompanies an online database of prospective funders for the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Groups. The database is located here: https://oceanfunds.bluecharter.thecommonwealth.org

Figure 1. Screenshot of the funder database website



The overall aim of the database and the handbook is to support Action Groups in sourcing funding for their work. The handbook has two main purposes:

To provide advice on how to approach fundraising with the types of funders listed in the database, including key questions you should ask yourself when trying to match a project to a prospective funder;

1. To provide advice on how to approach fundraising with the types of funders listed in the database, including key questions you should ask yourself when trying to match a project to a prospective funder;
2. To provide guidance on how to use the database and interpret its information in order to be able to implement a fundraising approach with funders

How to navigate and use the handbook

The handbook contains guidance notes for using the database, which are set out in the order in which a development team would typically approach the process of fundraising for a project. It is divided into four sections. This structure is designed to help familiarise handbook users with the key steps required to successfully move from a project idea or a need for funding through to identification of specific steps to take in order to engage well-matched funding prospects.

The four sections are as follows:

1. Filter fields: defining a project or proposal;
2. Key things to consider when finding a suitable funder;
3. Making contact and applying;
4. Relationship – and partnership-building.

If you are new to the process of fundraising, it may be useful to read through the handbook fully and familiarise yourself with the Database Fields Glossary in Appendix 1 before starting work inside the database. If you have more experience of project fundraising, you may wish to refer to single sections of the handbook relating to individual parts of the fundraising process.

Additionally, the handbook includes three appendices:

Appendix 1: Database Fields Glossary – definitions of the terms and fields used in the database and explanations as to how they have been used;

Appendix 3: Checklist – key questions to answer before making an application or starting to build a partnership with a potential funder;

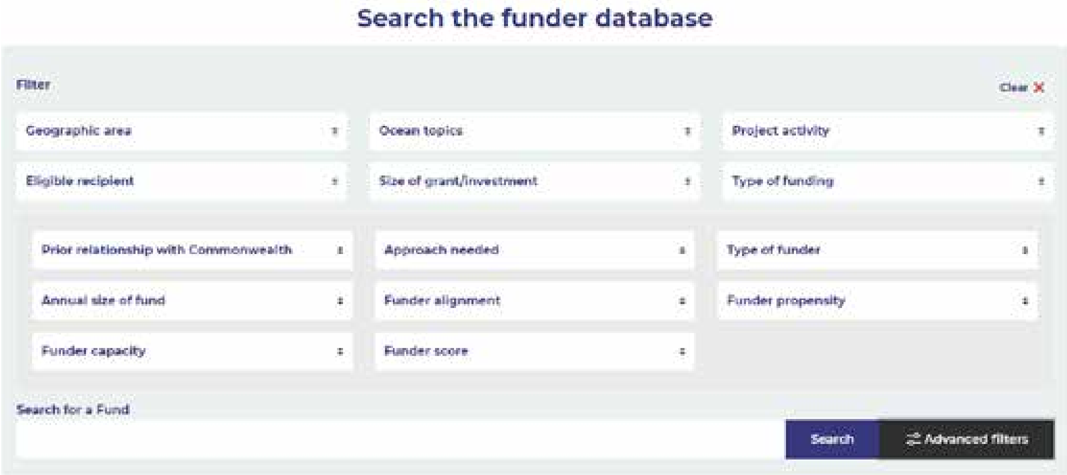
Appendix 3: Links to further guidance.

Filter fields: defining a project or proposal

The intention of the database is for you to be able to use the information created through your project design process to identify potential funders for your work, and then to narrow down to the most suitable funders using different layers of filterable fields.

It is tempting to want to begin with the biggest funders, or the funders that are most likely to give to ocean work in general. However, funders will have specific areas within the subject that they like to focus on, and much funding is still project-based. As such, it is a good idea to search for funders that are aligned with the kind of work that you aim to do, in terms of both activity and ocean area.

Figure 2. The basic and advanced filter fields available on the database to search for funders.



To begin with, you might ask yourself a number of project-related questions that will help you filter down the donor prospects on the database. Many of these questions will have been defined when you designed your project. It is also a good idea to identify potential funders and start to build relationships with them during project design, as many donors will add value through project design advice or by referring you to relevant and useful partners.

What do you want the funding for/how do you intend to work?

Ocean topic: In what area will the outcomes of your work be? What Action Group(s) does this work touch on? Many aspects overlap; could this project cover more than one Action Group?

Activity focus: What activity do you want to deliver? What are the primary objectives of the project? Are there any secondary objectives that are potentially more fundable (e.g. human development outcomes that would open up potential new funding sources)?

1. **Where** do you want to work?

   Do you have a specific country, habitat or ecosystem in mind?

   Looking at **Geographic area** can help you narrow down to regions (e.g. least developed countries, small island developing states) and sometimes ecosystems (e.g. Arctic, Mediterranean).

Different ecosystems might also be covered through the **Action Group** field.

2. **Who**/what partners are you working with?

