Effective Marine Funding Survey

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Introduction

With the realisation that addressing complex environmental challenges requires greater strategic collaboration and stronger relationships, John Ellerman, Esmée Fairbairn and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundations are hosting a workshop in October 2017 to better understand how to effectively secure a healthy UK marine environment.

Ahead of this workshop, invitees who represent leading NGOs and funders working in the UK marine environment were asked to contribute their perspectives and knowledge to key strategic questions.

In total, there were 20 responses to the survey which was sent to about 30 people. Sixty percent of respondents are NGOs and 40 percent are funders and other enablers.

The results of this survey have informed the design of the October workshop. It is also being shared with participants ahead of time to stimulate their thinking. This summary is intended to be used as a tool that can help provoke, guide and shape future conversations and collective action across the wider NGO and funder ecosystem.

What are your top priorities?

There are four key areas where respondents are placing their priorities and in order of prominence they are:

- Marine ecosystem conservation
- Sustainable fisheries
- Pollution
- Community development

Marine Ecosystem Conservation

A large number of people surveyed are working to support and develop Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). 'We are ensuring an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas and species conservation' and we are aiming to 'increase coverage of effective marine protected areas'. We are seeking to help 'the ocean recover through improving marine management, securing well-managed marine protected areas which will aim to recover, nurture and protect marine species and track ocean recovery'.

Several of the respondents' work is about developing a better understanding of the marine ecosystem. We are seeking to bring a greater 'understanding of the ecology and biodiversity of hotspot ecosystems in the ocean' and 'to understand the role of the ocean at earth system level'. This extends to developing 'science to inform management and policy'. 'We want to incorporate an overview of historical change, losses and damage into conservation targets'.

A cluster of people are focusing their attention on the implementation and management of MPAs. We are 'ensuring all activities are considered on a regional management basis and cumulative impacts are taken into account.' 'We are working towards all MPAs being appropriately managed.'

This includes activity aimed at securing policy reinforcement for marine conservation. 'We are getting marine conservation and stewardship firmly on the political agenda' and working towards 'improved policy on marine conservation.' We are 'ensuring the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is transposed effectively into domestic law post Brexit.'

Others were focusing more broadly on 'moving towards high seas protection' and 'protection for high seas biodiversity through a treaty' in order to 'protect last ocean wilderness areas.'

Sustainable Fisheries

The second most prominent area of focus for the survey respondents was about 'working towards sustainable management of fisheries'. This included a more specific effort in:

- 'Ensuring ecosystem-based fisheries management'.
- 'Influencing consumers and seafood businesses to be more responsible in their seafood and buying choices' and 'increasing a social shift toward marine conservation fisheries'.

- 'Promoting equity in the distribution of fishing rights.'
- 'Greatly restricting the use of destructive fishing methods.'
- 'Reducing over-fishing and IUU fishing.'

People are spanning a geographical range of working with 'sustainable fisheries in coastal communities' and 'sustainable fisheries in Europe.'

A good deal of effort is also being placed on 'enabling fisheries to be appropriately regulated' and this includes 'a fair and sustainable fisheries policy post-Brexit.' This work also includes positively 'influencing the direction of travel of the Common Fisheries Policy' and 'ensuring that the Government minimises by-catch and the impacts of commercial fishing on mobile species in UK waters'. Others are 'supporting UK Government's anti-whaling stance at the IWC' and 'providing a single inclusive voice for the 80% of the EU fleet that is deemed small scale'.

Pollution

Working towards reducing pollution is an area of focus for many of the respondents. This includes 'ending the flow of plastic into the ocean' and doing this by 'tracking the health of our seas, identifying key sources of pollution, preventing it and ultimately cleaning it up'.

Community development

Several respondents are 'engaging society and key economic sectors in developing marine conservation'. This includes 'helping communities and people be better linked to the sea' and also identifying 'solutions to poverty through marine biodiversity in developing countries.'

