

Hi There

I only just realised this was in my in box as I have been managing International Student Volunteers for the last few weeks. Working through over 200 emails takes a bit of time!

Some things that I think are important but don't have the time at the moment to work on wording properly.

1. NLP innovation grants. Great way to get things going, however could have doubled the funding and extended the program to a 3 year rolling fund rather than 1 year grants - nothing truly innovative takes a year to get it right. The other problem is the committee seemed to be more interested in already proven ideas rather than innovation. The boundaries seemed to be rarely stretched.
2. Innovative initiatives funded via the CMA's from NHT. These were used successfully by many groups to do the innovation that no-one else was willing to touch. In these cases the grant may not have given the desired result but did give a chance for people to give it a go. The returns from these small amounts of money gave returns to the community much greater than the same project run by a larger group that was fully funded. The results were also relevant to that local community.
3. The Envirofund grants program was still too tight in its time frame, even at 18 months. It takes 2-3 years in some cases to get a project completed due to the need to get things right from the start and not compromising the timelines needed with what is dictated by the funding. An example is the time needed to collect seed, prepare sites, grow trees/ plants/ grasses/ wildflowers, planting the site, direct seeding, maintaining the sites, fencing, and so on. Notification usually came in October, a project manager may not be employed until late November, this give the project one winter to finish when two are needed to make sure nothing is pushed. An extra year gives the chance to maximise the seed collection diversity for the sites if it is needed, such as in areas there is no seed bank or large projects are sucking out most of the seed diversity.
4. Feed back from why or not funding was made/declined improved towards the end of the programs and was essential in understanding how to either improve the successful application for funding the next time around. It was not helped by the frequent changing of the goal posts.

Cheers and hope this is not too late.

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