   If you are able to partner with another organisation, company or community group, it is worth choosing these options in addition to national government, etc., as these actors may be able to host the funding if you do not fit the criteria for **Type of recipient.**

   Who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this project? Are there particular human communities that will participate and benefit, and will you be working closely with these groups to deliver the project? You can identify some of these factors in the **Activity focus** field, such as by choosing *indigenous peoples* or *local community engagement.*

Tip:

If you are applying as a country or as part of a national government without any partners, some donors (especially philanthropic foundations) will not be able to, or will prefer not to, give, for tax or diplomatic reasons. Also, most funders, regardless of type, hugely value multi-actor partnerships across the public, private and charity sectors and projects developed in tandem with the local community. As such developing projects in collaboration with other parties is advantageous on a number of different levels. The resources list in Appendix 3 contains links to other organisations working on oceans issues that could be useful partners or be helpful for networking.

1. **How:** What amounts and types of support are you considering?

2. How much money do you need for the project? Do you have any co-funders? You can filter by **Typical size of grant/investment**.

   What types of support do you need? In the **Type of funding** field, and its related field, **Type of funder**, you can narrow down funders by the types of support they give – whether it comes as a straightforward grant, a loan with interest or technical support in lieu of funds. Try to be flexible about what types of funding you could receive in order to broaden your prospect pool. For example, could you apply to receive tailored technical assistance from a partner rather than fundraise for a grant to pay for a new staff member?

Tip:

We have deliberately not included 'When' in this list of questions. Other than prize funding, all other types of support will require that you deliver the project after the funds have been secured. Also, funders have a wide range of timetables, and it is best to refer to the links on their application or their funding process for information about this. As a general rule, however, you should plan to start fundraising 12-18 months before you want to begin work. Broadly speaking, the larger the amount, the longer the lead time. Do not try to get your project fast-tracked. Framing your request for funding as very urgent and important and therefore outside their normal rules will not help you build the trust and respect you need for a long-term, highly successful relationship.

Key things to consider when finding a suitable funder

Once you have narrowed your search down to a manageable number of potential funders using the filter fields, you should delve into the following free-text fields: **About the fund, Eligibility criteria** and **Application process.** These contain essential information on donor priorities and criteria, and how to go about securing support from them. Where possible, links have been provided to allow you to jump directly to the most up-to date information. All of the most vital information that couldn't be captured in the filterable fields is contained here, so make sure you read these fields for any donor you are considering approaching.

We also recognise that funder and application information can change, so, where possible, links to the original information has been provided in lieu of transcribing this into the database.

About the fund: This field contains the most important top-line information for you to know about the donor and their approach to funding, including:

> **Background**: Why was the funder created and by whom? This can give you a glimpse into why the fund was created (e.g. personal, business or statutory reasons) and therefore what particular things the funder will be looking for in their funding partnerships
>
> **Approach**: What is the problem the funder is seeking to solve in the world (e.g. habitat loss, loss of livelihoods and poor resilience owing to climate change) and how is it looking to solve it (e.g. microloans, scientific research, raising public awareness, public-private partnerships, grassroots organising)? This field will often provide greater detail than the filterable fields and tell you more about the funder's funding preferences.

Tip:

Information given in **About the fund** can provide insight into what the particular funder is looking for in a partnership and help you identify what your project or you as an organisation can offer that they might be looking for. It is also helpful to think about whether your project approaches the problem the same way this funder seeks to, or how you might otherwise frame the project to better speak to the funder's interests.

1. Eligibility criteria: Any criteria not covered in the filterable fields, or that add greater detail to those fields, are captured here. This may include any of the following criteria:
   - Type of recipient they will fund;
   - Eligible countries/locations;
   - Co-finance rules;
   - Types of activities they will fund;
   - Restrictions or requirements;
   - Funding caps (e.g. overhead percentage).
2. Application process: This section brings together any available information about how to secure funding, whether through a formal application to a Request for Proposal (RFP) or through building a partnership. Where the donor explicitly says they do not accept

unsolicited applications, this will be highlighted here and often in the Summary field, to draw attention to it. Where application processes, web pages listing RFPs or grant round timelines have been published, these are provided as links.

Tip:

Many funders do not have specific partnerships or co-funding requirements *per se*, but it's still a good idea to make this your default approach. These elements are now a standard expectation among donors because it is believed they promote collaboration, cohesion and programmatic sustainability. Despite the additional time and effort it takes to develop partnerships, proposals with multi-sector consortia with multiple donors will be most successful and most likely to receive the largest grants.

Other fields to consider

In addition to the essential fields above, you may want to consider the following categories when identifying possible funders, depending on your circumstances:

Country where the funder is located and **Currency:** This is less important than perhaps related criteria such as the types and location of eligible recipients; for example, development banks will only give to activity taking place in developing countries. However, it is important to be aware here, as the rules, particularly for non-profits/charities, vary by country. For example, many USA-based foundations will give only to US non-profits, mainly for reasons related to tax; the same is the case for Australia. In most countries, foundations are usually registered as non-profits or charities, but the requirements on publishing information vary by country. For example, financial and governance information about charities and foundations registered in Switzerland is very rarely publicly available. Where available, the registered organisation number for non-profits and foundations has been provided in the database.