Capacity building

Several respondents are 'building the capacity of member organisations to be able to engage more effectively' and they are also working towards 'increasing collaboration' to better 'identify solutions to systemic problems' in the marine environment.

What are your main approaches to change?

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on their main approaches to change. The results showed that people use multiple strategies for change in their work including:

Changing frames, values and behaviours

'The ocean will be able to recover and flourish if the way we value and use the ocean changes.' We believe if 'people are inspired by marine wildlife and value the sea for the many ways in which it supports our quality of life' then 'people will protect what they value.'

Aligning people around a common purpose

Some people feel it is important 'to help stakeholders to see that they share a common purpose, vision and goals'. 'We believe it is important to enable conversations between actors that don´t talk normally to each other.'

Raising awareness and providing research

We believe change will come about through 'a greater understanding of the role and value of the ocean for human existence and its wellbeing will leverage faster protection.' We are 'encouraging people to become aware of issues, engendering their support and recognising the need for future safeguarding'.

Other approaches to change linked to awareness raising include providing good science and evidence. We 'produce data that are relevant to sustainable management of the ocean and communicate those data and their relevance to propel changes in policy.'

Increasing collaboration and demonstrating solutions

We feel that 'systemic change in marine needs an ecosystem of skills and approaches to effect change. If we build collaboration and capacity to communicate the value of the ocean to people more effectively, it will lead to better management and protection of the ocean.' We focus on helping people to have a 'coordinated effort for change' and 'help them to co-develop work plans'.

Advocating and campaigning

Combining policy and advocacy was another strong theme in enabling change amongst survey respondents. 'On the basis of sound science, we influence ocean-users, the public, industry and decision-makers to change their behaviour and decision-making through political and policy advocacy (and if needed legal action), public campaigning and awareness-raising, education, engaging coastal communities and engaging with volunteers, including through citizen science.'

Our approach is about 'investigating, documenting, exposing, acting and lobbying - these five steps make up the campaign cycle for most of our campaigns.'

What do you see as your most significant challenges?

The top significant marine environment challenges in order of priority are:

- Poor MPA and ecosystem management
- Overfishing
- Pollution
- Climate change
- Lack of political will and agency
- Brexit
- Lack of strategy and resources
- Lack of public awareness

Poor MPA and ecosystem management

Some of the challenges here include 'MPA management and legislative protection and the consistency following Brexit. The challenge is to ensure the government improves protection of all MPAs to European Marine Site standards'. At the moment, 'MPAs are not effective – this creates a backlash' and overall there is a challenge in that the 'cumulative impact of human behaviour is taking some areas of the ocean beyond repair'.

Overfishing

A few examples of challenges in this area include 'the need to feed growing populations and an increased desire for protein and an expansion of frontier and distant water fisheries to meet growing food demand'. Additional challenges include 'fisheries reform including supporting a consistent management approach around the country, supporting small scale low impact operators' and dealing with 'increasing pressures from fishing and overfishing'.

Pollution

'Reducing the flow of plastics and other pollutants into the ocean' is a clear challenge as is doing this 'without establishing sufficient waste infrastructure on land.' Underwater noise was also cited as another form of pollution that is proving to be a challenge for marine conservation.

Climate change

'The multiple impacts of climate change' are becoming more prominent challenges. This includes mass coral bleaching, invasive species, ocean warming and acidification and sea level rise adversely affecting coastal wetland habitats.

Lack of political will and agency

There is a 'lack of genuine governmental commitment to marine conservation' and marine conservation is 'low on most political agendas with political changes that ignore and reverse marine

conservation commitments and work on policy and funding cycles that do not match biological and behaviour change cycles'.

"The 'lack of political will arises as a result of vested and competing interests."

Brexit

Brexit is a challenge with '80% of environmental legislation coming from the EU. This will have a huge impact on the marine environment. Our biggest challenge is ensuring that this legislation is transposed effectively and improved upon to maximise protections.' 'Another challenge is just the sheer distraction of Brexit to existing concerns such as designating and implementing management plans for MPAs.'

