

## **FUNDRAISING TIPS**

*(Source: Environment Canada Green Source Funding Guide)*

### **Before you Go Knocking on Doors for Funding**

You identified an environmental problem that you would like to solve. Working with a group of individuals, you studied every facet of the problem and considered several solutions. A number of questions came up (What are the targeted objectives? What are the phases that lie ahead and the schedule to be followed? How much will all this cost? Who will have to play a role? What licenses, permits and/or authorizations are required? Is the project technically and financially feasible? What will be its environmental repercussions?). Having answered these questions, you are ready to act: you have a project.

### **Selling a Project**

1. First of all, paint a good portrait of your own organization and identify its assets: its objectives; its usual areas of activity; its influence; the beneficiaries of its activities; and the members of your project implementation team. An examination of your project in the light of the resources at your disposal within your organization will make it easier for you to identify what type of assistance you require.
2. After completing the preliminary resource needs identification, prepare a list of potential partners. Assistance can take the form of money, human resources (paid or volunteer), in-kind donations in the form of space, equipment, and professional services. The list is a long one. You can judge for yourself:
  - Your organization: its members, volunteers and workers; take advantage of their time and skills, and of the funding activities, which they may organize (benefit nights, raffles, sales, etc.);
  - Local social agencies and recreational associations (service clubs, guides and scouts, hunting associations, fishing associations, riparian residents' associations, committees) sometimes have objectives that intersect with yours, and your project could be of interest to them;
  - Municipalities (elected officials, employees, regional counties and various committees) can be a source of funding, as well as technical expertise, administrative support, and the loan of equipment and space. Some municipalities receive financial assistance for environmental projects whose delivery they assign either in whole or in part to local organizations;
  - Local and regional businesses are also potential partners that can share their knowledge with you and give you discounts, if they see any benefit to it. Some chambers of commerce provide management consulting services and certain large companies have sponsorship budgets;

- The media may agree to help you in your communication activities, either by producing reports and articles or by offering you discount prices on information dissemination;
  - Professional or union associations may wish to participate in your project;
  - Academic institutions (schools, colleges, universities, school boards, students, teachers and unions) are an important source of assistance: student internships and research work, as well as the loan of personnel, space and equipment should be examined;
  - The residents of your locality, once they are aware of your project, may be a source of considerable project support;
  - Financial institutions interested in helping to improve their environment distribute financial or technical assistance locally;
  - Potential revenues from the project (sale of recyclable materials, compost, documents, etc.);
  - Federal and provincial governments programs;
  - Grants from organizations in the private sector and from non-profit organizations.
3. Check to ensure that your project's objectives are compatible with those of the selected programs and organizations. Each organization has its own specific areas of interest, territory, eligibility criteria and mode of operation. It will be necessary for you to take appropriate steps to obtain relevant information. Most have leaflets and forms; some can only be reached by mail, while others can be contacted in person.
  4. Once you have gathered all of your information and have selected a number of sources from which you hope to receive a positive response, develop your strategy so as to maximize your chance of success and avoid wasting time. Draft a document reflecting the seriousness of your project and demonstrating your organization's ability to see it through to completion. Test your project by meeting with officials of several organizations in order to verify their interest, obtain their opinion and revise your approach if necessary.
  5. You now know on exactly which doors to knock. The first step consists in selling your project in your community in order to find allies and obtain support from your community. A case that is well presented improves your chances. Clarity and conciseness are required. If your project is complex, you may wish to include a one-page summary with your application. Government programs use forms, but this is less frequent in the case of foundations and community organizations. In most cases, the following information is required:
    - Description of the organization: charter, history, accomplishments, membership, latest financial statement;
    - Project: problem to be solved, description of the environment, proposed solutions, location and context of implementation, targeted objectives, planned works, work plan and schedule, budget, follow-ups, responsible officials;
    - Communications strategy: target audience, message, planned communication methods;
    - Funding: requested funding, other sponsors and their contributions;
    - Support: letters of support and of confirmation of funding;
    - Miscellaneous: appendices if necessary, including maps, plans and photographs;
    - Charitable registration number: essential for foundations.

- Terms and conditions: in all cases, stated requirements and closing dates must be respected.
- 6. Response time varies from one program to the next, but it is generally at least three months. Have patience, because these organizations receive numerous applications.
- 7. If you receive a positive reply (and a cheque!), send charity donation receipts to those who require them. In addition, a letter of thanks is always appreciated.
- 8. In other cases, particularly when governments are involved, you will have to sign a contribution agreement before you can start your project and receive allocated funds.
- 9. Submit whatever project progress reports are required and draft a final report. All of these formalities are time-consuming, but they will enable you to keep better control over the conduct of your project and help you to reach your objectives. It is vital that you complete your project. And who knows...you may have another project to sell in the near future!

### **Additional Tips on Applying for Funding**

#### **Do Your Homework**

- Know your donor organisation.
- Know the key contact in the organisation.
- Know the program criteria.
- Always call, if possible and set up a meeting if you can.

#### **Know What You Are Asking For**

- Why are you approaching this particular founder?
- Are you asking for an in-kind donation, cash or both? How much?
- What are you offering the founder? An opportunity to support their community, a sponsorship opportunity or a partnership opportunity?
- How can you distinguish yourself? How can you show that you and your project are unique and creative?

#### **Build Relationships**

- Build relationships; start off small.
- Recognise your supporters. Remember to say thank you.
- Maintain relationships.

#### **Prepare a Strong Proposal**

- Show how the work you do directly benefits the community.
- Show how the project will live on after you have finished.
- Be concise, clear and concrete. Have a well thought out proposal.

- Know and include the name and contact information of the current contact person.
- Include a cover letter.
- Make sure there are no typos or other mistakes.
- Do not include a lot of unnecessary information.
- Follow-up with a phone call; if you did not get funding, ask why?

### **Keep Current**

- Find out what funding programs are out there. New programs are created every year; others are discontinued.  
Read newspapers; find out about new companies and ideas.

**And last but not least – Don't give up!**