

Finding International Funding for MPAs: Places to Search

For the MPA manager facing a future of tight government budgets and increasing program demands, the search for additional funding becomes an essential task. While there are various self-financing mechanisms from which to choose - e.g., user fees and income from associated commercial operations ([MPA News 2:8](#)) - there is another option available: soliciting donor organizations for funding.

MPA News has received requests from readers, particularly in developing nations, seeking advice on how to contact donor organizations working at the international level. Rather than continue to respond solely in a case-by-case manner, we put together the following brief guide on approaching donor institutions.

Reports available on raising revenues

Lee Thomas, deputy chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and convenor of its task force on financing of protected areas, told MPA News last year that before managers pursue any revenue-raising initiative, it is key that they first devise a plan. "The most common pitfalls for protected area managers in pursuing finance are the lack of a business plan and lack of a strategy for securing sustainable financial flows," he said. ([MPA News 2:8](#))

A report produced by Thomas's task force, *Financing Protected Areas: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers* provides a step-by-step process for creating business and financial plans, and guides readers through the range of funding sources and mechanisms available at various geographic scales. The report is available free-of-charge online in PDF format at http://wcpa.iucn.org/pubs/pdfs/Financing_PAs.pdf.

Barry Spergel is director of the Center for Conservation Finance (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/conservationfinance>), operated by the World Wildlife Fund, an NGO. In 2001, he authored the report *Raising Revenues for Protected Areas: A Menu of Options*, available free-of-charge in PDF format on the Center's website. Although the report primarily focuses on how to set up financing mechanisms, it provides some guidance on the advantages and disadvantages of soliciting international aid. Spergel is now completing a separate report on raising revenue for marine protected areas in particular.

Donor institutions and websites

MPA practitioners seeking international aid have a choice of organizations to solicit. The following list provides a primer on some of the main types of funding sources, with websites for representatives of each type.

Multilateral banks:

Funding is generally available only to governments or to government-approved, private-sector projects (with some exceptions, as for small grants through the Inter-American Development Bank). A development bank grant or loan to establish or maintain protected areas would typically be part of the support given to implement a national conservation plan. Advice: Learn about the bank from its website, then contact your government's liaison(s) to the bank and discuss partnering on a proposal. If you do not know your country's liaison(s), contact the country office of the bank for this information.

World Bank: www.worldbank.org

Asian Development Bank: www.adb.org

African Development Bank: www.afdb.org

Inter-American Development Bank: www.iadb.org

Global Environment Facility:

The GEF brings together more than 160 member governments, leading development institutions, the scientific community, NGOs, and the private sector to address biodiversity loss and other threats to the environment. Like the multilateral banks, GEF funding of projects requires approval and sponsorship by the host-country government. Advice: Learn about the GEF from its website; there, the web-based guide (<http://www.undp.org/gef/guide/main.htm>) is helpful. Then pitch your proposal to your country's liaisons to the GEF. If you do not know these liaisons, contact the country office for the United Nations

Development Programme (<http://www.undp.org>), a co-coordinator of the GEF, for this information.
Global Environment Facility (GEF): www.undp.org/gef/

Bilateral donor agencies:

Bilateral agencies often have poverty alleviation objectives with biodiversity as a component. Assistance is normally focused on a target group of developing countries; like the multilateral banks, these bilateral agencies often require host-government approval of projects prior to providing financing. Advice: Below are some of the bilateral agencies most engaged with protected-area activities. Learn about the agency from its website, and determine whether it is active in your country. Then network with the appropriate national embassy and with your own government to discuss how your initiative could fit into the agency's strategy for your nation. Also, don't ignore the other embassies in your country: it may be worth checking with all of them to learn from their environmental officers about their areas of interest, aid-wise.

AusAID (Australia): www.ausaid.gov.au

CIDA (Canada): www.acdi-cida.gc.ca

DANIDA (Denmark): www.um.dk/danida

DGIS (The Netherlands): www.minbuza.nl/english

JICA (Japan): www.jica.go.jp/english/

NORAD (Norway): www.norad.no

SIDA (Sweden): www.sida.org

USAID (US): www.usaid.gov

International NGOs:

Several NGOs have significant funds and/or fundraising assistance to provide to conservation activities at the international level. These organizations usually have their own goals, activities, and partners with whom they collaborate. It is often possible, however, to work with these NGOs to develop programs that meet their needs as well as those of a protected area. Advice: Learn about the NGO and its priorities and programs from its website. Then contact the local, national, or regional office of the NGO to discuss and develop collaborative programs and proposals.

Conservation International: www.conservation.org

The Nature Conservancy: nature.org

Wildlife Conservation Society: www.wcs.org

WWF: www.panda.org

Some national agencies provide international aid, too:

For an example of this, see the [Notes and News](#) section for information on the US-operated Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program.

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