INVESTING IN OUR OCEANS

INSIGHTS FOR BUILDING LASTING MARINE CONSERVATION FUNDING INITIATIVES

BLUE EARTH CONSULTANTS, LLC AND COASTAL QUEST COMPLETED 2010
About Blue Earth Consultants, LLC

Blue Earth Consultants, LLC is a boutique management consulting firm founded in 2005 with a portfolio approaching 100 completed projects for a multitude of clients in the United States and internationally. The firm works across sectors and specializes in developing sustainable solutions to complex, multifaceted marine and terrestrial issues, providing the best ideas and consulting services to help improve resource management and sustainable practices around the world. Blue Earth Consultants has expertise in development of strategic, business, and management planning; strong governance and institutional framework design; monitoring and evaluation; long-term funding, financing planning, and framework design; strategic communications strategies and materials; science integration; and the implementation of sustainable management measures. For more information on Blue Earth Consultants, please visit www.BlueEarthConsultants.com.

About Coastal Quest

Founded in 1999, Coastal Quest is a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt, nonprofit organization established to efficiently and effectively deploy expertise and knowledge from around the world to enhance sustainable coastal resource management so that resources persist for future generations. Coastal Quest’s approach is solution-oriented and strives to promote innovation, partnership, and the uptake of cutting-edge information and ideas to create vibrant and resilient coastal communities and ecosystems. It serves as a clearinghouse for data, research, and analysis, much of which is available for public use. Coastal Quest’s three program areas—Capacity-Building and Knowledge-Sharing, Successful Implementation, and Applied Research and Tool Development-address the predominant challenges and barriers that many coastal sustainability organizations and initiatives face around the world. Through these three program areas, Coastal Quest works to achieve its mission—to develop solutions to protect, sustain, and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of our coastal environments for present and future generations. For more information on Coastal Quest, please visit www.Coastal-Quest.org.

Special Thank You To Our Supporters

Blue Earth Consultants, LLC and Coastal Quest would like to thank both The David & Lucile Packard Foundation and The Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation for their generous support and contributions in making this executive summary publicly available and for assistance in undertaking the initial study and associated efforts.
About this Report

This document summarizes results from a study that examined 20 large-scale ocean conservation strategic funding initiatives from the foundation and government sectors to distill successes and failures, investment gaps and opportunities, and lessons to help avoid common pitfalls in achieving sustainable ocean conservation and management. To our knowledge, this study represents the first examination of how foundation and government donors determine and implement their ocean conservation initiatives. It seeks to provoke more thoughtful, long-term initiatives and grant-making in ocean conservation and management. Specifically, the study sought to identify and provide insights on:

- Principles and/or criteria funders use to guide strategies and portfolio level decision-making on whether or not to invest in an initiative
- How success is measured and whether initiatives are setting realistic goals and metrics of success
- Preconditions and key elements needed during implementation to ensure success
- Internal operations, capacity, and governance for successful grant-making
- The role of funding partnerships
- The appropriate scale of ocean conservation investment
- Effective and ineffective investment strategies
- Barriers, barrier removal methods, and lessons learned
- What funders want to achieve

In this summary, our findings are organized into nine main topics to address the most important elements of an initiative’s cycle. More detailed information may be found in the full report that also shares key findings, recipes for success, and lessons for avoiding failure in designing future initiatives.


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1 This report was commissioned by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and conducted by Blue Earth Consultants, strategic implementing partner of Coastal Quest. At the Packard Foundation’s request, programs and initiatives in the Africa region were not included in this research and case study investment amount was more than US$1 million per year.
The Rising Tides of Ocean Conservation

Ocean and coastal conservation emerged in the 1970s as a distinct field of environmental advocacy and policy-making. Environmental disasters, such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, along with rising public concern for marine mammals and other threatened species, have kept ocean conservation in the public eye and on policy-makers’ agendas.

Over the past decade, new ocean policies and legislation, increased interest in sustainability and corporate social responsibility, emerging global threats (such as climate change and ocean acidification), and continued cultural shifts in environmental awareness have kept a spotlight on the marine environment and led to expanded ocean conservation and management efforts.

