



TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Skills Series

# Fundraising guidelines



***Fundraising guidelines*** is designed to accompany a practical training workshop to develop the capacity of African scientists to fundraise effectively for conservation activities that are top priority for their countries.

This document is inspired by many and was developed over a series of specialist training workshops. It was written by Rosie Trevelyan (Tropical Biology Association). It was funded by the European Commission (B7-6200/01/0370/ENV).

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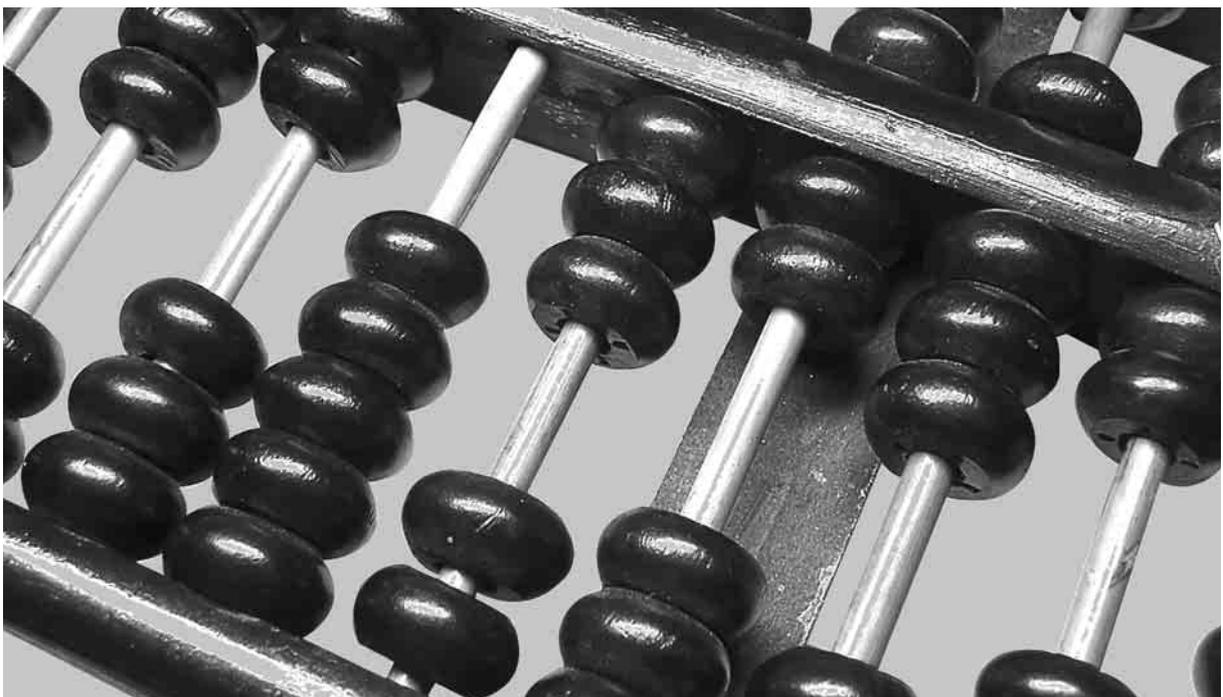
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# WRITING FUNDING PROPOSALS

## THE RIGHT APPROACH

Getting money for your project is not just a matter of luck. The key to being successful is learning a few skills and improving them with each proposal. The approach you take is also vital: acquiring funding is not about asking for money, it is about **selling your idea**. The funder **needs** good projects. You are persuading them that by giving you this money **they** will succeed in fulfilling their **own aims**.

Put yourself in the funder's shoes – what would you want to see in a proposal? Usually, a funder wants to invest in a project that will:

- ❑ solve a specific problem;
- ❑ meet an urgent need: by funding a solution now you will bring immediate results;
- ❑ produce tangible benefits with lasting effects; and
- ❑ be used in an area that specifically interests the funder – it will fit in their niche and add to their portfolio of successful projects in their niche.

## Understanding your funding agency

You have to target your proposal to each funder – unfortunately no two funders are alike. You need to do your homework and find out what the donor does and does not fund. Funding sources are established for a variety of reasons and understanding their objectives is usually the most important information you need, as it explains what the fund is trying to achieve.

