

KPMG Foundation Perception Review 2022

Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, the Foundation has been reviewing how it works, including looking at grant making policies, systems and processes. In October 2022 we commissioned a confidential and anonymous customer survey with all our grantee partners, as well as unsuccessful 'applicants' from the past three years. We were keen to use this as an opportunity to learn more about the experiences of those that have experienced part, or all, of our grants process, and use this feedback to think about how we can improve our practice.

The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback on the overall quality of the Foundation, the relationship with the KPMG Foundation, the application process and the information and service provided.

THE FINDINGS

This is the first time that we have undertaken a survey of this nature. The first stage of the research collected quantitative feedback through the survey (though there were many open comments too), and the second stage collected qualitative feedback using in-depth telephone interviews.

We received 27 responses (out of a possible 32) – of which 16 were grantee partners, six were unsuccessful full proposals at Trustee Board stage, and five were not approved at concept note stage. The overall return rate was high for this kind of exercise.

In summary, we were considered an approachable, flexible and professional funder. The Foundation's application process (how easy and clear it is) is seen as something that makes us stand out from others.

We were praised highly for seeking to understand the organisations we work with.

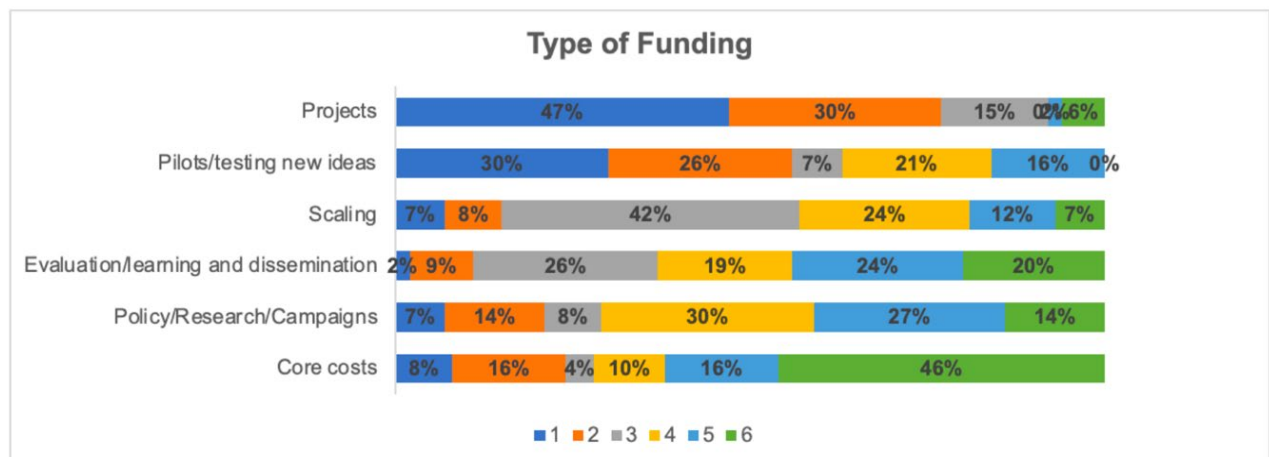
'The application process was not made into an industry – straightforward and I enjoyed being able to meet Trustees'. **Grantee**

'We found the two-stage process helpful because if there is no chance of being funded then we do not need to spend a lot of time on an application that would go nowhere. Also found being able to talk to the CEO at an early stage very helpful'. **Grantee**

However, the feedback on why we have rejected a proposal was frequently referred to as too general, and not as helpful as it could be, and therefore an area for improvement.

Survey respondents told us that core costs were the most precious type of grant funding, but most difficult to secure (ranking areas hardest to fundraise for – from one the easiest, to six the hardest).

Some of those who responded to the survey mentioned the KPMG Foundation's lack of funding core costs as a potential barrier to transformational change.