As with the public interest, donor interest in ocean and coastal sustainable resource conservation and management has increased. The Marine Funders Working Group, for example, has grown from approximately eight key private foundations based in the United States in the mid-1990s to more than 30 current members. The group’s annual grant-making survey reported a growth in ocean conservation investments from approximately US$60 million in 2004 to just under US$300 million in 2011. Government donors, which include multilateral, bilateral, federal, and state funding programs, also have steadily increased their investments in marine conservation and sustainable management over the past two decades, though recent budget shortfalls may have slowed investment.

Some key investment trends identified in this study include:

Geographic Scales of Engagement
Three-quarters of initiatives invest at regional levels (more than one country), half at national and local levels, and one-quarter at state levels. Scaling programs up or using large-scale approaches to support more localized and regional efforts are the most effective methodologies.

Investment Length
As a whole, lengths of investments are spread evenly across the initiatives. Lengths range between three years to more than three decades. The majority of foundations invest in initiatives longer than ten years and the majority of governments invest for five years or less.

Investment Amount
Financial investments range between US$1 million to nearly US$200 million.

Initiative Goals and Strategies
Initiatives have a wide variety of goals and strategies.
Why Funders Invest in Ocean Conservation

Donor investments often aim to address anthropogenic threats to ocean and coastal ecosystems. Specifically, donors seek to fill the significant gap in marine biodiversity protection funding. Case studies show that foundation investments are motivated by founder, board member, and staff interest in ocean conservation, whereas government investments are typically based on legal mandates and policy agreements driven by public interest and priorities. Because of these drivers, donors rarely exited from funding ocean conservation, but rather shifted initiative priorities. Those that exited cited poor evaluation results, which raised concerns about overall initiative effectiveness, or changes in the overall vision of the donor. Shifts typically were prompted by evaluation findings and recommendations, program budget restrictions, realization that the initiative could not effectively address key threats using the originally selected strategies or scale, changes in board interest, or a combination of these factors. Common shifts included changes in geographic emphasis or implementation strategies.

Donors typically implement screening criteria to direct their ocean conservation initiative grant making. Case studies examined in this study utilized either formal or informal criteria that commonly focused on specific strategies or threats.

THREE MAIN PRIORITIES FOR OCEAN CONSERVATION INVESTMENT ENGAGEMENT

{1} Promoting Sustainable Use of Marine Resources
This includes (A) developing social sustainability; (B) encouraging sustainable tourism; (C) removing obstacles to sustainable growth; and (D) developing programs to diversify economic activities.

{2} Improving Ocean and Coastal Governance
This mechanism helps increase conservation and sustainable management, particularly within fisheries, which informants connected to addressing overfishing, bycatch, and the promotion of overall fisheries health.

{3} Fostering Relevant Science
This includes collection, translation, synthesis, and dissemination of science to help inform management and decision-making, with an emphasis on (A) research and monitoring; (B) science targeting specific species or ecosystems; (C) ensuring uptake of science to inform management; and (D) filling scientific knowledge gaps.

3 Blue Earth Consultants used qualitative terms to refer to data trends: Minority—1–20%; Strong Minority—20–45%; One-half/Average—45–55%; Majority—55–75%; and Strong Majority—76–100%, as well as Low—0–33%; Medium—34–66%; and High—67–100%.

4 The selection criterion for investment amount was more than US$1 million per year.
Donor Approaches and Practices for Success

Although informants had diverse opinions regarding the best approaches for achieving the greatest success, we found that:

- Most successful initiatives utilize strategies that are primarily donor driven, but are also informed by grantee perspectives.
- In general, funders use a mix of strategic and opportunistic portfolio approaches. This approach is used by donors that have a strategic plan in place but deviate from their strategy when opportunities present themselves.
- All of the very successful initiatives and one-half of the successful initiatives employ open granting and/or relationship-based grant making.

Both foundation and government donor groups recognize the value of strategic planning and developing a theory of change within the plan. In fact, many described planning as a precondition for success, and nearly one-half of cases offered specific examples of how strategic or action planning processes led to successful initiative outcomes; yet, extensive planning processes have trade-offs. While they bring rigor and in-depth understanding to the process, they can also reduce flexibility. Finding the right balance is key!