So find out what work the organization likes to support. There may be specific objectives or priorities, so you need to have up-to-date information. It may only fund projects on endangered species, or hotspots; particular habitats (e.g. drylands); or specifically support education projects or those involving communities. Whatever the objectives, your job is to show how your project fits in.

## How to find the important information

Funders present their information in many ways – in leaflets, application forms and, more commonly, on the internet. You need to work out an efficient method of extracting the relevant information to be sure you include all the right material in your proposal. By reading a donor's literature thoroughly, you will only need to ask questions to fill in the few remaining gaps in your understanding. It is also useful to get details of past projects they have funded. This will help guide you as to who and what kind of projects they support.

## Persuading the funder to give you money

- ❑ Use the same language as the funding organization – this shows that you fit closely with their objectives.
- ❑ Show how your project fits with national or international conservation priorities: “The study area is

one of Kenya's Key Biodiversity Areas” or “This project will help Tanzania meet its obligations to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by...”.

- ❑ Clever use of words, such as: “This project will carry out the **first** systematic survey of the...” – that one extra word shows this work has not been done before.

## A checklist of things your application must do

- ❑ Your application must show the funder that yours is a project to which they want to give money.
  - ❖ It will match each and every one of their priorities.
  - ❖ It will produce excellent results with which they will be proud to be associated.
  - ❖ Their investment in you as a person will have lasting consequences in the world of conservation.
- ❑ Be convincing. Can you deliver what you say you will? How will you do it?
- ❑ Make it interesting – how is it different or new?
- ❑ Be absolutely crystal clear. If any sentence is difficult to understand without rereading, then rewrite it. Avoid unnecessary use of jargon.
- ❑ Your proposal has to stand up to criticism without you there to explain the parts that are unclear.
- ❑ Make it look good. Get rid of ALL typing and spelling errors – *mistakes in your proposal (such as typos) indicate you will be inaccurate and messy in your project.*

## If your application does not match the funding organization's priorities

- ❑ Reword your application so that it does. If you are not convinced, then you are unlikely to convince the funder that the project fits their priorities.
- ❑ Write a proposal for the part of your project that does meet their priorities.
- ❑ If you don't fit in closely with their priorities, then move on – don't waste your time.

## Why do I feel rejected?

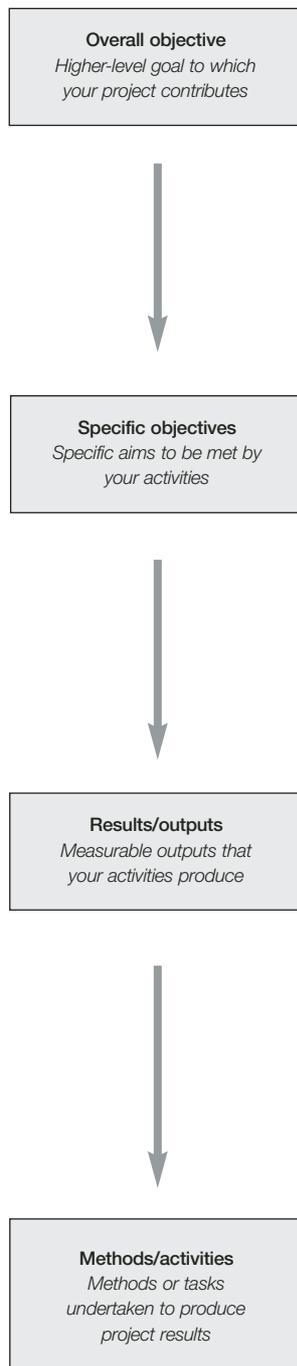
If your application is rejected, don't take it personally. There are limited funds out there and lots of other applicants. Try and find out why you didn't get it, improve your application and try again. *Don't resubmit the same application – if it didn't work the first time, why should it work next time?*



# THE APPLICATION

## THE STRUCTURE

Different funders use different formats. Some have templates you need to fill in, others give very limited guidelines. Before starting, it is useful to think of the application as an hierarchical structure: aside from the project summary, you will probably start with general objectives and then move on to the specific aims of your proposal. Having stated your aims, you then need to describe how you will answer them. You will also need to show how you will assess your achievements – what does a successful outcome of your project look like? What information will you use to show this?



## Proposal hierarchy and terminology

Different organizations use different terms for the same thing. Rather than worry about terminology, it can be helpful if you think of your proposal as an hierarchical structure, and then match the terms you use in your funding application to the right part of the proposal. The diagram (left) illustrates such a structure and some common terminology used by funding agencies at each level of the hierarchy.