Lack of strategy and resources

A lack of strategy and human and financial resources was noted as a challenge.

There is 'a lack of joined up approaches to communication and a lack of funding to tackle the emergent issues such as deep-sea mining and PCP pollution and insufficient funding to address implementation of 'boring' needs such as a high seas treaty'.

'National NGOs face funding cuts as the key statutory bodies which lead on implementation of marine legislation (such as through designating protected areas) budgets have been cut.'

Respondents felt another challenge was the prominence of 'competing agendas and priorities' and 'vested interests still wielding significant control'. It is a challenge to 'move marine conservation up the agenda when there are so many other things to worry about'.

Lack of public awareness

Another challenge is the 'overall lack of public awareness and engagement and value for the ocean and it struggles to compete with other societal pressures such as economic and security concerns'. There is also 'poor engagement with coastal communities'.

What do you see as the opportunities for change?

Shifting mindsets and creating new narratives

Some respondents believe there is opportunity in 'increasing the value of the ocean in people's minds' – to change their mindset. Others felt there was an opportunity 'to create new narratives grounded in shared values – the sea underpinning people's prosperity' and 'reframing the narrative of the sea as a public open space rather than 'belonging' to some elements of the sectors'.

Increasing public awareness

Many respondents felt there is an opportunity to raise greater awareness such as through 'more public attention on ocean conservation issues and more media coverage of ocean stories'.

"There seems to be an opportunity to build on groundswell of awareness and behaviour change around plastic pollution – it could be a platform for raising awareness more generally."

Demonstrating negative physical impact

Some people feel that the 'decline of species and habitats continues to be a driver for public change and can be used positively' and the 'impacts of climate change are finally beginning to make the wider public aware of what is coming'.

Increasing collaboration and local engagement

There is an opportunity for greater 'NGO (and other) collaborations, with unity over key marine conservation issues and with some truly inspiring and clever people working in the sector.' There is also an opportunity for 'closer working relationships between NGOs and small-scale fishing sector working together for mutual benefit.' Linked to increasing collaboration, several people feel that there is an opportunity to increase 'volunteer and local engagement' and 'community involvement in marine planning.'

Adopting and implementing MPAs

A significant area of opportunity for the respondents, includes 'strengthening MPA management and monitoring' and 'moving from creating MPAs to managing them effectively and 'demonstrating that MPAs' work for many players such as fishermen and tourists.'

Using technology

There is an opportunity to use 'technological advances for better monitoring and control' including 'addressing overfishing and illegal fishing' and the 'use of aerial monitoring to better predict the? state of intertidal environment.'

Promoting a strong post-Brexit policy

'Brexit could bring opportunities to tighten marine management and bring about changes in the way our sea is managed and regulated.' 'A post-Brexit fisheries policy could be world leading in its approach to sustainability and equity.'

'Brexit, though a challenge, does harbour a wealth of opportunities to build better protections for the marine environment. From bycatch to estuaries, a lot of EU legislation can be transposed into domestic legislation and built upon to broaden and improve on existing legislation and protections.'

Leveraging global frameworks

There is also an opportunity 'to support higher UN protection targets after 10% by 2020 has been met. 30% by 2030 is gaining real legs right now.'

Creating new finance models

Several respondents saw an opportunity for the development of new finance models such as 'sustainable financing mechanisms for ocean conservation and sustainability initiatives' and an 'establishment of an Ocean Fund, supported by governments and others, to address conservation and sustainable blue growth.'

Increasing market demand

Other respondents noted an opportunity to increase market demand such as by 'supermarkets and restaurants competing to be most sustainable on fish'.

What are the gaps in conserving the marine environment?