However, performing evaluations can help to find this balance. Carrying out initiative evaluations can yield big impacts. All donors used formal and/or informal evaluations over the course of their initiative to guide and gauge progress toward goals, institute course corrections, and generally improve initiative management. In addition, informants agreed that initiative adaptations based on evaluation results lead to more successful project outcomes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING UNDERLYING DRIVERS FIRST

Three donor initiatives—two foundations and one bilateral funder—invested in ocean conservation efforts in the Philippines. All three entities shifted away from their initiative or exited the country completely. Sources acknowledged a failure to address the fundamental drivers of the environmental threats as the reason these initiatives refocused or relocated. Drivers such as poverty, population pressure, and limited enforcement capacity were considerable contributors to the threats of overfishing, destructive fishing methods, and damaging coastal development. Foundation donor strategies primarily focused on developing marine protected areas (MPAs), rather than addressing the drivers first then focusing on creating MPAs. Foundation donors realized there was a mismatch in the scale and extent of the investment needed to address these drivers and subsequently decided to shift the geographic focus of their initiatives. The foundations were also persuaded that their departure would not lead to a significant funding gap, since government donors would continue to invest in the Philippines. USAID’s CRMP (the bilateral donor) remained as a funder in the Philippines; however, the donor exited the ocean and coastal policy initiative to refocus its efforts more on sustainable fisheries.

POWER BROKERS: FORCES FOR SUCCESS

Power brokers are individuals who have the connections and the ability to influence high-level decision-makers who can be important in driving success for ocean conservation initiatives. Our research showed that all of the very successful initiatives either interacted closely with power brokers or were power brokers themselves. Power brokers can be donors, non-governmental organizations (NGO) staff, political leaders, or resource users. They are responsible agents for such activities as building relationships, coordinating efforts, leveraging funds from targeted donors, or ensuring long-term staying power. At the state, national, or regional levels, donors typically interact with power brokers to further policy, increase governances, and to ensure lasting solutions. At the local level, grantees interact with power brokers in the community, such as community leaders and chiefs.

5 Blue Earth Consultants used a three-pronged approach to rank initiative success for each case study into one of five categories. Ranking methodology included: 1) reviewed interview data to gauge informants’ perceived success of their initiative’s achievements and highlights; 2) reviewed evaluation data to determine how external sources viewed success of the initiative; and 3) incorporated the consultants’ knowledge of program success and perception of success within the wider ocean conservation community.

6 Blue Earth Consultants classified grant-making strategies into four categories: 1) Relationship-based: Donor and grantee work together to determine the project to fund. 2) Open granting: Donor provides loose criteria and accepts proposals within those criteria. 3) Focused Granting: Donor requests proposals with strict criteria for approval. 4) Request for proposals. Donor outlines specific project(s) within a specific topic/issue/etc., along with strict criteria and review process.
Goals and Investment Strategies for Creating Durable Outcomes and Achievements

The study examined whether donors believed initiative goals and their expectations were realistic, as well as the factors that influenced why they were, or were not, realistic. We also explored the primary goals and sub-goals shared by donors, as well as the main strategies funded to achieve these goals.

Setting the Tone for Success: Establishing Realistic Goals and Expectations

While a strong majority of initiatives reported setting realistic, attainable goals, few stated that their initiative had achieved its goal(s). Informants correlated success with setting an adequate timeline, establishing a robust management structure, building strong capacity, creating longer-term strategic plans, and focusing investment on achieving main goals. The few respondents who felt that goals and expectations were unrealistic cited the setting of overly ambitious goals at the outset of the initiative and expecting conservation impacts to occur faster than was possible.

Investment Strategies to Achieve Goals

The six common strategies used by case study initiatives include: (1) collection, translation, and dissemination of relevant science to inform decision-making; (2) awareness building through education and outreach; (3) capacity building; (4) partnership; (5) policy and management tools; and (6) market-based solutions.

Funders generally supported multiple strategies to achieve their main goals. The most effective strategies that donors identified were partnership, policy and management tools, and direct conservation. Paradoxically, donor informants also claimed that investments in partnership and science were the least effective strategies. This conclusion underscores the benefits of investing in effective partnerships, as well as the risks of poorly conceived and executed partnerships. Similarly, the extent to which science is integrated into decision-making determines whether science investments—universally seen as essential to ocean conservation—are worthwhile. Foundation and government funders differed in their most frequently supported strategies.