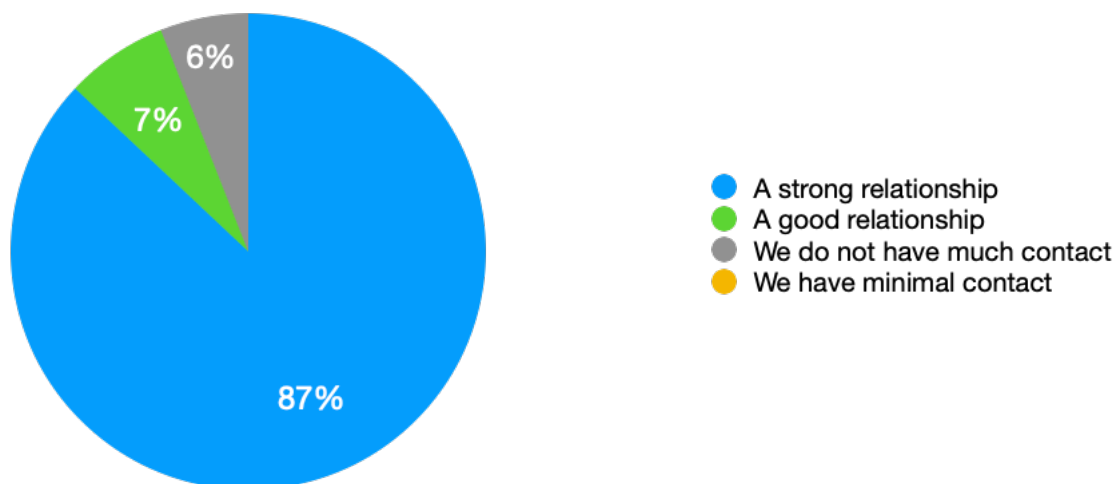


Our application process was considered 'much better' or 'better' by 70% of respondents, and where pre-application advice was sought and received, it was thought of as very helpful. A high proportion of grantee partners found reporting back on their grant 'much better' or 'better', than other trusts and foundations. Overall, the Foundation is seen as providing an **approachable and straightforward** service, with an application process that is **not over burdensome**, and delivered with **appropriate guidance**.

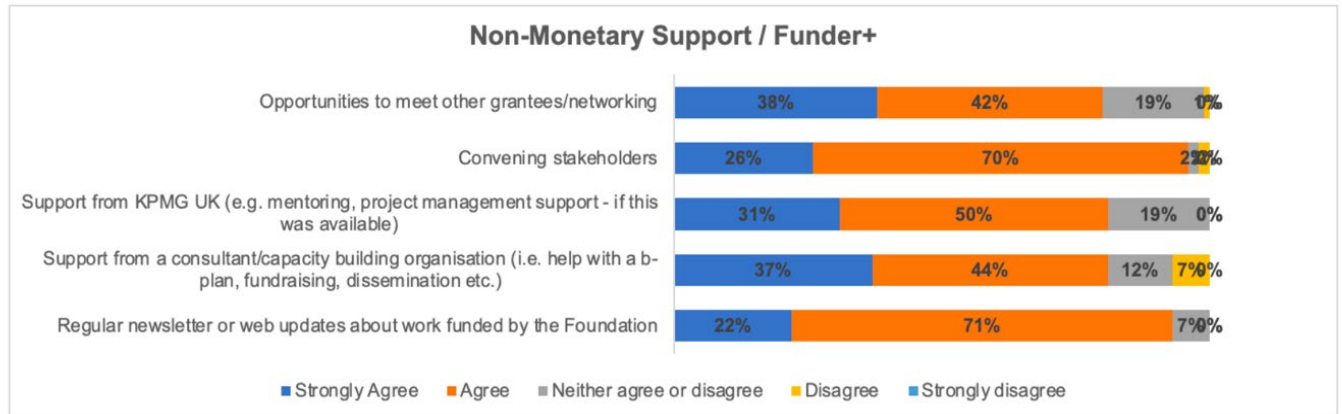
'This has been the best experience I have had in over a decade in talking with the CEO and KPMG Foundation. The clarity in regard to realistic expectation setting, alongside the process and support has been extremely helpful and allowed for really good engagement and learning. A real sense of shared understanding and commitment to outcomes' **Grantee**

