OCEAN Grantees: Essential Information

Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN)

January 2026

Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature

UK International Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Contents

OGL

1.   Introduction

This resource is for organisations that have been awarded a grant from the Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature Grants Programme (OCEAN). **It is relevant for both Community Grants and Partnership Grants.** It details important information for Grantees to effectively manage their projects and outlines key steps and requirements from when a grant offer is received to when a project closes.

1.1. Further Resources

This document summarises all key information but is not exhaustive. For greater details, Grantees **must read the latest versions of the following guidance notes** which are available for download from the OCEAN Website Resources Page:

- Finance Guidance
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Guidance
- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Guidance
- Standard Indicator Guidance
- Communication Guidance[1]
- Conditions of the Grant

1.2.   Templates & Forms

Templates and forms are regularly updated and uploaded on the OCEAN Website Resources Page from where they can be downloaded. **It is the responsibility of the Grantee to ensure the correct and current version of any template and form is used every time**. Information (e.g., reports) or requests (e.g., claims) submitted on an incorrect template, with errors or with omissions will cause processing delays.

1.3.   Further Support

If in need of assistance, Grantees can contact the Grant Administrator (NIRAS) via email in their preferred language and expect a response within five working days. Grantees must **always state the project reference number in the email's subject line** and can use the following email addresses:

- reports@oceangrants.org.uk for submitting reports.
- finance@oceangrants.org.uk for submitting claims.
- comms@oceangrants.org.uk for sharing media updates or communications-related enquiries.
- helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk for general questions and requests for support.

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[1] The OCEAN Grantee and UK International Development logos are not available for download from the OCEAN Website Resources Page but emailed to Grantees. Copies can be requested by emailing comms@oceangrants.org.uk.

2. Grant Award

2.1. Grant Funding Agreement

After an application has been selected for funding, and once all pre-award due diligence checks have been completed and deemed satisfactory, a Grant Funding Agreement will be issued.

This will be issued to the Lead Organisation named in the project application. The Lead Organisation will be responsible for complying with all conditions of the grant. As part of the award process, the Grant Administrators will request the name and email address of the person within the Lead Organisation who is authorised to sign the Grant Funding Agreement, and the Agreement will then be issued to this authorised signatory.

The Grant Funding Agreement sets out the details of the grant and its Terms and Conditions. It is made up of the:

- Grant Offer Letter (see 2.1.1)
- Conditions of the Grant (see 2.1.2)
- Grant Acceptance Form (see 2.1.3)

2.1.1. Grant Offer Letter

The Grant Offer Letter formally confirms Defra's offer of funding and outlines the key details of the grant. It includes information on the approved project, the funding amount and period, and any special conditions that apply. It also sets out the details of the Grantee and explains how to accept the grant.

The Grant Offer Letter will be issued electronically by NIRAS on behalf of Defra. **It will be addressed to the Lead Organisation that applied for funding** and must be accepted in writing by completing and returning the **Grant Acceptance Form (see 2.1.3)**, together with the stand-alone Supplier Form and Payment Details (see 2.1.3), and the **UK Aid and UK International Development Visibility Statement (see 2.1.4)**. Acceptance is required within 30 days from the date of the Grant Offer Letter. If you do not accept the offer within this deadline, the grant offer may be withdrawn.

The Grant Acceptance Form will be completed via Docusign. Any other supporting documents should be returned to **applications@oceangrants.org.uk**.

Special Conditions

The Grant Offer Letter may include a section on Special Conditions. These are **specific requirements that must be met by the Grantee within the indicated deadlines** which are unique to the project. The requirements may need to be met before funding is released or during the delivery of the project. Failure to meet the special conditions in a satisfactory manner, or within the required deadline, may result in funding being withheld, delayed or withdrawn.

2.1.2. Conditions of the Grant

The Conditions of the Grant are the **Annex of the Grant Offer Letter**. They explain the **terms that apply to how the grant is managed and used**. They outline the standards, procedures, and

requirements that Grantees must follow throughout project delivery. These include, but are not limited to, technical reporting; financial management; visibility requirements; assets' administration; safeguarding and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; and data protection provisions.