Strategy Clusters

While evaluating case studies, we discovered that very successful and successful donor initiatives frequently employed two strategy clusters to achieve goals: Very successful initiatives funded education and outreach, management tools, and science, while successful initiatives used capacity-building, non-funding partnership, and science.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES: Conditions for Success

- Select realistic goals that consider adequate timelines, focus investments on achieving goals, foster partnerships, and build or have capacity in place.
- Fund multiple strategies that collectively work toward goals.
- Use of strategy clusters can be an effective means for improving success.
- Do not be afraid to exit or shift strategies when the political landscape changes.
Scaling Investments for Success

In this study, we examined multiple scales of investment. We also explored the paradigm shift from funding smaller-scale initiatives to greater focus on ecosystem-based initiatives that has occurred in the last decade. As donors have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of marine ecosystem services and the role of interconnected marine ecosystems, funders have moved toward larger-scale ocean conservation and management initiatives in order to achieve greater impacts.

Informants agree that this shift is necessary and scientifically supported; however, a fundamental mismatch between the appropriate scales for achieving ecological versus socio-economic benefits has led to a lack of consensus about how successful the move toward larger-scale investment has been. Natural science supports ecosystem-based approaches to many ocean conservation issues, while social and cultural imperatives demand working at smaller human scales.

**Scales of Engagement and Role of Scale in Initiative Success**

The five primary scales of engagement for guiding ocean conservation investments are spatial, financial, temporal, governance, and biological. Case study informants regularly described involvement across categories, noting their intrinsic interconnectedness and the importance of considering the interplay among them for increasing program success.

**Spatial Scale (Geographic Range)**

Donors most frequently selected regional scale initiatives because this scale often incorporates local, state, and national components. Selection of the donor’s operating scale(s) is often driven by organizational priorities, philosophies, and perception of a scale’s ability to generate the most positive impact. They also noted the importance of considering the initiative’s goals and objectives when defining an appropriate spatial scale, as it is the basis for identifying the levels of governance that must be engaged, funding requirements, and ideal length of investment.

- Very successful and successful initiatives utilized regional approaches as their primary spatial scales of engagement and local level approaches as their secondary scale.
- One-half of all informants stated that regional (covering more than a single nation) ocean conservation investments were correlated with greater success.

**Financial Scale (Investment Size)**

- Understanding the available funding is critical for identifying appropriate spatial scales in which to work in conjunction with its ability to make a meaningful impact with available funds.
- The most successful initiatives were also those with larger investment amounts (US$50 million or more), regardless of the length of investment.

**Temporal Scale (Investment Duration)**

Longer-term commitments are better able to achieve meaningful conservation outcomes. Some case studies shifted initial project timeframes from 3–5 years to 10–15 years. The main drivers toward prioritizing longer-term investments are (1) the recognition that ocean conservation and sustainable management is a nascent field; (2) larger-scale projects require more time for building institutions, connecting and coordinating multiple levels of governance, developing partnerships, and identifying increased funding sources; and (3) a better understanding of ecologically realistic timeframes to realize conservation outcomes.

- Initiatives with greater than five-year timeframes encourage initiative durability more than shorter-term investments.
- Nearly all of the moderately successful initiatives were short-term (fewer than six years), while the strong majority of very successful initiatives were investments longer than seven years.

**Governance Scale (Jurisdictional, Policy, and Management Authority)**

Selecting the proper scales of governance engagement is crucial for gaining proper buy-in and encouraging policy actions that support an initiative’s goals and effectiveness. Initiatives that work at both local and statewide or national scales can achieve greater success than they could serving one scale.

- Interactions with local levels of government can help to inform the policy, legislation, and partnership actions that are needed and taking place at the state and national levels.

**Biological Scale (Biological and Ecological Interactions)**

In initiative planning and implementation, it is important to remember that each ecosystem has distinct species compositions and species interactions, and each faces different threats. In addition, biological scale may have unique implications for governance scale and engagement.

- Safeguarding biodiversity values and functional integrity is crucial to effective conservation. To achieve this, consider the uniqueness of each ecosystem’s ecological, political, and socioeconomic context when defining an initiative’s spatial scale.
**SCALE CONDITIONS for Success:**

- Identify and support initiatives aimed at achieving state- and regional-level impacts with dedicated funding for local-level activities to support larger scale goals.

- Work across spatial scales and scale categories in ways that strategically align efforts to maximize each dollar; this removes inconsistencies and creates space for moving forward in a more unified manner.