Most grantees (14 out of 16) believe they have a **strong relationship** and feel comfortable contacting the Foundation. However, two grant partners said

they would hesitate before contacting the Foundation or feel that they have little contact beyond that which is related to their grant. It could be that these grantees wish to engage with the Foundation, but feel unclear about what contact is welcomed, or what support is on offer, beyond that related directly to the grant that is provided.



About half of all survey respondents would like the Foundation to offer some type of **non-monetary support**. The two most popular options are for the Foundation to **convene stakeholders** (70% 'agree' with this type of support) and/or **provide regular updates** (71% 'agree' with this type of support).



NEXT STEPS

In response to the feedback, we plan to work with Trustees to review how we work and ways we can improve. This report provides some initial reflections on the findings and we will continue to provide an open environment in which those we fund, and those applying to us, feel empowered to tell us what they really think – the good, the bad and everything between.

We are really pleased to have conducted this perception survey. We didn't expect a response rate as high as 84% and we are grateful that organisations found the time to complete the survey. This research has provided us with clarity and the space in which to reflect about what we must do to be a better funder.

As an organisation we are committed to listening, learning and continuous improvement.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT KPMG FOUNDATION PERFORMANCE

Alongside this review of organisations experience of working with the KPMG Foundation, readers may also wish to consult the Foundation Practice Rating This assesses foundation practices in relation to diversity, accountability and transparency from published sources only (i.e. the funder's own website and the annual report and accounts as filed with the Charity Commission).

In 2021 the Foundation was rated B overall. In 2022, the Foundation was also rated B overall although with improved scores in nearly all areas.

More information is available on: [Home - Foundation Practice Rating](#).

CEO Reflections on the Perception Review

Overall, this survey and follow up interviews have been extremely helpful in shedding light on what's working well, or not so well, about the grant making approach that the Foundation has developed over the last few years.

We believe we are a pro-active, relational funder, with not too much time wasted for potential partners – it's helpful that the feedback seems to support this view. The review provides evidence that the Foundation is knowledgeable about the sector, has appropriate and proportionate processes, and is interested in **developing relationships** with organisations, **even when the outcome is disappointing**.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Organisations commented on a number of areas, where their preferences are different from what the KPMG Foundation currently provides. The findings from this review have highlighted some issues that we will reflect on, and consider any changes we can realistically make for the future:

Feedback (particularly to organisations who are not awarded a grant)

The feedback received from those declined at the initial stage was frequently referred to as too general and not as helpful as it could be. *Should the KPMG Foundation provide more?* We will continue to try to give some bespoke feedback but with only one full-time member of staff, there is a limit to what we can offer. Trustees are usually presented with a larger number of grants than we can 'afford' so at the Concept Note stage they will choose those they believe best fit our strategy. The success rate for final proposals is high, and if rejected at this stage, organisations will receive more detailed feedback. Across a year, we approve approx. one in three proposals that reach the concept note stage (through to final decision).

Core costs

Organisations have confirmed what is widely understood in the sector, that core costs are the hardest area to fundraise for. *Should the Foundation be more open to supporting core costs, that many believe can lead to transformational change within an organisation?* We have made a gradual shift in this direction, particularly for smaller-medium sized organisations. However, for some types of work (e.g. research), or with bigger/longer established organisations (where our funding is only a small % of the total) we are likely to continue with project based or restricted funding.

Non-monetary support / Funder+

We will investigate further the type of non-monetary support the KPMG Foundation and our colleagues in KPMG UK could offer grantees. The Foundation will be convening our first charity partner event in Spring 2023. We will keep this area under review, as adding value to our grant funding is very important to us.

Judith McNeill – CEO (February 2023)