An understanding of the drivers and impact

There is a gap in the understanding of key drivers and their impact such as:

- 'The value and role of the ocean in all our wellbeing.'
- 'The patterns of biodiversity in the marine environment and the links between loss of biodiversity and loss of ecosystem function.'
- 'The source of pollution arising from domestic and agricultural sources.'
- 'Consumer information and awareness about pollution, sustainable seafood, toxins, supply chain, waste, carbon.'
- And some people felt, even when there was information, 'science is ignored or not effectively communicated to policy makers.'

Effective Management of MPAs

Many respondents believe that there is a significant gap in 'the acceptance, adoption and management and monitoring of a comprehensive network of MPAs'. 'Gaps exist between theory and implementation. For example, ensuring that marine protected areas are well managed and not just paper parks. This takes innovative ideas, financing mechanisms and stakeholder support.'

"There is a significant gap in 'the acceptance, adoption and management and monitoring of a comprehensive network of MPAs'."

'There is also a gap with the possible erosion of rule of law if there is a combination of lack of funding and appropriate empowerment of regulators, leading to lack of monitoring and enforcement, together with erosion of ability of civil society to bring legal action and absence of remedies (or failure to comply by government) even where legal action is brought (and won).'

Fishery impact and influence

Respondents felt there were a few gaps relating to fishing including:

- 'Lack of ecosystem approach to fisheries management and fisheries sourcing policies.'
- 'Damaging fishing techniques.'
- 'Agency capture by the fishing industry' and 'power asymmetry between different players (such as markets, retailers, small versus large vessels).'
- 'Lack of fisheries enforcement.'

Awareness

Several people feel there is a gap in awareness including 'a positive vision of marine conservation in healthy, prosperous, progressive society'. And 'with negative media coverage we need more spokespersons in favour of marine conservation which go beyond NGOs'.

Strategy and Funding

Another significant gap is related to strategy and funding. 'NGOs are working in silos, each pushing their own internal agendas, especially with relation to funded projects'.

'Funding is a gap where there is limited marine conservation funding and funders (although lots is not used effectively and we could get much more efficient on how we use funding). It is very hard to fund 'more of the same' with funders seeking innovation and new approaches versus continuation projects. This results in competition within NGO community.'

What can funders do differently?

There were a number of suggestions for what funders might want to consider doing differently.

Encourage collaboration

People reflected on how foundations can 'actively encourage and support collaboration among the NGO sector to address 'ego and logo' issues.' What role can foundations play in 'working together and providing more connections for a joined-up approach that minimises competition between potentially complementary initiatives?'

Support new approaches for change, shared learning, capacity building

Several people wondered how funders could help to 'bring in new ideas and approaches from other sectors', 'share and promote solutions and reduce reinvention of the wheel' and 'encourage or facilitate training or exchange of ideas, expectations, best practice or maybe placements with industry and professional bodies to enable professionalism at a level that can compete easily with business and industry.'

Longer term funding and strategy processes

Many respondents felt that foundations would be more effective if they changed their funding time horizons and strategic processes. Some suggestions included:

Timescales

'Be prepared to commit to longer funding cycles (with caveats of course), as many conservation projects are hamstrung by short-term funding cycles.'

'From an operational perspective, it would be helpful if funders were willing to fund for longer periods (to improve continuity and staff and knowledge retention) and to be willing to fund core costs such as salaries. All three foundations convening this workshop already take that approach, and it would be brilliant if other funders could do the same.'

'Have a sense of timescale - some projects (SCF, LIFE and Coastal PO) will take time to self-fund and need specific advice to make sure that they will live beyond the life of a charismatic founder. More hands-on approach to these organisations with a longer-term commitment is required as these have the ability to reach other communities'.

"The average 1-3 year funding for applied conservation science projects is a significant limitation when faced with such large gaps in knowledge and understanding of the marine environments."

<u>New strategic processes</u>

Funders have an opportunity to 'recognise that there needs to be both a top down and bottom up approach to change and engage genuinely with those within the sector that are open to positive and proactive action that will benefit both the marine environment and those that rely upon it'.