- Create partnerships among donors, governments, NGOs, and other stakeholder groups to align coordination efforts and leverage funding; this is crucial in effectively working across scales.

- Assess the capacity of grantees to effectively deploy funding and diversify to a broader set of grantees as needed; however, do not exceed the funder’s own capacity to manage multiple grantees.

- If only short-term funding is available, support portions of an initiative that link to a larger framework, or give to an initiative that is leveraging funds through a partnership and/or has longer-term goals, and has coordination and financing mechanisms in place.

- Do not expect long-term project success with short-term investments; longer-term initiatives are often needed to increase grantee security and promote project sustainability.
The Central Role of Partnership in Funding

Partnership consistently emerged as a key theme throughout this study. Informants regularly discussed partnership as a primary goal, an effective strategy, a challenge, and, at times, a strategy shortfall.

Impacts of Partnership on Success

The value of partnership is clear: All very successful and successful donors engaged in partnerships. Partnership and collaboration often helped facilitate achievement of initiative goals and outcomes by expanding capacity, skills, and expertise, and leveraging resources more effectively. Partnership included formal (structured cooperative agreement, memorandum of understanding, contract, etc.), collaborating (coordinated approach, no formal agreement, frequent discussion, etc.), and informal (loose collaboration, knowledge sharing, networking, etc.). The initiatives examined in this study also engaged in both same-sector (intrasectoral) and cross-sector (intersectoral) partnerships. Intrasectoral partnerships can be easier to develop and manage than intersectoral partnerships. However, intersectoral arrangements, such as public-private partnerships or partnerships with industry, can provide the opportunity for donors to expand their reach, allowing for greater impact.

Challenges in Partnership

In spite of partnership’s key role in initiative success, it was also a common setback. Two challenges commonly arise:

Forming and Maintaining Partnerships:
- Partnerships are complex and require coordination to form and be effectively maintained to ensure initiative progress is on track; this often takes more time, money, and energy than expected.

Lack of Sufficient Communication:
- While donor groups usually have some level of communication, they still lack the level of interaction needed to be effective; this can lead to inconsistencies between donor groups, create confusion among grantee organizations or stakeholder groups, and reduce the ability to leverage or attract additional funding.
Creating Donor Synergy for Enhancing Success by Leveraging Complimentary Roles

Government and foundation donors have diverse strengths and serve different roles in supporting ocean conservation initiatives. Their efforts can be leveraged, along with private sector investment and innovation, to create synergies and open opportunities for enhancing initiative success and longer-term sustainability. Approaches in which foundation donors can complement and leverage government funding and private sector efforts include:

- **Mutually Leveraging Funding From Diverse Sources:** Foundation donors can provide seed funds that can be matched later with larger government support.
- **Bridging and Gap Funding:** Foundation donors (private and public) can work with government to bridge funding gaps when government budgets are reduced or political support for conservation diminishes.
- **Convening:** Foundations have the power to convene multiple sectors to discuss and implement ocean conservation.
- **Connecting Grantees to Opportunities:** Foundation donors identify opportunities for grantees to apply for government funds.
- **Influencing Action and Educating Leaders:** Most of the foundation case studies have prominent board members from political, financial, scientific, or cultural sectors. Opportunities exist for these influential leaders to engage and advocate for increased ocean conservation government funding. Government donors can get private foundations face time with elected officials and senior agency leadership to discuss threats, needs, and solutions.
- **Building Response Capacity:** Foundation donors can build governments’ capacity to address emerging issues by funding innovation, piloting solutions, and then advocating government implementation of these solutions at a larger scale. In addition, foundation donors can build the capacity of grantees to act as watchdogs over governmental and private practices.
- **Incentivizing Innovation and Market-Based Solutions:** Foundation donors can encourage and guide entrepreneurs by supporting the creation of innovative, market-based solutions and by subsidizing development of sustainable concepts through different mechanisms such as program-related investments, in addition to grants. Once a concept is proven, or a viable market solution exists, along with a demand for it, the private sector can invest in the solution; or, government donors can assist with introducing the solution to the mainstream. They can bring concepts to scale by creating enabling conditions for markets and adopting policies to support strong environmental conservation and management standards, as well as providing incentives such as loans, tax credits, and grants.
- **Accessing More Capital:** Both foundation and government donors can leverage their connections with the donor community to increase ocean conservation funding across sectors.

