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**Sea-Changers Marine Conservation Social Fund -**

**Guidelines for Applicants**

The purpose of the Marine Conservation Social Fund is:

***To support socially beneficial marine conservation approaches and solutions.***

**Background**

Engagement with the sea can have a hugely positive impact on wellbeing[[1]](#footnote-1). It has also been demonstrated that volunteering has both individual and community cohesion benefits[[2]](#footnote-2).

Sea-Changers has run a Main Grant Fund for several years for projects whose objectives are:

1. To **address the root causes** of marine conservation threats and challenges in the UK.
2. To **prevent or reduce negative impacts** on UK coastal and marine environments and/or species.
3. To **add to the body of knowledge** about marine conservation threats and challenges in the UK and ways to overcome them.

In 2021 we received a donation to develop the Marine Conservation Social Fund (MCSF) - a new funding stream that combines marine conservation with social benefits. Its purpose is to support projects that deliver **health and well-being benefits** and/or **benefits for disadvantaged communities** alongside benefits to the marine environment.

**Types of projects funded**

2023 is the second time we’ve run the MCSF. The available total grant fund is £23,000 and has been made possible by a single generous donation to Sea-Changers.

Grant requests should be in the region of £3,000- £5,000. We expect to fund between 4 and 7 projects in this round. We do fund larger projects where Sea-Changers funding is only part of the total funding amount. If this is the case, you’ll need to be clear in your application where the additional funding will come from.

Sea-Changers is particularly interested in grassroots projects which **galvanise community action** and in projects which increase the number of people taking action for marine conservation.

Participants might include refugees, people experiencing mental health issues, ex-offenders, disabled people or people seeking employment. Communities might include those where deprivation is a significant issue or where there are issues of social cohesion to be addressed.

The types of projects that we envisage funding could include:

* Marine conservation education and engagement projects - e.g. campaigns or activities reaching out to and working with people who don’t currently engage with the sea, raising awareness and interest in marine conservation issues and enabling people to get involved.
* Citizen science and/or practical or direct-action marine conservation projects working with disadvantaged communities and/or people with health/wellbeing issues which aim to increase community cohesion/engagement and deliver personal/health benefits through volunteering.

We are particularly interested in funding **pilot programmes** that, following careful evaluation, might be continued, expanded and/or replicated with additional funding in future years (subject to Sea-Changers securing ongoing funding).

Sea-Changers recognises that approaches to combining marine conservation work with social/wellbeing/community benefits may be relatively untried and that measuring clear outcomes for individuals and communities may be challenging. It is important to us that there is learning from both successes *and* failures and we therefore want all applicants to explain how the success *or* failure of project activities will be judged and where relevant, measured.

**Who can apply**

Sea-Changers welcomes applications from a wide range of UK based organisations including charities, community groups and schools. We also fund ‘for profit’ organisations where the project applied for is clearly not having a direct financial benefit to the company.

We actively encourage MCSF applications from **partnerships** between **marine conservation organisations** and **social welfare or health and wellbeing organisations.** Partnerships must have a lead partner who will be the main contact with Sea-Changers and who will be responsible for successful delivery of the project.

**Evaluation criteria**

MCSF applications will be judged against the following criteria:

1. **Potential for impact on coastal and marine environments and/or species**

* What is the potential/expected impact on the coastal and marine environment and/or species and is this impact significant?

1. **Potential for impact on disadvantaged people or communities**

* What is the potential/expected impact on the target community or individuals and how will it be measured?
* Is there a realistic plan outlined to identify and engage with the target community or individuals?

1. **Value for money**

* How well justified is the sum proposed?
* Is it good value for money and is there potential for our grant to kickstart funding from other sources?
* Are there other ways that the funding could be obtained?

1. **Deliverability and Scalability**

* Is the application convincing in terms of deliverability? Does it outline clear timescales?
* Have suitable partners or potential partners been identified and are they ‘on board’/is this a joint bid?
* If the project is a success is there wider applicability?
* How will success or failure of the project will be judged and evaluated? How will learning be shared?

**What we don’t fund**

* Projects that have a political aim.
* Applications solely to fund administrative or core operating costs.
* Retrospective projects or funding requests.
* Individuals or causes that will benefit only one person.

**How to apply**

**Applying**

* Download and complete the Marine Conservation Social Fund Application Form from Sea-Changers’ website.
* Ensure you read through the guidelines above and that your application meets the outlined criteria.
* Complete and return the application form by email to [info@sea-changers.org.uk](mailto:info@sea-changers.org.uk)
* If, as part of the project, any/all organisations involved will be working with children or adults at risk, you must send up-to-date copies of Safeguarding Policies with your application.

**Timescales**

* Deadline for receipt of applications – **22nd December 2023**
* Decisions will made by the **end** **February 2024.**

**Evaluation**

All successful applicants would be asked to provide data and feedback on the outcomes achieved through the funding received, as a condition of receiving a grant.

We will send an evaluation form for you to complete but we would also ask that you consider in your application how you will evaluate your project at throughout implementation. An evaluation / shared learning event will take place engaging all successful applicants and the funder of the Marine Conservation Social Fund, funded project will be expected to attend this event and present the outcomes of their project.

1. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928136/Social_benefits_of_blue_space_-_report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.bl.uk/britishlibrary/~/media/bl/global/social-welfare/pdfs/non-secure/u/n/d/understanding-how-volunteering-creates-stronger-communities.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)