'From a strategic point of view, it would be enormously helpful if funders can share information and possibly develop shared funding strategies to ensure a truly joined up approach to funding NGOs. This would maximise the effectiveness of Foundations' limited resources, while maximising impact and delivery of positive outcomes for NGOs.'

'Develop new application processes and ways to identify, engage with and award projects, that minimise the current time burden of seeking funding and completing funding application processes. This would help to free up the amount of time grantees can spend on actually delivering the conservation work they are designed to…'.

'Allowing freedom and flexibility is vital to accommodate regular political change as well as supporting work on a range of scales'.

'Somewhere in this is a brokering role for foundations to 'identify collaborations between individuals in NGOs (rather than the organisations themselves). Perhaps joint bids may be a good idea – and fostering an environment where that is likely to happen.'

'Don't be scared of core funding including for coordination and coalitions'. 'Most grant recipients have to hide core costs in projects and that is a pointless paper exercise.'

'Funders will be key to helping us advocate and campaign for the realisation of our vision at this critical time.'

Support demonstration projects, innovation and experiments

Several people felt that funders 'could support research and development projects' for example by 'funding 3-5 demonstration projects to show that other ways are possible such as demonstrating that sustainable and law-compliance fishing can be financially viable'.

Funders can 'encourage and enable innovative thinking – which includes taking risks and not being sure about outcomes. For example by bringing together cutting-edge technology and science with NGOs who want to find solutions in the sea and make space for thinking together.'

Supporting leverage points for change

A number of respondents pointed to different leverage points that funders could back including:

- 'Continued support for advocacy is vital. Funding is sparse and rarely supports long-term policy changes which have slow longer term wins.'
- Funders can help to 'support and source ideas that give us effective voice and narrative with 'the public' and policy makers'.
- There is an opportunity for funders to 'to coordinate to build a movement of active citizens that support marine conservation initiatives'.

What process or approaches have inspired you?

There were several clusters of inspiration that respondents highlighted.

Creating new narratives and visions

'The Blue New Deal is inspiring because it creates a new narrative around marine conservation which puts coastal communities at the core of it.'

Raising awareness

Several people cited examples of awareness raising initiatives that have had a positive impact such as the Fish Fight campaign, Project Ocean, plastics and microbeads and general climate change communications. Others pointed to effective tactics such as 'multiple public engagement initiatives that bring people (schools, volunteers, etc) close to the coast-sea' and the 'emerging ocean literacy network'.

Shifting power dynamics and self-organising

Some respondents have noticed there is 'a drive to work more closely with sea users as those who are best placed to protect it are those who rely on its resources'. Community activism such as 'Marine Conservation Society's Community Voice Method' have been impactful as has 'advocacy by small-scale and static fishers' such as 'Low Impact Fishermen of Europe – this is important as it gives a voice to a group that is often ignored and not organised'.

Collaborating for change

Several people referred to the 'Marine CoLABoration and #OneLess initiatives which support complementary collaboration across NGOs, create a new language and approach to solving ocean issues, have the ability to reach everyone through simple action to help the ocean and learn how to change a system'.

Respondents also commented on 'powerful NGO collaborations on Common Fisheries Policy reform or on marine plastics (including microbeads). These collaborations are playing to all organisations' strengths.'

Influencing policy and legal framework change

Some people have been inspired by the success of campaigns supporting the 'Marine Reserves Coalition and the Great British Oceans – which have brought about tangible policy commitments and designation of large MPAs in the UKOTs.'

Others have appreciated the 'recognition of the ocean within COP21, RIO+20 and SDG outcomes'.

And there is also 'the legal case on the application of the Habitats Directive to apply to fisheries (with MCS – work still ongoing in the EU context). This has fundamentally altered the approach to the bizarre exception fishing claimed for conservation legislation.'