N.B. Further details on registered charities and non-profits may be available online via the registered organisation number for the country of registration. Links to some of these databases are listed in Appendix 3 (e.g. UK Charity Commission website).

Approach needed: Generally speaking, organisations that allow a direct approach for funds tend to be more restrictive in their criteria, so it is certainly worth reviewing the criteria fields and links in detail before submitting an application. Furthermore, most direct approaches will be for specific RFPs on a set timetable. If you find that certain grant programmes are closed or are between rounds, you might want to consider a more proactive relationship-based approach with a donor.

Prospect score: If you want a quick and easy assessment of the best possible funders once you have filtered down based on your requirements, the overall prospect score could be useful. You can adjust this requirement according to the type, amount and timing of funds you require. If you need only a small amount and the donor's likelihood of giving is more important to you right now, you might consider funders with a 2 or 3 Capacity rating but a 1 or 2 Propensity rating. Likewise, if you don't want to consider a donor that is not a perfect match with the Blue Charter aims, you might choose to narrow down to those with an Alignment rating of 1. However, the prospect score should not be used in isolation: it represents merely a best guess based on the information available.

Commonwealth relationship with funder: If the Commonwealth or a member country has an existing relationship with this funder, it will be indicated with a tick. An introduction from a Blue Charter colleague can be really helpful in furthering your relationship with the potential funder, particularly if the funder does not accept unsolicited applications and a relationship-based approach is required.

Type of funder: Generally speaking, different types of funders require different levels, types and timing of information and have different ideas about the ideal way to solve global issues. An understanding of these differences is useful to know when deciding which kinds of funding to pursue and how to structure your application to fit with the donor lens.

> **Corporate foundations:** Consider the industry they work in as a driver to their giving, as well as the marketing, market positioning and technical/research benefits for them as a company in getting involved with your project. Some corporate foundations have very separate aims and objectives from their parent company. Others have strong alignment with their parent company; in this case, if you have good prior relationships with the company in question, this may stand you in good stead in trying to gain support from the foundation. In order to have a positive impact on public perceptions of their brand, many corporate foundations will put geographical constraints on their funding, limiting grants to communities where they have production or operation facilities.
>
> **Philanthropic foundations:** Pay attention to the personal and professional background of the foundation. Some are re-granting foundations that exist to give away the money entrusted to them by others. Some are the personal giving vehicles of wealthy individuals or families. In the latter case, it is always worth considering the background of the founder and their reasons for starting the foundation. The degree to which an individual founder's ethos is spelled out in published materials varies hugely but will usually inform the foundation's areas of focus and approach. Even if your project's area of work (e.g. ocean conservation) seems very different from the background of the donor (e.g. pharmaceuticals), try to keep in mind the lens through which your project may be viewed based on the information you have about the donor (e.g. interest in prestige ocean sports and leisure; potential blue economy opportunities for pharmaceuticals). This does not mean necessarily changing the focus of your project to match the donor lens, but perhaps framing it such a way or drawing out certain aspects of the project that help you speak to the donor in their own 'language'.
>
> Philanthropic foundations change their giving strategies fairly frequently (usually every three to five years) so it is always worth checking to see if their giving priorities are evolving. Larger foundations will also have full-time paid programmatic staff; it is worth getting to know them and informing them about your programmatic goals, as they may be able to advise you or keep you in the loop about changes to their strategies or structure.
>
> **Development banks:** These tend to want to use financial mechanisms in a targeted way to 'correct' market failings and use their influence/backing to attract funding from private sector investors. The commerciality of your proposal – strong value for money, clear path to market development – will be crucial to success. Funding from development banks tends to be 'blended financing', meaning that they include a number of different funding mechanisms, precisely deployed to meet specific financing goals. If grants are given, it is rarely to cover the total project cost, but often comes alongside a loan, debt restructuring or other financial mechanism. (For more information, see also the separate Commonwealth Blue Charter background document and case studies on Blue Finance.)
>
> **Donor-advised funds:** These funds have operated in the USA for some time but have emerged only recently in other countries. As such, they vary widely in operation, and you will have to assess them case by case. You may find that a DAF operates in a very 'administrative' way – simply carrying out the wishes of the pool of funders, and therefore your key task is simply to write an application that perfectly matches their criteria. Other

DAFs are more 'strategic' and employ experts (in development/climate/environment, for example) to help find/create great projects on behalf of their donors. In these cases, such individuals can be powerful allies, and it will be worth the effort to get to know them as well as you can.