Failure to comply with the Conditions of the Grant may result in Defra immediately suspending payment of the grant or terminating the Grant Funding Agreement. Defra may also take action to recover some, or all the funds paid to the Grantee. Defra retains the right to amend the Conditions of the Grant at any time. The latest version is always available via the OCEAN Website Resources Page.

2.1.3. Grant Acceptance Form

The Grant Acceptance Form is **Schedule 1 of the Grant Funding Agreement and includes in Part B a copy of the Grant Application** as submitted by the applicant and including any subsequent agreed changes. It records key project details, including the project title, reference number, funding period, total award amount, and names of those responsible for project management and financial oversight.

Grantees must complete and sign the Grant Acceptance Form to accept the funding offer, confirm they have read and understood the Conditions of the Grant (see 2.1.2) and agree to use the funding only for the approved purposes. This should be completed by the **authorised representative of the Lead Organisation provided to the Grant Administrators** as part of the award process.

Signatory Panel

The Signatory Panel is a **section of the Grant Acceptance Form** where Grantees are required to provide **information on the grant's authorised signatories**. These are the persons responsible for the finances of the grant, including the submission of claims, statements, and accounts. Each grant should always have **at least two authorised signatories** (see 5.9).

Supplier Form and Payment Details

The Supplier Form and Payment Details are a **section of the Grant Acceptance Form** where Grantees are required to indicate the **details of their bank account including currency** for payments, as well as information of a **contact point for any finance related matter**.

A stand-alone copy of the Supplier Form and Payment Details will also be provided via email. Grantees must complete, sign and submit this to applications@oceangrants.org.uk when returning the Grant Acceptance Form. **The Grant Administrator is unable to make any payments to the Grantee until this stand-alone copy of the Supplier Form and Payment Details has been correctly submitted.**

2.1.4. UK Aid and UK International Development Visibility Statement

The UK Aid and UK International Development Visibility Statement is **Schedule 7 of the Grant Funding Agreement**. It sets out the requirements for acknowledging funding from the UK Government on Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes supported by Defra. It ensures that projects funded under OCEAN clearly recognise UK Government support in their communications, materials, and assets.

By signing the Grant Acceptance Form, the Lead Organisation confirms they have read, understood and agree to acknowledge funding from the UK Government in written materials and verbal statements and through use of the UK International Development logo on materials and project assets and comply with the requirements set out within Schedule 7 (see 7).

Grantees must also complete and sign the stand-alone copy of the UK Aid and UK International Development Visibility Statement. This will be provided with the Grant Funding Agreement and should be returned to applications@oceangrants.org.uk.

2.2. Press Embargo

Defra intends to officially announce new projects as soon as possible following the award of the grants. This process may take some time. Until Defra's announcement, the result of any application is subject to a press embargo. **Despite signing a Grant Acceptance Form, Grantees must not share the outcome of their application wider than the main project partners until after Defra's official announcement**. Once the press embargo is lifted, **Grantees will be notified** by the Grant Administrator over email and only then, will they be able to share information about their projects more widely.

2.2.1. Information for OCEAN Website

During the press embargo, Grantees are requested over email to **supply a photo and approve summary text of their projects to upload onto the OCEAN [website](#)**. This gives Grantees the opportunity to review information and raise any project sensitivities that should not be made publicly available (see 7). Grantees are also asked to let the Grant Administrator know if language support would be beneficial to support the participation of Community and Partnership Grantees and partners. OCEAN can provide language support in **French, Indonesian, Spanish** and **Portuguese.**

Once the press embargo is lifted, the Grant Administrator will publish a full list of the projects funded on the OCEAN [website](#). Grantees are **encouraged to publicly announce** they have received a grant from OCEAN and inform the Grant Administrator of any planned media engagement so support can be provided (see 7).

2.2.2. OCEAN Communication Guidance

During the press embargo, Grantees are provided via email with a copy of the OCEAN Communication Guidance, the UK Government's [Branding Guidance for ODA Funded Programmes](#), and the OCEAN Grantee and UK International Development logos where appropriate. Grantees are expected to familiarise themselves with these documents within the first few weeks from their project's start date (see 7.).

