**The National Marine Aquarium and National Aquarium Limited**

The National Marine Aquarium is the UK’s largest public Aquarium with a strong marine conservation ethos. The Aquarium operates a wide range of education, conservation and research programmes as part of its charitable objects.

Through the Aquarium exhibitions, educational programmes and internal and external projects, the Aquarium seeks to **‘connect us with our oceans’**.

Connecting us with our oceans or **‘Conservation through Engagement’** means putting individuals and communities at the heart of marine environmental issues, linking people with their seas and motivating them to take action. Large-scale conservation of the natural environment can result from the actions of motivated and well-informed individuals and collectives.

National Aquarium Ltd is a charity which gives small grants to organisations or individuals that operate projects to further the goals of the National Marine Aquarium. We support projects which enable individuals and communities to enjoy and learn about our oceans to develop active, caring attitudes and behaviours.

Projects can be research-based, conservation-focussed, educational or community events – the unifying theme is **‘connecting us with our oceans’.**

**Guidelines for National Marine Aquarium Grants**

There are four pages to this document, please ensure you have read all of the information before you begin the application process

To apply for a grant, you must complete the application form that you can download from the National Marine Aquarium website. <http://www.national-aquarium.co.uk/marine-conservation/grant-opportunities/>

**Who can apply?**

* Applications will be accepted from all sectors of society, there are no restrictions upon age range or abilities of groups carrying out the projects.
* Student projects that are mainly requesting funds for travel or equipment will not be funded.
* There is no geographical restriction on where projects might be located, or where applications might come from. Consideration will be given to projects operating at every scale but priority will be given to local and national initiatives.
* Applications will be accepted from other charities, other organizations, schools, colleges and individuals.

**Application Process:**

Send your completed form to the grant administrator at the National Marine Aquarium (full name address details can be found on the application form).

Closing dates are detailed on the National Marine Aquarium website**.** We require all applications by midnight of the advertised date.

Your application form will be screened by the National Marine Aquarium for compliance with the application criteria, before passing to the Trustee Board for consideration.

Trustee Board meetings are held in May and October each year, dates of application deadlines and Trustees Meetings are available from the National Marine Aquarium website.

Notification of decision will be issued within two weeks of each Trustee Board meeting. We can not provide feedback for unsuccessful applications.

**Application Criteria**

Before applying, please ensure your project meets the following application criteria and that you are able to build capacity within your project to ensure you can fulfil the essential project deliverables.

Only applications made using the National Aquarium Ltd Application form will be considered. Please include all your information within the application form. Supplementary documents will not be considered.

1. All projects should fit with the stated aims of the charity, **‘connecting us with our oceans’ –** please see ‘Evaluation’ information on page 3 for further information.
2. The maximum grant awarded per application will be £5000.
3. We will only support projects which follow best practice environmental and animal welfare requirements.
4. Projects should be discrete with a commencement and finish date, although they may form an individual module of a larger scheme.
5. Projects should have stated aims which can be measured as outputs.
6. Applications should be accompanied by references from competent persons capable of commenting upon the specific project in a professional capacity.
7. We would encourage applicants to use our grants in conjunction with other sources of finance, although where additional funding is necessary for the project to proceed, funding will be made available upon proof of match funding being in place.
8. Projects which demonstrate a novel approach are more likely to attract support.
9. We will not fund applications which are primarily for training courses, expeditions or travel.
10. Clear evaluation methods must be shown, ideally to provide feedback in relation to the generic learning outcomes (GLO) of the National Marine Aquarium. **See evaluation section on page 3 for details of GLOs.**

**Essential Project Deliverables:**

Please provide details on your application form of how of how you plan to achieve these essentials.

**Results dissemination:** The National Marine Aquarium will support worthwhile projects that can be shared with others, as such there is an expectation that dissemination of results will occur – how will your project do this?

**Written Reports:** A written report will be required at the end of the project, for longer projects we may also request an interim report – who will write your report?

**Evidence:** Reports must include pictorial support of the project. Video evidence in the form of short films that are appropriate for social media are expected to be created and shared with the National Marine Aquarium – what is your plan for providing this type of evidence?

**Branding and communications:** National Marine Aquarium branding must be used throughout the project and the National Marine Aquarium Communications team should be kept aware of press contact – where will logos be positioned?

**Evaluation:** You must evaluate the outcome of your project to enable you to demonstrate how your project achieved at least three of the following National Marine Aquarium’s **generic learning outcomes:**

* **Broaden knowledge of the marine environment.**
* **Develop new skills i.e. formulation scientific questions, observation skills, communication skills.**
* **Appreciate the value of the marine environment and develop or enhance respect and empathy for its inhabitants.**
* **Have fun and be inspired by the project.**
* **Take action to reduce negative impacts and increase positive impacts on the environment.**
* **Motivation to explore the marine environment further.**

**Frequently asked questions:**

**Who can act as a referee? Do they have to be external to the project partners?**

We only take up references occasionally, however we would like to have the name and contact details of 2 people from different organisations who can vouch for your project in an independent and constructive way, if required.

**Does the application have to be sent electronically?**

We prefer all applications to be sent electronically, but will accept postal applications if electronic copies are not possible.

**Do all partners have to sign the application?**

Ideally, we require all partners’ signatures, but will accept only 1 if necessary.

**Can you provide comment/guidance before application submitted?**

We do not provide comment before a completed application is submitted, as all necessary guidance can be found within the grant guidelines.

**Can a charity partner a business?**

Yes. We accept and encourage partnerships in all forms.

**What happens if you are successful in gaining a National Marine Aquarium Grant?**

1. Once you have successfully gained a grant you will be contacted by our grant administrator who will organise payment of the first instalment (usually half of the total). The final payment will be made on submission and approval of the final report.
2. After your project you must send a written report to the National Marine Aquarium. A report template will be sent to you if you successfully receive funding.
3. You must provide photographic AND video evidence of your project to the National Marine Aquarium.
4. We will provide you with official National Marine Aquarium logos to use on all promotional material.
5. Successful applicants may be asked to assist in the production of public communication of their project through the public audience at the National Marine Aquarium or elsewhere as appropriate.
6. The National Aquarium may wish to use extracts and results of the project within it exhibitions, programmes or publicity.