**PARTNERSHIP CONDITIONS for Success:**

- Conduct a sufficient level of due diligence and risk analysis prior to engaging in partnerships, including communicating intentions and willingness to participate.
- Engage in structured partnerships, either collaborating or formal.
- Clearly develop and implement a robust governance structure, define roles, develop and implement metrics to measure success, and design an appropriate communication strategy.
- Engage partners with strong leadership and address issues inhibiting effectiveness.
- Design partnerships around manageable focal areas: species, ecosystems, regions, and/or threats.
- Enlist a third party to coordinate when administrative capacity is not available to manage partnerships adequately.
Five Common Challenges Funders Face and How to Overcome Them

This study illuminated a variety of challenges donors face in identifying, planning, implementing, and evaluating ocean conservation initiatives. Achievement came when donors and initiatives focused on areas of greatest need regardless of the challenge. This indicates that donors should not necessarily shy away from ambitious projects, if they align their resources, strategies, and tactics.

The five most common challenges are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership and coordination</td>
<td>These challenges arise from the difficulty of forming and maintaining strong partnerships. Finding alignment among groups and coordinating members can take substantial time, money, and energy. The three primary problems are (1) lack of willingness or capacity to engage in partnership and (2) lack of alignment among donor agendas and (3) varying capacity for engagement with governments, grantees, and other stakeholders.</td>
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<td>Capacity</td>
<td>Inadequate donor and grantee capacity commonly hinder program and project effectiveness. Donors described being understaffed or “stretched thin,” while limited grantee capacity delayed conservation progress. Specific issues include staff turnover, limited talent pool, lack of business and technical skills, and limited cooperation among NGOs.</td>
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<td>Governance, political will, and buy-in</td>
<td>Contributing factors to this challenge include ineffective government leadership; unwillingness to adapt to newer, more innovative methods of ocean conservation; and, corruption among governments bodies and, at times, grantee organizations. This challenge is more acute in developing countries.</td>
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<td>Stakeholder willingness and buy-in</td>
<td>When donors fail to develop broad-based support for marine conservation at local, regional, and national levels, changes to policy and creation of new initiatives are often met with stakeholder resistance; stakeholder opposition ranged from mild to intense and organized.</td>
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<td>Funding and economy</td>
<td>Lack of funding is a consistent challenge. The case study showed that grantees often underestim ate the cost and time needed to achieve results, which can, in turn, disrupt timelines or cause changes to outlined initiative activities. In addition, for all types of donors, the stock market downturns in 2000 and 2008–2009, coupled with state budget cuts and other fluctuations in funding, resulted in reduced financial resources and budgets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other challenges</td>
<td>Ocean conservation initiatives are also hindered by cultural and scientific knowledge gaps, unrealistic temporal scales, and a variety of external forces, such as population growth, poverty and lack of economic opportunities, natural disasters, and political volatility.</td>
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The five most common solutions are:

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<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve coordination and alignment</td>
<td>Ensure initiatives have an adequate budget and a well-conceived and executed plan for coordination among groups. The substantial time, money, and energy required to support communication and coordination efforts are well worth it. Donors may consider using a management team rather than a single leader to improve coordination in more complex, global-scale projects.</td>
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<td>Increase capacity</td>
<td>Have the proper capacity at all levels – government, grantee, and donor. Each level works together to maximize funding efficiency. Funder willingness to take part in grantee capacity building significantly helps to minimize initiative setbacks by ensuring grantees have the capacity, proven manpower, skill sets, and infrastructure to deliver the intended initiative tasks. Donors must also have the capacity to properly manage their portfolio demands, whether on their own or by using a network of partners.</td>
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<td>Build allies</td>
<td>Find ways to improve interactions and create new relationships with groups affected by ocean conservation efforts. Public awareness, open dialogues, and transparency with stakeholders can build trust, reduce pushback, and create a strong constituency for aligning policies and enforcing legislation. In addition, ensure that adequate resources are available to absorb the incremental costs of conservation and economic tradeoffs.</td>
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<td>Build the business case and provide incentives</td>
<td>Create changes in practice by making a strong business case and providing incentives for organizations to be early adaptors. Incentives can come in many forms, such as access rights, training programs, and updated gear or other technologies.</td>
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<td>Leverage funding</td>
<td>Capitalize on economies of scale by coordinating and communicating between funding agencies and donors, and by merging or aligning funds toward common goals, when possible. Also, identify and fund cost-efficient and successful program elements.</td>
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<td>Improve scientific knowledge</td>
<td>Fund targeted and in-depth research initiatives that link to conservation action plans and provide greater understanding of species and systems by donors and grantees. Support similar efforts for increasing social-science knowledge to illuminate cultural needs and sensitivities, enhance buy-in, and reduce the potential for alienating communities in which initiatives work.</td>
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<td>Consider an ecosystem services and values framework</td>
<td>Developing uniform definitions of coastal and ocean ecosystem services, attaching economic values to them, and using terms that decision-makers understand will help garner support and buy-in for adopting sustainable practices and conservation.</td>
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Highlighting Success: Outcomes and Achievements