2.3. Annual Grant Review & Award

Before the end of each financial year, Defra conducts an Annual Grant Review to assess the Grantee's progress against the agreed project outputs and activities. The review considers how well the project is delivering against its objectives, as set out in the Grant Funding Agreement.

In January of every year, Grantees receive confirmation of their annual award offered for the forthcoming year. This offer must be accepted **within 30 days from the date of the letter for**

payments to continue. To do so, Grantees must **sign a new Grant Acceptance Form and supply a quarterly forecast for the upcoming financial year (see 5.1) to finance@oceangrants.org.uk**. The Grant Administrator will provide Grantees with further information in due course.

3. Project Start

Projects are expected to **start on the date specified in the Grant Offer Letter.** This date will be the official start date of the project. In the first few weeks, grantees should focus on key start-up activities. This may include checking and improving project plans and tools, hiring project staff, confirming partnerships, and initiating delivery.

Within the first few weeks from the project start date, Grantees are also expected to also familiarise themselves with all reporting and financial requirements of their grant and to finalise any outstanding documentation.

Grantees are responsible for managing their projects day to day but are not on their own. If you are unsure about anything, we encourage you to contact the Grant Administrator for support or clarification and a member of the team will be available to help with any questions.

3.1.   Onboarding Webinars

Soon after project award, Grantees will be invited to a **series of online onboarding workshops by the Grant Administrator,** where attendance is **mandatory for the Project Leader** and optional for a limited number of key project staff from either the Lead Organisation or a Partner Organisation (e.g., finance lead, MEL focal point).

The purpose of the workshops, among others, is to introduce projects to OCEAN's reporting and financial requirements, provide guidance on topics such as monitoring and evaluation, gender equality, disability and social inclusion and safeguarding, and offer an opportunity to network with other Grantees. There will also be a question-and-answer section in each event to ensure Grantee's have the opportunity to ask questions to the Grant Administrators

Detailed information around topics and dates will be circulated over email following award. Any workshop materials and a recording of the event will also be made available to Grantees after each event.

3.2.   Grant Administrator Focal Point

Soon after project award, each grantee will be allocated a focal point from the Grant Administrator team. This is the project's key point of contact and leads any project related communication as well as coordinates support to the project where needed.

Grantees can contact their Project Focal Point via the OCEAN Helpdesk at helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk. Project Focal Points are also available for meetings where this may be easier. It is the focal point's responsibility to establish the first contact with the grantee via email and propose an initial online introductory meeting.

3.2.1.   Focal Point Introductory Meeting

Soon after project award, Grantees will be contacted over email by their Project Focal Point to schedule an **introductory meeting**. This will be held virtually between the Grant Administrator and the Project Leader, along with up to two other relevant contacts from the project. The meeting offers the Grantee the opportunity to introduce the project and clarify any next steps and requirements as well as engagement opportunities. **From time to time throughout the duration of the project**, the Grant Administrator may set up meetings to check on progress and offer an opportunity for more informal contact.

3.3.   Finalising Documentation

The first three months of each project provide a dedicated opportunity for Grantees to review and refine their project documents. During this period, Grantees can strengthen their materials, ensure they reflect any feedback provided on their application, and confirm that they are aligned with the planned delivery.

Within three months of the project start date, Grantees must ensure that all required documentation is in place to enable effective management of their funding (see Section 4). These documents will be requested via **Flexi-Grant and will include the following:**

3.3.1. Logframe

Logframes are an important tool for monitoring and evaluating project performance. Grantees are therefore given the opportunity to refine and strengthen their logframe during the start of their project. This process ensures that Grantees can collect and record baseline data, set accurate baselines at the outset, incorporate any necessary adjustments since the application stage, and apply feedback received during the assessment process.

All grantees therefore must re-submit their logframe via Flexi-Grant within three months of the project's start date, as specified in the Grant Offer Letter. Logframes are reviewed by the Grant Administrator and approved prior to any reporting being due (see 6.1). Grantees are expected to report on progress against their logframe in their annual and final reports.

