

Scottish Environmental Fundraising Forum (SEFF)



This paper has been included with our joint consultation response to enable us to answer questions that have not been asked in the consultation and to emphasise the key points made in the consultation.

Independence

- We are concerned that the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland cannot be (seen as) independent when so much weight is being given to transient Scottish Government policy - specifically, that BLF is awaiting Scottish Government policy directions before setting new funding programmes. This is of particular concern as the next Scottish election is likely to take place only shortly after the new BLF programmes are launched. We feel that Lottery funding should complement Government policy, not be led by it.

Risk

- We do not think it appropriate that the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, as a distributor of the public's money, should fund projects that the Scottish Government and other public funders consider too risky. Risky funding should be the preserve of private sector funders such as individuals, private charitable trusts, and companies.
- Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Partnerships are not a proven mechanism for delivery, and the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland should not facilitate the shifting of Scottish Government responsibilities onto the third sector.

Innovation

- Many/most funders now prefer to fund "innovation" rather than "tried & tested"; there is a real need now for a leading funder willing to support projects that consolidate and build on good work previously done. We feel it is neither economically sustainable nor cost-effective (nor responsible) to encourage charities to be funding-led, by requiring them to spend time and money changing a winning formula simply in order to secure funding.
- Many SEFF member organisations have existed for decades, and have a good track record in delivering effective and cost-effective work. This is possible in large part thanks to the general public support they receive through membership subscriptions and donations, that provides some core stability without the funding direction changing every few years.

Environment

- Scotland's environment is of immense importance to her people, making a vital and intrinsic contribution to our economy, our social and community life, our health and well-being, our wildlife and ecosystems, and our long-term sustainable development. This critical importance is partly acknowledged by government and statutory bodies, by some funding bodies, and by some organisations and individuals, but it is frequently undervalued, both financially and culturally. Future generations who rely on our custodianship of the natural heritage now, need us to take more care of their legacy.

- The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland, as a major funder, has a crucial responsibility to recognise the importance of, and to support, the natural and built environment (as BLF England did in the last funding round, through a ring-fenced programme).
- We would also welcome a move to integrate environmental issues as a horizontal theme across all grants, to help ensure sustainability (as, for example, with European Structural Funds). SEFF members would be willing to be involved in supporting this move, for example by providing advice or training for Big Lottery Fund staff.

Biodiversity

- Public bodies in Scotland now have a duty to conserve biodiversity and we would like to see the Big Lottery Fund embrace this policy in all its grant-giving.

Strategic Grant-giving

- The environment sector in Scotland and the UK (public, voluntary and private) already works well in partnership, delivering a strategic programme of work developed and agreed at international, national, regional, and local levels. Because the strategic framework and partnership structure already exist, this sector is very well placed to deliver effective and cost-effective projects with positive social and economic outcomes alongside their primary environmental outcomes.

Full Cost Recovery

- Local authorities are increasingly adopting the Full Cost Recovery principle, accepting the need for all attributable costs to be included in a tender and for tenderers to be entitled to include them. We hope that BLF will (continue to) recognise and acknowledge the true full cost to organisations of delivering projects – i.e., the cost of the established work necessary to support the cost of additional work - and will adjust intervention rates accordingly to ensure that charities are able to maintain the strong foundation necessary to sustain project work. For example, we hope BLF will recognise that using existing experienced staff to deliver a project may be more effective and cost-effective than employing an external consultant.

Sustainable Development

- As a responsible funder, BLF should ensure that the three equal pillars of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental – are supported. With its collective expertise across the environmental sector, SEFF would be willing to assist in advising BLF on the environmental pillar in Scotland.