Alliance/initiative: In the past few years, a growing number of these types of funding vehicles have been created, often through collaboration and co-funding of five or more of some of the most significant funders in the oceans and environmental space. A defining characteristic of many alliances/initiatives is that they have been formed to try to generate more attention and impact around an issue than their founders could have achieved working separately. They have often been created to try to do something new, or unique, in a crowded market place. They can be usually be approached in the same way as a philanthropic foundation, and are often staffed by the same kinds of people as work in traditional foundations, but, given their desire to do something new and unique, a critical aspect to getting on well with them is to be 100 per cent clear why your project is suitable for them and matches their vision and mission and would be less suited to a more traditional funder. It would also be useful in this case to look at the associated ('linked') organisations to understand their individual priorities and motivations.

In addition, many of these alliances have been created to amplify impact by minimising operating costs, so they look to prioritise larger amounts of funding to fewer organisations. For this reason, most applications are by invitation only. They do not have separate registered foundation status themselves but, by being hosted by another foundation, will have the same tax and governance requirements, meaning they will need to give to non-governmental organisations (NGOs). One way to manoeuvre between these two obstacles is to contact them as a potential partner of one of their beneficiary organisations. For example, an NGO they already give to could deliver a project in partnership with you in your country. This will help them achieve their goals, as well as get you valuable exposure to the funding alliance and its extensive network of ocean funders.

Government/statutory and international organisations: In the main, government funders are less able to change funding strategy than are philanthropic foundations, and their giving criteria are likely to be more rigid and less negotiable. Multi-year funding is much more common than one-off or short-term funding. Relationship-building with government funders can seem at the outset more difficult than that with other types of donor. Funding calls are often managed anonymously, and have very complicated hierarchies and approval processes. It can be difficult to work out with whom it is useful to build a relationship. However, government funders very often schedule in-person or virtual learning sessions when new strategies or calls for proposals are planned. For large funders like the International Climate Initiative (IKI) in Germany, the EU LIFE programme and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in the UK, there can be dozens of these sessions every year – some held centrally (e.g. in Berlin, Brussels or London) and some held in the field in developing countries, by embassies or high commissions for example. Funders take these sessions very seriously: they help funders assess which organisations and consortia are best placed to bid for tenders and grants, and also gather feedback on proposed strategies. It is beneficial to become a regular face in the sessions led by a funder that you eventually want to get funding from. The sessions will help you understand who the key decision-makers are, build partnerships with other organisations and better understand what the funder is really looking for in proposals.

Grant programme or initiative of one organisation: These can be programmes or initiatives of many different types of organisations, but most commonly of government and development banks. These are separated in the database for clarity, as often the criteria, application process and types of funds are very different. However, as for other types of funding, it is useful to understand the motivations and perspectives of the 'parent' organisation, which can be found in the **Linked organisations** field at the top of the profile. When multiple funding streams have been established, it is often because the organisation is aiming to meet what it sees as a number of different types and levels of funding needs, which it will usually make clear in its published information. Fully understanding the purpose and criteria of the grant programme to which you are applying, and ensuring you have applied to the most appropriate one, is crucial to a successful proposal.

Prizes: As open competitions, prize funds are often the most highly competitive funding options. It is also often very difficult to build any kind of relationship with the staff administering a prize, as they have to retain strict impartiality. If you already know someone working as an evaluator, or as a high-level sponsor or ambassador for a prize fund, this can help. It can also help if your project idea is especially topical or newsworthy, since most prize funds aim to cultivate media attention for that issue (and their work) as a way to address that particular problem. Otherwise, applying for a prize is simply a case of trying to write the best possible application and being 100 per cent attentive to the criteria laid out. Unlike every other form of funding, prize money is given after the project delivery has occurred, but it will likely be unrestricted, meaning it can be spent on other activities. This is something to take into account when planning for your year's activities and budget.

Making contact and applying

Contact details

The database lists key contact details, where these are available in the public domain. Contact details may change over time, so it is always worth double-checking the latest available information on the donor's website.

Contact details specifically related to the application process are listed in the **Application process** field.

Depending on your needs/focus area, an organisation may have other useful contact points, in addition to those listed in the database. This is worth checking at the time you intend to make contact.

Approaching applications

If a funding prospect is open for applications, the database will show that either a direct application process is appropriate or a partnership with an NGO must be built before submitting an application because they do not give directly to governments.

In setting out their application criteria and processes, donors will commonly describe how they wish to be contacted in terms of their requirements for application submission (what kinds of documents to prepare, word limits, how to submit, where to direct queries, submission dates, etc. They may also provide information on contact points who manage different funding streams.

Some key points to consider include the following:

Read the criteria carefully to make sure your idea really fits with what the funder is looking for. Submitting badly fitting ideas may damage your chances of securing funding in the future, and is a waste of your time and effort.