Demonstrating conservation impact

There has been some recognisable success in 'Marine Protected Areas - although we are not there yet' and in 'the delivery of the revised approach to European Marine Sites by IFCAs, demonstrating that local and regionalised decision making can provide innovative tailored solutions.'

Increasing market demand

Some people are inspired by 'the adoption and championing of sustainable fishing by the market' and admire how 'retailers are beginning to take responsibility for brands beyond their own'. Net-Works is an inspiring market solution 'bringing sustainable business models into marine conservation that address community needs and support conservation'.

Developing good evidence

Many respondents respect the positive impact of effective evidence. This includes 'the New Economics Foundation (nef) economic modelling and appraisal of fisheries management options'. Additionally, people commented on growing success in the areas of:

- 'Linking protection of the environment to increasing resilience against climate change impacts and supporting adaptation to them.'
- 'Understanding of the carbon sequestration benefits of marine ecosystems, especially coastal wetlands.'
- 'Linking of effective environmental protection to improved human wellbeing (including mental health).'
- 'Analysis of ownership of the UK fishing quota.'

Tools

There is increasing positive impact in 'unlocking technology to help with large-scale marine surveillance and enforcement' and 'low cost technology to providing tools for management of vessels'. An example that was cited is 'Pew- Satellite Applications Catapult - Eyes on the Sea.'

What is your vision for the next 10 years?

Valuing the ocean in a new way

Quite a number of survey respondents spoke about their vision of people valuing the ocean in a different way. 'I'd like to see a new 'sea story' for the UK which includes a strong link in people's minds between the ocean and physical and mental health.'

'I'd like to see a recognition of the need to protect the marine environment for the longer rather than short term and to see it valued for what it offers for all, not just those who use it. I'd like to see people value and respect the sea wherever they live. At present, as an island nation, we appear to have lost this valuing which partly contributes to failure to protect our habitats and species.'

"My vision is for people to be immensely proud of UK seas and hungry for more positive change."

Effective Marine Protection Areas and marine conservation

A large cluster of respondents had a vision for 'more and better-managed protected areas' and 'at least 5-10 MPAs delivering results both at sea and the coastal communities near them'.

'A positive future vision is where the UK has effectively protected and managed its own waters based on sound science, delivered and championed international marine conservation (including climate) commitments, and is supported by a united marine conservation sector and engaged communities, public and private sectors working collaboratively because they value the ocean.'

'I would like to see a complete rebalancing of our approach to marine management. Recognising the marine environment as something which needs to be protected for its own sake (a positive drive not because of 'fear' of climate change – which however correct works on the wrong part of the human psyche).'

'I'd like to see a more integrated approach to marine management that incorporates fisheries and protection into the same framework. This would include the UK leading internationally with regards to pressuring for designation of MPAs on the High Seas and UK to be modelling world leading marine policies and encouraging other nation states to follow suit.'

Visions also included 'decentralisation and the adoption of regional management systems, to support local decision making and tailored solutions' and new 'sustainable funding mechanisms that are more widely available to support ocean conservation' and 'sustainable ocean practices that are integrated throughout society, including education, retail, supply, consumer awareness, design, circular economy etc'.

Sustainable fish stocks

A large number of survey respondents also had a vision for sustainable fisheries. Visions included 'restored fish stocks and biodiverse waters' as a result of 'sustainable management of fishery resources, where low impact fishing methods are supported and rewarded.'

Reduced pollution

A significant number of people also conveyed a vision whereby 'marine pollution is drastically minimised'. This includes 'a comprehensive review of all discharges to eradicate significant sources of marine pollution and waste with alternative options for onshore treatment'.

Better governance and UK leadership

Visions for better governance include having:

- 'A more joined up strategy and representation for the ocean at a government level.'
- 'Government commits and delivers appropriate budget to achieve ocean conservation goals.'
- 'UK policy and resources supporting prosperity of coastal communities is underpinned by healthy seas.'
- 'That UK government takes a leadership role globally, identifying as an Island nation alongside other Islands hit by climate change impacts.'