

A hand is shown holding a purple puzzle piece. The puzzle piece has a complex shape with several circular cutouts. The hand is positioned at the top right of the frame, with fingers gripping the piece. The background is white.

PLANT YOUR SUCCESS

# The Ultimate Eligibility Checklist

UNDERSTANDING  
YOUR DONOR

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It is very important in fundraising to understand the concept of eligibility. Every time you find a new potential donor, you must ask yourself if your organization and your project are within the target group for this specific opportunity. If you apply for an opportunity that you are not eligible for, you are just wasting the donors time – and your own as well.

Before starting to prepare a proposal for an opportunity, ask yourself the following questions. The questions from step 1 to 5 are crucial. If one of these criteria does not fit for you, you cannot and should not apply for this opportunity. The questions from step 6 to 8 are still important, but with a little bit of tweaking of your project plan, you might still fit in the target group. If you are unclear about them, you can also ask the donor.

# ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR AN OPPORTUNITY?

## STEP 1

Is your country/region eligible for the grant?

## STEP 2

Does your organization meet the donor's requirements? (Are you an NGO, social enterprise, private person, business? How many years has your organization been established? etc.)?

## STEP 3

Do your core values and your mission align with the core values and the mission of the potential donor?

## STEP 4

Does the donor fund in your focus area of work (i.e. health, education, environmental protection)

## STEP 5

Do the guidelines explicitly exclude the activities you are planning from being eligible (i.e. building of infrastructure, organizing of conferences, etc.)



## STEP 6

Does the donor include the strategies and activities you are planning in the guidelines?

If they do, it might be a perfect fit. If they don't, that does not necessarily mean that you cannot apply. Normally, the list of activities is not exhaustive, and donors are open to new ideas. If you are not sure, check back with the donor before putting in the work of preparing a proposal.

## STEP 7

Does your budget fit within the grant floor and ceiling?

When choosing a potential donor, it is important that your budget fits within the range of the proposed grant. If your annual budget is 10,000\$, it does not make sense to apply for a grant of 1,000,000\$. As a rule of thumb, you should not apply for a grant that is more than double of your annual budget. If you have a good reason for applying for more, you might be able to explain it to the donor though.

## STEP 8

Does your proposal address and include the types of stakeholders that the donor wants to work with?

Many donors want to work with organizations that are driven by beneficiaries or only specific groups of stakeholders. If yours don't align, think about ways to tweak it in a way that it would still work out.

**Make sure to only apply to opportunities whose eligibility criteria you fit!**

**If in doubt, ask!**

**Do not waste the donors and your own time!**