- If the fund doesn't support governments directly, but rather goes through an NGO partner, be sure to show clearly what the roles and responsibilities are for each party, and what makes the partnership a strong delivery team.
- Even if you must apply with an NGO (rather than as a lead applicant), remember that government endorsement can be extremely powerful. Think about which government stakeholders should endorse your application, secure that endorsement and find ways in the application to show to the funder how this political support can help the project succeed.
- Some funders have only one submission date per year; others ask for submissions regularly, such as every quarter. Submit on time. Late applications will typically not be considered at all.
- Some funders will have a one-stage application process. Others will require a short 'concept paper' first, and then may invite a full proposal if they like your initial idea. Be sure to know the process before you start drafting documents.
- Expect to wait at least several weeks for feedback. Some funders have time to give only automated responses; others will provide more personal feedback or may share scoring of your proposal. You can ask for additional feedback but you may not receive it.
- A process of submitting a concept paper, moving to a full proposal, receiving approval and arranging payment will typically take six to 12 months.

Tip:

Even if it is possible to make an application directly, it can be useful to establish a relationship with the funding organisation prior to submission. This will help you better understand the funder's needs, and in turn will help them understand why you are applying. Asking clarifying questions about your proposed application is a good way to start this kind of conversation. Funders are extremely busy, so ensure these are genuine inquiries based on evidence that shows there may be good alignment between your ideas and their mission. Also, try to remember that raising funds is both an art and a science, and is very competitive. Not even the best fundraisers are 100 per cent successful with their applications (or even 50 per cent successful). Only a minority of good applications can ever be funded. Try to balance quantity and quality of applications for a balanced 'pipeline'.

Relationship and partnership-building

For many of the prospects in the database, the key next step after establishing a potential match will not be to submit an application but to start building a relationship. In the environment, conservation and climate sector, many funders do not have open application processes. This is because they are typically heavily over-subscribed in this under-funded sector, and would be inundated with ideas if they opened their application processes publicly. Many give large sums through long-term relationships with their existing grantees and can take on only a few new grants per year. Therefore, they choose to look for new grantees privately themselves.

In these cases, the key next step is to begin starting to build a relationship with the funder.

How to go about this?

- Typically, for the kinds of funders listed in the database, the best way to make first contact will be by email or via social networks like LinkedIn, after which you may be able to set up a call.
- Networking at international events (even virtual events like webinars during the COVID-19 pandemic) is also a great way to make first contact. It is worth considering whether you can invite funders to events hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat or indeed by individual Commonwealth governments. This would be a great opportunity for them to learn about the Blue Charter in more detail and to meet the main personalities involved.
- Since many donors give to NGOs rather than directly to governments, you can start by getting to know some of the non-profits already funded by the donor you are trying to reach. This may be a good way to develop joint propositions with such NGOs as well.
- Think about in-kind support that you can offer to NGOs and donors, and what they can offer you. Sharing new research, making staff secondments and collaborating on joint communications work (such as op-eds advocating for positive social change) are all ways in which governments and NGOs and major donor organisations can collaborate in a way that deepens relationships and can lead to funding.
- Develop open processes to come up with new project ideas, and, just as you would source ideas from research institutes, think-tanks, NGOs or companies, invite funders to participate. Co-creation of funded ideas is very important to many funders, as they will often fund projects only where they have had strategic input.

What's the payoff?

While it sounds like relationship-building might be harder work and less predictable than application writing, it can yield longer-lasting results. Try to balance both approaches.

Several factors in the current funding landscape make relationship-building worth the investment:

- Major funders may give small sums to organisations they do not know, but they typically do not give large sums to organisations/projects they do not know well – even through open application processes. For example, large sums of UK international environment and climate investment is funnelled through major charities like the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK and through trusted London-based consulting partners like

PricewaterhouseCoopers. These partners succeed in open tender processes because of deep relationships with the UK government built over many years. Similarly, large percentage of German international environmental and climate funding is channelled through German Development Cooperation (GIZ), and outsider organisations cannot in practice hope to compete with GIZ in open application processes.

- Successful relationship-building can lead to long-term, predictable funding once trust is built. By contrast, funding through less personal application processes generally results in shorter-term funding, which creates a financial 'cliff-edge' every time a project comes to an end.
- Building relationships of trust with funders usually leads to introductions to other funders and partners.
- Building relationships with funders will also boost the profile of the Blue Charter and its Action Groups, and this in turn will lead to more funding opportunities.
- Finally, government involvement in funded projects is highly sought after, so you are likely to find initiating conversations with funders easier than an NGO would. Creatively using the network provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat should provide opportunities to engineer discussions with funders of interest.

Appendix 1: Database Fields Glossary

This section lists the fields within the database and provides an explanation in italics for some of the key terms used. Fields with an asterisk have set fields and are therefore filterable on the main page of the database.

Name of funder – *the public name of the main funding prospect in this record. In the case of joint initiatives of funding streams of specific organisations, the name of the funder would be the funding pot or initiative and the host organisation(s) will be located under the* **Linked organisation**.