## Logical frameworks (log frames)

Log frames are a way of documenting your proposal having followed a specific planning process called the logical framework approach; they set out your project in a table in an hierarchical structure. If you have set out your proposal using the hierarchy we suggest in the diagram, it will be easy to convert this into a log frame using additional information that the log frame requires.

Log frames are meant to help you set out your project in a logical format, showing connections between each level of the project. However, do not be misled: a log frame is only a tool and will only ever be as good as the project itself.

A log frame fulfils the following functions:

- ❑ It provides a clear brief description of your entire project in a single table.
- ❑ It clarifies your objectives and shows how you will measure their successful fulfilment.
- ❑ It indicates likely risks that might prevent you successfully completing the project.
- ❑ It provides a basis for project appraisal.

Most government and intergovernment funding agencies require you to use a log frame to summarize your project.

The “logic” part of the log frame is that if you carry out the activities you list, then the results or outputs will be achieved, therefore the project’s purpose will be realized – which in turn will ensure the overall goal is

## Sections of the log frame

	Indicators	Means of verification	Risks or assumptions
Overall goal	Impact indicators		
Project purpose	Impact indicators		
Results (or outputs)	Implementation indicators		
Activities			

met. All of this will only take place if, at every stage, the assumptions (in the end column) hold true.

You will already recognize the terms in the left-hand column, so we will explain the terms in the top row.

### Indicators

These are the measures used to show how the goals, project purpose and outputs are achieved. Indicators usually show:

- Quality (How well?)
- Quantity (How much or how many?)
- Target group (Who?)
- Time (By when?)

Good indicators are SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

There are two levels of indicator: a) impact indicators that measure the success of the project goals and purpose – i.e. was the project outcome achieved; and b) implementation indicators (or outputs) that measure whether the activities have been carried out.

### Means of verification

These tell us the sources of information used for the indicators. For example, one might use anonymous questionnaires to assess the quality of a training course.

### Risks or assumptions

These are the important conditions or decisions outside of the control of the project, but which are critical for the project to work. Risks or assumptions are stated as positive conditions, such as “The project continues to receive government approval” or “The stakeholders remain willing to participate in the activities”.

## Typical proposal sections

### Title

- Keep it short.
- Make sure it is relevant to your project.

### Project summary or abstract

The summary is arguably the most important part of your proposal. It gives the reviewer a very good idea about whether the project is worth funding and whether it fits their priorities. You should hook the donor’s interest and impress them before they go into the detail.

### Tip

**Remember – first impressions count, and if you do not spend enough time on the abstract, it may be the only part of your proposal that is read at all!**

### Overall objectives

If the proposal form asks for an overall objective and specific objectives, then the overall objective should do the following:

- State the project goal in terms of the longer-term benefits. For example, show how the project fits in with the CBD, international priorities, government policies and the objectives of the donor.
- The overall objective will not be achieved by the project alone but will contribute to the donor’s longer-term objectives.

### Background or justification

- Show that you have identified a specific conservation issue that needs addressing and that your project will provide tangible results that will solve this problem.
- This section puts your project into context – but keep it relevant to your project rather than swamp the whole proposal with unnecessary detail.
- Describe how your project fits in with the priorities of the national or international conservation community as well as the grant programme.

### Specific objectives or aims

- These should address the core problem. Try not to sound too ambitious – your project has to be achievable within the time available, so don’t state objectives you can’t achieve.
- The project should not have more than four specific objectives or it will look too ambitious: better to tackle two objectives well than half-finish five.

- ❑ Each objective should have clear, measurable outcomes: this is the opportunity to convince the reader that your work will have a significant impact.
- ❑ Make sure your specific aims are in the same order as you state them in the earlier and later sections, and that the wording matches as closely as possible.
- ❑ Be sure to use the same terminology throughout.

#### Outcomes

Your proposal needs to indicate the conservation impact it will achieve. Each objective listed in your proposal should have a corresponding outcome. You may use indicators as described above, or some other means of showing that you will assess whether you have met your project aims.

#### Methods/programme of work

This section must convince the reader that you will be able to achieve your objectives in the time available and that you have thought through the programme in detail.

