

Building relationships with your funder

Once you have secured your grant it is vital to maintain a good relationship with the funder. If your project changes mid-delivery you will need their permission and you may also wish to come back to them for another grant in the future...

1 Keep good records of communications and expenditure related to the grant

Whether you are receiving a grant in full up front or whether it will be paid in instalments you should always keep evidence of any expenditure related to the grant, be it in the form of invoices or receipts.

Some funders may require original invoices or receipts, while others may accept photocopies. The important thing is to find out what proof of expenditure is required as soon as you have been awarded the grant and to keep good electronic and paper records of the communication you have with the funder in case you need to refer back to them.

2 Keep the funder informed of the progress of your project

Funders will want to know how you are spending the money you have been awarded and, depending on the funder, this may entail completing a progress report template (which they will normally provide) or simply giving regular written updates on progress.

Either way, it is good practice to keep the funder updated informally between formal reports, be it through newsletters or pictures of the project. Take the opportunity to mention other current or forthcoming projects; this will give the funder a bigger picture of the work your organisation does... maybe opening up opportunities for future funding.

3 Ensure any variations to the project are communicated to the funder

In an ideal world, your project will develop as anticipated in your bid and the funding will be spent according to the figures you included.

However, funders do appreciate that, as a project develops, things could happen that are out of your control and which may result in unavoidable changes to the scope, expenditure or timescales of your project.

The key thing is to ensure that any variations to the project, budget or milestones are agreed

with the funder and communicated to them in good time, ideally before they happen, so that plans can be put in place to ensure that the project is put back on track.

4 Invite the funder to appropriate events and functions

As part of the monitoring of your grant, the funder may visit your organisation or even speak to some of the beneficiaries of your project to see first hand how the money they have awarded has been spent.

These are likely to be formal visits, which may entail looking at financial documents and any physical items purchased with the grant. However, funders will also want to be involved (or at least invited) to any events or functions that have the purpose of acknowledging or celebrating the project they have paid for.

You should view this as a chance not only to enable your organisation to meet the funder in person, but as a potential opportunity to give feedback on their funding and reporting processes. It could also open up the possibility of discussing any additional or future funding streams.

5 Send the funder copies of anything that acknowledges their support

Funders will want to know that their grant has been publicised in some way and that their support has been appropriately acknowledged in any publicity materials.

Moreover, the funder may want their support to be acknowledged *in a particular way*, using specific wording or using their logos in a specific size and format. It is for this reason that you should read any publicity guidance from the funder. If there is any doubt, ask them about their publicity requirements.

Observe any embargo on announcing the grant and only publicise the fact that you have been awarded a grant after the funder has confirmed you are able to do so.

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