Linked organisation – *the name of an organisation linked to the main funding prospect. Linked organisations may for example be a 'parent' organisation of the main funding prospect or a partner if the main funding prospect is a joint venture of several funders. You can click on the linked organisation to take you through to that organisation's profile.*

Linked organisation relationship – *describing relevant connections between linked organisations.*

*Contact information – *website link, registered organisation number (if available/applicable), email, phone and address (if available). You will be able to filter by country.*

About the fund – *an overview of the funding prospect and their approach to funding, including their priority areas.*

*Prospect score – *an overall score, being an average of the three component scores given below.* **NB. There is some subjective judgement by the prospect researcher included in the assignment of prospect scores.**

> ***Prospect score: alignment** – *rating of strategic alignment between funder interests and Blue Charter Action Groups. 1 = high level of alignment; 2 = medium level of alignment; 3= low level of alignment.*
>
> ***Prospect score: propensity** – *rating of funder propensity to give funding for work similar to that of the Blue Charter Action Groups. Propensity scoring includes, for example, factoring in data on whether a funder gives numerous grants per year or a small number, and whether they are open for applications or work by invite only. 1 = high propensity to fund; 2 = medium propensity to fund; 3 = low propensity to fund.*
>
> ***Prospect score: capacity** – *rating of funder capacity to give funding for work similar to that of the Blue Charter Action Groups. Capacity scoring includes total financial assets of a funder, as well assessment of past giving and financial size of grants/investments. 1 = high capacity to give; 2 = medium capacity to give; 3 = low capacity to give.*
>
> ***Approach needed** – high-level guidance on approach required to begin to solicit a donation. Options included are:
>
> *Direct: A direct application for funding is possible.*
>
> *Relationship: You will need to begin by building a relationship with the funder, with a view to being invited to apply for funding.*
>
> *Various: Different options are possible. See application process for further information.*

*Type of funder – *listing of types of funder. Most categories are self-explanatory. For reference:*

> *Business*

Corporate foundations: Some corporate foundations have very separate aims and objectives from those of their parent company. Others have strong alignment with their parent company; in this case, if you have good prior relationships with the company in question, this may stand you in good stead in trying to gain support from the foundation.

Development bank.

Donor-advised fund: These giving vehicles typically aggregate funding from a number of donors who are interested in giving to the same types of work. The fund managers then find projects to invest in to meet the objectives of the funders.

Government/statutory.

Grant programme or initiative of one organisation: This will be one of multiple funding streams provided by one organisation, which is indicated in the Linked organisation *field. These are separated for clarity as they often offer different types of funds with different processes and criteria.*

International organisation.

Joint initiative or alliance: Formed between two or more organisations highlighted in the Linked organisation *field, this type of funder can be as simple as a single funding stream or comparable to a separate organisation. Although not a legal entity in its own right, it will usually be hosted by one of the partner organisations. In addition to viewing the criteria and approach of the initiative, it can also be useful to understand the approaches and preferences of the partner organisations.*

NGO: The organisation is a registered non-profit. It may also operate in another capacity as well (e.g. foundation or donor-advised fund).

Philanthropic foundation.

Prize.

*Type of funding – *listing types of financial transactions possible with each funder. Each funder may offer multiple types of funder. Key terms include:*

Contract/results-based finance – investment where a proportion of funds is linked to the completion of pre-specified outputs or other performance measures. May be blended with grant-funding or loans

Fiscal sponsorship – in-kind financial support wherein a non-profit offers their legal and tax-exempt status to projects or other initiatives to help such projects deliver their work in a given field or geography. This may be particularly relevant where the donor is located in another country (e.g. the USA) and requires that their recipients are registered as US non-profits. In this case, a fiscal sponsor would act as proxy US non-profit

Grant – donation given with no expectation of financial return, but with reporting requirements

Impact investment – financial investment seeking to generate both a social and environmental impact as well as a financial return for the investor

Loan – investment given with requirement for financial return

Multilateral aid – finance from multiple (usually national government) sources given either on grant terms or on concessionary (i.e. non-commercial loan) terms

Prize – usually given as a donation (like a grant) but likely to be one-off rather than recurring, and for general support rather than to fund a project. Unlike other types of funding, this will usually be given after the activity for which it is earned, rather than in advance

Return on Investment – a financial return is expected for the investor (though this may be lower than normal market values)

Technical assistance – capacity-building support that may include expert staff time, data, technology and/or finance

Other mechanisms

Type of funding (detail) – *commentary describing funding behaviour where further information is needed*

*Currency

AUD – Australian dollar

CAD – Canadian dollar

CHF – Swiss franc

EUR – Euro

GBP – Great Britain pound

NZD – New Zealand dollar

USD – United States dollar

*Annual size of fund – *searchable range, based on the selected currency. This will be a single range.*

*Size of Grant/investment– *searchable range, based on the selected currency. Where funding is provided across a wide range of values, multiple ranges may be selected.*

*Ocean topic – *focus area of project outcomes, which correspond to a list of Blue Charter Action Groups. This indicates the possible overall field of work and is advice based on past funded projects, stated criteria, etc. As there is so much cross-over in ocean-related outcomes, you do not have to represent an Action Group in order to select its corresponding* Ocean topic *when searching for funders.* N.B. Where 'General Ocean' is selected, along with specific Action Groups, this indicates where all groups would be relevant but specific Action Groups would be especially good matches for the funder.

