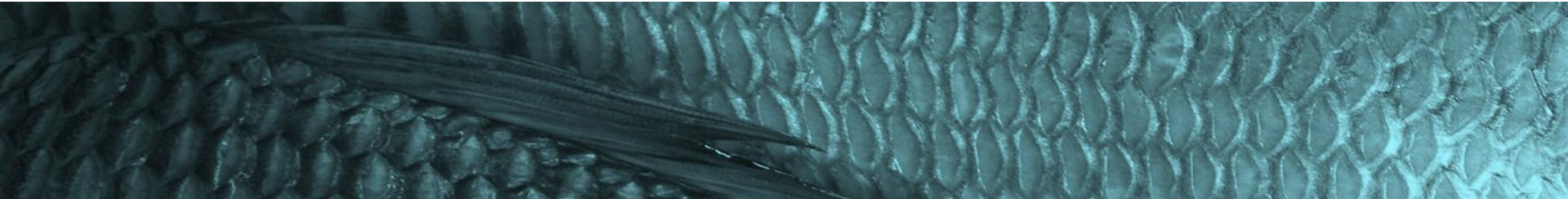




*Parks, people, planet:  
inspiring solutions*



# Investing in our Oceans:

## Insights for Building Lasting Marine Conservation Funding Initiatives

**Blue Earth Consultants, LLC and Coastal Quest**

With support from The David & Lucile Packard Foundation and The Curtis & Edith Munson Foundation

# Overview

In 2010, Blue Earth Consultants reviewed 20 ocean conservation funding initiatives to advise a donor's grant-making visioning and strategic planning. In total, the funders gave \$1.7 billion to ocean conservation over the duration of the initiatives in the following regions:

Number of Case Study Donors in Each Geographic Region



*This presentation describes key findings on ocean investing, synthesized from the case study funders.*

# Key Findings: Ocean Conservation Landscape

*There is increasing interest in ocean conservation and sustainable management from private funders, government, and the public. Ocean conservation investments have steadily increased over the past two decades. Based on this increased interest, Blue Earth took the opportunity to take a closer look at past efforts in ocean conservation funding.*

## Key Types of Achievements of Ocean Investments:

- Improvements in governance and policy
- Implementation of area-based management
- Increased awareness of marine protected areas (MPAs)
- New partnerships forged
- Increased science informing policy and management

## ARE DONORS SELLING THEMSELVES SHORT?

Prior to this study, donors put limited effort into measuring and communicating the results of their investments. Since this study, there has been a shift towards donors placing greater emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and learning from their investments.

# Key Findings: The Role of Scale in Initiative Success

*The study assessed conditions of funded initiatives that lead to success at various scales. Across the case studies, Blue Earth identified the importance of complementing efforts across the following scales:*

## Spatial Scale

- Regional (covering more than a single nation) investments were correlated with greater success
- Utilize regional approaches as primary spatial scales of engagement and local-level approaches as secondary scale

## Financial Scale

- Understanding available funding is critical for identifying appropriate spatial scales of investment and potential for meaningful impact
- Initiatives with larger investment amounts (\$50 million or more) were most successful

## Governance Scale

- 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

## Biological Scale

- To effectively safeguard biodiversity values and functional integrity, consider the uniqueness of each ecosystem's ecological, political, and socioeconomic context when defining an initiative's spatial scale

# Key Findings: Funder Partnerships

*Blue Earth investigated the role of partnership in ocean conservation grant-making.*

## **Funder Partnerships Findings:**

- Formal and informal funder partnerships in marine conservation are becoming increasingly popular
- Partnership was consistently identified as a theme in goals and effective grant-making strategies
- All successful and very successful case study funders engaged in partnerships

## **Partnership Conditions for Success:**

- Conduct due diligence and risk analysis before entering into partnerships
- Provide structure for partnerships through governance documents, defined roles, measures of success, and communications strategies
- Engage partners with strong leadership in place and address issues inhibiting effectiveness
- Design partnerships around manageable topics (e.g., species, ecosystems, regions, and/or threats)
- Enlist a third party to coordinate when adequate administrative capacity is not available

# Key Findings: Challenges and Solutions for Ocean Investments

*The study examined funders' challenges and methods for overcoming them to achieve success of funded initiatives.*

## Common Challenges

## Common Solutions

Partnership and  
Coordination

### **Improve coordination and alignment:**

- Ensure initiatives have adequate budgets and well-conceived coordination plans
- Consider a management team for large or complex projects

Capacity

### **Increase capacity:**

- Ensure proper capacity at grantee and donor organizations; if needed, fund grantee capacity building
- All partners work together to maximize efficiency

Governance, Political  
Will, and Buy-In

### **Build allies:**

- Create new relationships with groups affected by ocean conservation efforts
- Build trust through public awareness building, open dialogues, and transparency

Stakeholder Willingness  
and Buy-In

### **Build the business case and provide incentives:**

- Create changes in practice by making a strong business case and providing incentives for early adopters

Funding and Economy

### **Leverage funding:**

- Capitalize on economies of scale by coordinating and communicating between funders and merging funds toward common goals
- Identify and fund cost-efficient and successful program elements

# An inspiring solution?

## Innovative and Effective

- The study highlights the crucial role of partnerships, including public-private partnerships, in marine conservation grant-making
- Public-private partnerships resulted in increased levels of ocean governance, the development of MPA networks, increased enforcement, and facilitation of science for decision-making
- For example, in Belize, foundations support non-profit co-management of MPAs to help implement, monitor, and enforce protected areas

## Evidence of Implementation and Impact

- For example, through a memorandum of understanding with the state of California, Resources Legacy Fund filled gaps in the implementation of the state's Marine Life Protection Act by helping establish MPAs and responding "real time" to resolve technical support needs during the stakeholder engagement process

## Applied Elsewhere or More Broadly

- Of the 20 case studies worldwide, 15 engaged in inter-sectoral partnerships
- Several US states developed mechanisms for private funders to fund state-level conservation and science-based decision-making, including Oregon's legislatively mandated non-profit that can accept philanthropic dollars to support state near-shore science and management priorities



# What makes it work?

## Components that Lead to Success

- Employing grass-tops approaches (i.e., funders simultaneously funding complementary top-down and grassroots approaches)
- Addressing drivers for funding decisions and creating incentives for ocean conservation
- Deploying resources efficiently and supporting initiatives with realistic goals
- Matching the initiative scale to available human and financial capacity
- Leveraging funder-to-funder and public-private partnerships
- Reflecting on past efforts to learn and shift approaches as necessary (which funders are doing as a result of this report)

## Enabling Factors

- Support of power brokers who have connections and ability to influence high-level decision-makers
- Political will and buy-in
- A supportive governance framework
- Willing partners