For the 20 case study initiatives, donors collectively invested roughly US$1.7 billion in ocean conservation, which resulted in several positive outcomes and achievements; yet, few initiatives reported that they had realized, either partially or fully, their goals.

Main Achievement Categories

Initiative achievements fall into five main categories: (1) governance and policy; (2) area-based management; (3) increased awareness through education and outreach; (4) building and coordinating strong partnerships; and (5) science-based decision-making.

Are Donors Selling Themselves Short?

The 20 case study initiatives collectively invested approximately US$1.7 billion in ocean conservation over the duration of these initiatives. However, because there is no tracking of how the dollars invested correlate to outcomes, it is not possible to calculate a return on this considerable investment. Failing to communicate clearly the environmental and social benefits of these investments is a lost opportunity to leverage funds from other donors and support for conservation from the general public.

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<tr>
<th>Acheivement Area</th>
<th>Overall Trends Across Acheivements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governance and Policy</td>
<td>+40 achievements in the area of governance and policy, including 21 new policies created in six global regions—U.S./Canada, Pacific, Gulf of California, Asia, Wider Caribbean, and South America</td>
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<td>Area-based Management</td>
<td>+580 newly created MPAs (+2,000,000 km²)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+50 existing MPAs supported</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+6 networks of MPAs created</td>
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<td>6 demonstration sites established for teaching MPA design and monitoring techniques</td>
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<td>Awareness</td>
<td>15 donor initiatives experienced 35 achievements in the area of education and outreach</td>
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<td>+1.6 million members of the general public and 1,500 government representatives reached</td>
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<td>Partnership</td>
<td>12 key partnership achievements as formal partnerships, with a total of 38 memoranda of understanding/agreements signed memorializing formal agreements</td>
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<td>35% of all partnership achievements were public-private partnerships</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>+11 policies directly informed by case study science projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18 case studies supported science to fill knowledge gaps and supported management and policy decision-making leading to 65 clear achievements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+193 reports written, ranging in focus from genetic mapping to coral stressors, to inform decision-makers and managers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+96 monitoring protocols developed ranging from coral reef health monitoring to land-based indicators of pollution</td>
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HOW TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN Initiative Success:

Investment Preconditions for Ensuring Success

- Match initiative scale to human and financial capacity.
- Have political will and public buy-in.
- Have a supportive governance framework.
- Have willing partners.

Key Donor Ingredients for Sustaining Ocean Conservation Initiatives

- Use strategic plans to help staff make and align day-to-day decisions with goals and outcomes.
- Gain a clear understanding of the region, issues, and scale of challenge the initiative is working to address. Include experts, government representatives, and stakeholders to help define aspects of the geography or issues that are not well understood. This preparation will help secure political will and public buy-in.
- Avoid cumbersome donor application, reporting, and evaluation procedures. Create grant applications and reporting processes that are clear, simple, accessible (e.g., online), and sensitive to language barriers.
- Invest in ongoing capacity and constituency building.
- Invest in building partnerships and coordination.
- Use evaluations to identify lessons learned and continually improve implementation strategies.
- Provide sustained support.
- Integrate natural and social science into decision-making.
- Translate lessons and evaluation insights into improved initiative practices.
- Conduct robust grantee and financial due diligence.
- Address ineffective or poor leadership of key grantees in a timely manner to avoid wasted resources and negative initiative impacts.
- Provide evaluation feedback to grantees in a timely manner to remain agile, and quickly adapt strategies based on findings.
- Engage in long-term commitment.