*Project activity – *searchable categories of types of activity or work typically supported, including:*

Capacity-building – in any sector, including science, fundraising, or project management

Communications and media engagement

Community engagement – primarily with the local beneficiary community, often in a context of development or sustainable economy

Conservation – including biodiversity, ecosystem and species conservation

Economic development/poverty reduction

Food production and security

Indigenous peoples

Infrastructure

Policy reform – includes both local and national

Public health

Scientific research – this includes data collection

Sustainability and resilience – both human/economic and environmental

Technology and innovation

*Eligible recipients – *detailing the kinds of organisations eligible to receive funds, based on the information available. This is based on a combination of stated criteria, organisations funded in the past, etc. Further explanatory detail can be found in the* Eligible criteria *field*.

*Geographic area – *funded regions, based on stated criteria and educated guess based on funded projects, donor interests, etc. Further explanatory detail or restrictions can be found in* Eligible criteria *field. Member countries will likely fall under multiple categories so should select multiple entries when filtering.*

Antarctic – South Pole and Southern Seas ecosystems

Arctic – North Pole ecosystems

Atlantic – Atlantic islands and coastal

C Asia – Central Asia

Caribbean and C America – Caribbean and Central America

E Africa – East Africa

Europe

Global – no location restrictions identified

LDCs – least developed countries and developing countries

Mediterranean

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

N America – North America

Pacific – Pacific islands and the Antipodes

S America – South America

S Asia – South Asia and Indian subcontinent

SE Asia – Southeast Asia

SIDS – small island developing states

Sub-Saharan Africa

W Africa – West Africa

Other

Eligibility criteria – *detailing requirements, for example for partnership, co-funding, self-funding. NB: This is not a recommendation on what would make a* **good** *application, but key requirements that must be met make an application possible at all.*

Application process – *available information on steps required to apply for funding, as well as useful links detailing the process and contact details specifically for the application process.*

*Prior relationship with the Commonwealth – *indicates whether there is an existing relationship with the Commonwealth or a member country, which may facilitate future conversations. Yes could mean that the funder:*

Has a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Secretariat;

Has funded the CBC Action Groups and/or the Ocean and Natural Resources Directorate;

Has worked on joint activities with CBC and/or the Ocean and Natural Resources Directorate.

Appendix 2: Database checklist when identifying suitable donors

In summary: You can say that you have identified a good donor prospect if you can answer YES to each of these questions:

1. Is the type of funding or finance suitable for my project?
2. Is the financial size of my project suitable for this funder?
3. Is there a sufficiently relevant thematic fit?
4. Is there sufficient geographical fit?
5. Is the type of work or activity in this project suitable for this funder?
6. Can this funder give to the type of organisation in my bid consortium?
7. Have I checked for other Commonwealth relationships with or approaches to this funder?
8. Have I fully read and understood this funder's eligibility criteria?
9. Is this the right type of approach (application, relationship, etc.)?
10. Have I collated (or am I able to collate) all relevant supporting information and documentation required for this funder's application process?

Appendix 3: Useful resources

Lists of open RFPs

Research participant portal – calls for funding
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

BOND funding opportunities
https://www.bond.org.uk/hubs/funding-opportunities

Directory of grants with newsletters and alerts
https://www2.fundsforngos.org/

Fund directories

Funding the Ocean
https://fundingtheocean.org/
Centralised online knowledge hub designed to track, inform and inspire ocean conservation philanthropy

Association of Dutch Foundations
https://www.verenigingvanfondsen.nl/

Impact investing firms
https://www.investopedia.com/articles/active-trading/090115/top-5-impact-investing-firms.asp

US government grants
https://www.grants.gov/

US foundations
https://candid.org/?fcref=lr

EU grants
http://www.welcomeurope.com/

Swiss foundations
http://www.swissfoundations.ch/ueber-uns/mitgliederliste/

National charity/non-profit registers

Netherlands
https://www.belastingdienst.nl/rekenhulpen/anbi_zoeken/

Canada
https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/hacc/srch/pub/dsplyBscSrch?request_locale=en

USA
https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/allSearch

UK
https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/

Australia
https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity

New Zealand
https://register.charities.govt.nz/CharitiesRegister/Search

Other organisations working in this space, including potential delivery partners, research collaborators and networks