- ❑ Show what activity or research you will carry out to achieve each of the objectives.
- ❑ Research studies should state such details as the sample size as well as techniques to be used. It is important that you don't sound vague.
- ❑ You could think about putting your activities into a timetable (programme of work). This shows you have calculated how long it will take you to complete each activity. Don't forget to include time for setting up the project at the beginning and writing it up at the end.

#### Budget and budget justification

- ❑ Make your budget realistic: too high and people will be suspicious, too low and it will look unrealistic.
- ❑ Check you have included all relevant amounts – and check they add up.
- ❑ Find out whether there are specific items that the grant does not fund and **don't put them in**.
- ❑ Show your sources of other funding (e.g. people's salaries already covered, other grants, etc.), even if they are in kind (e.g. use of lab space and equipment).

#### Referees

Referees are one of the most long-suffering species on Earth. Most are happy to write a good reference. But doesn't that mean that **all** references are good? So how will that help you beat the competition? One thing you can do is a little bit of extra work. Rather than send your referee the whole proposal and conditions of the grant, send them three or four lines explaining what the proposal is about, why you are eminently suited to carry it out, and why it fits the grant conditions so perfectly. A referee's comment that not only says nice things about **you** but also **sounds** as if they **know** exactly what you are doing is far more powerful than a generic referee's report.

#### Finally, a do and a don't

- ❑ Do give your application to several people to read before submitting it – this is an excellent way to improve your writing.
- ❑ Don't leave it to the last minute. You need to beat the competition. A rushed application will have mistakes and make you look as if you don't really care.

# FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

## PREPARING FOR FUNDRAISING

The first step in fundraising is setting your goal, followed by developing a plan for realizing that goal and, finally, selecting the tools needed to execute the plan. The goal, plan and tools should relate to the activities you want supported. Commonly, people organize brainstorming sessions or stakeholder analyses to gather detailed information.

### Tip

The project must be very clear on its expected achievements and beneficiaries. These will help you choose who to approach for funds.

## Types of fundraising approaches

Different funders have different requirements, so you need to know what approach to take for each one. Will you be approaching a funder as an organization or as an individual? Some funders have a call for proposals, effectively advertising the availability of funds for specific activities. This is commonly done through the web and e-mail listings. There are usually strict guidelines for eligibility. If you have a relatively small project, you will probably be more successful approaching grant-giving organizations. If you have a programme of activities that your organization will be running, then you could approach donor governments or aid programmes. Other funders can be approached on an *ad hoc* basis, and this may require you to build up relationships with them over time. Face-to-face meetings are usually a good investment – it is an excellent way for you to learn about a donor's priorities, and for them to become convinced you have a good cause. Whatever your approach, your funder wants to know their money is going to be well spent and have an impact for which they will be given due recognition.

Funders relevant to Africa are listed on the TBA funding database on [www.tropical-biology.org](http://www.tropical-biology.org).

## Ways of asking for specific amounts of money

- ❑ Most grants indicate the amount of money for which you can apply. You do this through an itemized budget.
- ❑ If you are asking for donations, show other sources of income, including in-kind contributions. This will give people a good idea of how much to give.
- ❑ If you are approaching a company or individual for sponsorship, then it can be a matter of guesswork as to how much you should ask for. Ask for a specific sum for an item of expenditure (for example, £200 to

fund a species recovery plan, or £1000 for field costs for your MA project).

## Reporting your successes

- ❑ Writing a report is an important way of thanking your funders.
- ❑ Good reports, showing how successful you have been, also help you attract further funding.
- ❑ Adapt the style of the report to the reader.
- ❑ Putting donors' logos on your publicity materials or reports is a good way to profile them.

## The skills required for fundraising

- ❑ Commitment to the cause: you have to believe wholeheartedly in what you are doing, and make your cause compelling to others. If you are not convinced of your project it will show in your applications.
- ❑ Confidence and the ability to ask.
- ❑ Imagination and creativity.
- ❑ Persuasiveness (but don't promise what you can't deliver!).

## Making your proposal relevant

Make your proposal relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2010 targets and global priorities. For example, many will ask you to show how your work fits in with the CBD (see [www.biodiv.org/convention/articles](http://www.biodiv.org/convention/articles)), e.g.:

- ❑ Article 7, "identification and monitoring".
- ❑ Article 10, "sustainable use of components of biological diversity".
- ❑ Article 12, "research and training".