NGOs

Atlantic Whale and Dolphin Foundation
https://www.whalenation.org/

Pacifico
https://redpacifico.net/
NGO in Costa Rica

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
https://www.iucn.org/

IUCN Mediterranean Centre
https://www.iucn.org/regions/mediterranean

Seas at Risk
https://seas-at-risk.org/

Schmidt Ocean Institute
https://schmidtocean.org/

Rare
https://rare.org/

The Nature Conservancy
https://www.nature.org/en-us/

Blue Prosperity Coalition
https://www.blueprosperity.org/

Wildlife Conservation Society
https://www.wcs.org/

NDRC
https://www.nrdc.org/

Gaia Foundation
https://www.gaiafoundation.org/

Global Wildlife Conservation
https://www.globalwildlife.org/

The Manta Trust
https://www.mantatrust.org/

The Coral Restoration Foundation
https://www.coralrestoration.org/

Coral Reef Alliance
https://coral.org/

Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE)
https://www.bluemarinefoundation.com/

Georgetown Climate Center
https://www.georgetownclimate.org/

National Wildlife Federation
https://www.nwf.org/

Sofar Ocean
http://www.sofarocean.com/
(Weather sensor network for scalable ocean data collection and dynamic ship routing.)

Trygg Mat Tracking
https://www.tm-tracking.org/
(Information-gathering and analysis on illegal fishing and associated corruption.)

Friends of Ocean Action
https://www.weforum.org/friends-of-ocean-action/who-we-are

ICCA Consortium
https://www.iccaconsortium.org/

National Geographic
https://www.nationalgeographic.org

Pristine Seas Initiative, National Geographic
https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/pristine-seas/

Ocean X
http://www.oceanx.org/

Ocean Unite
https://www.oceanunite.org/
Communications and advocacy organisation

Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC)
http://www.savethehighseas.org/

National Ocean Protection Coalition
https://www.oceanprotect.org/partners/national-ocean-protection-coalition/

Marine Protection Atlas
http://mpatlas.org/

Marine Conservation Institute
https://marine-conservation.org/

Mediterranean Small Islands Initiative (PIM)
http://initiative-pim.org/index.php/en/home/

Wetlands International
https://www.wetlands.org/

Euronatur
https://www.euronatur.org/en/

BirdLife International
https://www.birdlife.org/

World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF)
https://www.worldfisher-forum.org/who-we-are

Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Ocean Policy Research Institute
https://www.spf.org/en/opri/

Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF)
https://ncfnigeria.org/

Poverty and Conservation Learning Group
https://www.povertyandconservation.info/

Big Ocean
https://bigoceanmanagers.org/
https://oceanfdn.org/projects/big-ocean/
(Peer-learning network created 'by managers for managers' of large-scale marine protected areas.)

Blancpain Ocean Commitment
https://environmentnow.org/

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
https://www.edf.org

Sierra Club Foundation
https://www.sierraclubfoundation.org/

Ocean-Climate Alliance
https://www.oceanclimatetrust.org/about

Ocean Climate Action
https://www.oceanclimateaction.org/

Tara Ocean Foundation
https://oceans.taraexpeditions.org/en/

Surfrider Foundation Europe
https://www.surfrider.eu/en/

SDG Philanthropy Platform
https://www.sdgphilanthropy.org/

Transform
https://www.transform.global/
Partnership between FCDO and Unilever

High Seas Alliance
http://www.highseasalliance.org/

MEDSEA Foundation
http://www.medseafoundation.org/

MedWet Initiative
https://medwet.org/

Tour du Valat
https://tourduvalat.org/en/

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
https://wwf.org/

Natural Capital Coalition
http://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/

Australian Marine Conservation Society
https://www.marineconservation.org.au/

Australian Conservation Foundation
https://www.acf.org.au/

Living Ocean
https://www.livingocean.org.au

Clean Ocean Foundation
https://www.cleanocean.org/

Plastic Free Parliament campaign, Surfers Against Sewage
https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-parliament/

Blue New Deal initiative, New Economics Foundation
https://neweconomics.org/2015/06/blue-new-deal

Wild Oceans Trust
http://wildtrust.co.za/wildoceans/

Marine Conservation Society
https://www.mcsuk.org/
UK's leading marine charity

Gulbenkian Oceans Initiative
https://gulbenkian.pt/en/initiatives/gulbenkian-oceans-initiative/

New Zealand Oceans Foundation
https://oceansnz.com/

Natural Capital Coalition
https://naturalcapitalcoalition.org/

Intergovernmental bodies

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
https://www.cbd.int/

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
https://unfccc.int/

Union for the Mediterranean
https://ufmsecretariat.org/

United Nations Group of Friends of Oceans and Seas
https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2020

Private sector

Vertigo Lab
http://vertigolab.eu/

Global Island Partnership
http://www.glispa.org/

Seafood Legacy Ltd
https://seafoodlegacy.com/english/
(Consulting firm)

Ocean Protect
https://oceanprotect.com.au/
(Business that produces technology to limit storm water runoff.)

Fiscal sponsorship (USA)

National Network of Fiscal Sponsors
https://www.fiscalsponsors.org

Pros and cons of fiscal sponsorship vs 501c3 registrationhttp://www.fiscalsponsorship.com/
Compare%20501c3%20w%20Fisc%20Spon%20Model%20A%20_00075865-2_.pdf

Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House, Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX
United Kingdom

thecommonwealth.org

The Commonwealth

D17421