## Alternative strategies for fundraising

Special events (sponsored runs, etc.) and product sales:

- ❑ Organizing special fundraising events – such as charity walks, exhibitions, dramas or shows, or a luncheon or dinner over an interesting talk – can be educative but labour-intensive and requires very good planning to be productive. For example, mobile operator Safaricom in Kenya has supported conservation through a popular "jungle" marathon. Also, the "Rhino charge" – a jungle driving event organized by Rhino Ark – has helped raise a lot of funds for the Aberdare Ecosystem.



### **The corporate sector**

Many business ventures are now supporting conservation activities as part of their social corporate responsibility. This provides a good opportunity for getting funding from the private sector. Additionally, much of the private sector is aware that eco-labelling and eco-association attracts premiums on products, and helps build brands.

### **Exhibitions and trade fairs**

Tourism weeks, annual hospitality exhibitions, trade fairs and so on can help generate funds directly, or through contacts made at the events.

### **Donations**

Safaricom donates Kshs 1 million every month to Rhino Ark, and a further Kshs 9 million towards agroforestry around Ngare Ndare forest. Also, funders might be asked to “adopt” a tree, for instance, by giving a donation to an organization involved in tree conservation.

### **Membership**

Membership fees can generate a lot of funds for conservation. Born Free Foundation, for example, runs a membership fundraising strategy to support local youth groups involved in conservation in Kenya.

### **Open competition**

This can be through open funding applications to institutions known to give funds and support work in the targeted areas of interest. This is perhaps the most common method of fundraising adopted by scientists.

### **Other**

Institutions can be requested to host an event where they gather funds that can be channelled to other work. Alternative ideas include hiring-out services – equipment, conference hall, human resources and so on; lobbying and advocacy; promotions or raffle ticketing; and selling materials such as posters and books.

# TYPES OF FUNDERS

## **COUNTRY DELEGATIONS**

Embassies, high commissions.  
Your organization may already have built relations with these, so be sure to find out whether any projects are currently being funded.

## **DONOR GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

These normally fund specific activities.

Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)  
Darwin Initiative  
Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA)  
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)  
Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)  
United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

## **MULTILATERAL AID PROGRAMMES**

European Union (EU)  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
Global Environment Facility (GEF)  
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)  
IUCN–The World Conservation Union (IUCN)

## **GRANT-GIVING ORGANIZATIONS**

These normally fund projects and individuals (rather than large programmes) and have annual deadlines.

African Academy of Science (AAS)  
African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD)  
British Ecological Society (BES)  
Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)  
Conservation International (CI)  
Environmental Conservation Trust in Uganda (ECOTRUST)  
Ford Foundation  
Green Global Grants  
Innovation at Makerere (I@Mak)  
International Foundation for Science (IFS)  
Lake Victoria Research Initiative (VicRes)  
Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users (NURRU)  
Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)  
Rockefeller Foundation  
Rufford Foundation  
Third World Organization for Women in Science (TWOWS)

## **CHARITABLE TRUSTS**

Usually country-specific with a variety of criteria requiring different approaches.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR**

It helps to have personal contacts (the higher up the hierarchy the better – but friends can also help you approach the relevant people within the company). It is best to approach a company based in your country, and your chances of success will be much higher if you can show a clear link between your activities and their interests.

## **INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

Finding a private donor can be a matter of luck – it is very different from filling in an application form. You need to be good with people, persuasive and opportunistic!

## **OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES**

Centre for African Studies, Oxford (CAS-Oxford)  
Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (TSBF-CIAT)



## TROPICAL BIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

### Skills Series

The **Skills Series** was developed in conjunction with the Tropical Biology Association's specialist training workshops. The workshops are collaboratively designed to fill specific skills gaps identified by the hosting African institutions. They develop capacity in the skills necessary for preparing funding proposals, publishing conservation research papers and communicating to decision makers and the public. The target group is conservation scientists and park ecologists working for government agencies, non-governmental organizations and research institutions.

The **Skills Series** provides resources for trainers on scientific writing and publishing, and fundraising. New titles will include research design and monitoring as well as communication skills.

### Tropical Biology Association

The Tropical Biology Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing professional training to individuals and institutions involved in the conservation and management of tropical environments. The TBA works in collaboration with African institutions to develop their capacity in natural resource management through field courses, training workshops and follow-up support.

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