3.3.2. Standard Indicators

OCEAN uses Standard indicators to help build a shared understanding of project outcomes. Grantees are therefore requested to review and update their standard indicator targets during the start of their project.

Partnership Grant projects must revisit their Standard Indicator targets on the standard indicators template and submit the document via Flexi-Grant, **within three months of the project's start date**, as specified in the Grant Offer Letter.

Community Grant projects must fill out the standard indicators template for the first time (see [OCEAN Website Resources Page](#)) and submit the document via Flexi-Grant, **within three months of the project's start date**, as specified in the Grant Offer Letter.

Standard indicators templates are reviewed by the Grant Administrator and approved prior to any reporting being due (see 6.1). Grantees are expected to measure progress against their standard indicators in their annual and final reports.

3.3.3. Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map, and Issues Log

To support effective risk management, OCEAN requests that its Grantees review and develop their risk registers at the start of their project. The Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map and Issue Register are critical elements of project management, helping Grantees to anticipate potential challenges, plan appropriate mitigations and provide assurance around the delivery of outcomes.

Partnership Grant projects must revisit their project Risk Register and Delivery Chain Risk Map, strengthening these documents in light of any feedback provided, and submit them via Flexi-Grant **within three months of the project's start date**, as specified in the Grant Offer Letter.

Community Grant projects must complete the risk register template for the first time (see OCEAN Website Resources Page). This template consists of three sections: Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map and Issue Register. Community Grantees should use this stage to also expand on their initial application risk register and strengthen their documentation in line with any feedback provided. Grantees must submit these documents **via Flexi-Grant within three months of the project's start date**, as specified in the Grant Offer Letter.

The Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map and Issue Register are **active tools Grantee must keep up to date and submit to the Grant Administrator every six months as part of the reporting process** (see 6.1). In cases where a project is deemed higher risk (e.g., implemented in a high-risk area such as a conflict zone), Grantees might be required to submit their Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map and Issue Register on a more frequent basis. If this is the case, Grantees will be notified.

3.3.4. Special Conditions

Within the first few weeks from their project's start date, Grantees are expected to begin work to meet any requirements referred to in the Special Conditions of their Grant Offer Letter (see 2.1.1). For example, for Community Grantees, these might include the finalisation of requested policies such as the Code of Conduct.

As Grantees complete work on their special conditions in line with the deadlines indicated in their Grant Offer Letter, they must email applications@oceangrants.org.uk to provide an update on progress and submit any required documentation.

3.4.   Communication Requirements

Within the first few weeks from their project's start date, Grantees are expected to familiarise themselves will the OCEAN Communication Guidance and the UK Government's Branding Guidance for ODA Funded Programmes, as well as apply the OCEAN Grantee and UK International Development logos where appropriate. These guidance documents and logos are emailed to Grantees soon after project award (see 7.).

4. Project Delivery

Grantees are expected to **effectively manage** their projects by ensuring **high-quality delivery**, practising **sound financial management** (see 5), **meeting deadlines**, and **responding to any requests** from the Grant Administrator and Defra **in a timely manner**. The following sections provide guidance and support to help grantees manage project delivery.

4.1. Adaptive Management

Grantees are encouraged to use an adaptive management approach throughout project delivery. This means managing projects in a way that allows for learning, reflection, and flexibility when circumstances change or new information becomes available.

Adaptive management is closely linked to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) (see section 6). MEL provides the evidence and insights needed to inform good decisions. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, projects can track progress, see what is working well, and identify challenges or unexpected results. Learning from this process helps grantees to adjust their strategies, activities, and delivery plans to improve effectiveness and impact.

Rather than following a fixed plan, **adaptive management supports an iterative approach where evidence and learning guide continuous improvement**. Grantees are encouraged to use their MEL findings and wider project feedback and learnings to make sensible adjustments to their project and to document and share lessons through regular reporting to the Grant Administrator (see section 6.3) and with partners more widely. This helps projects remain dynamic, evidence-based, and responsive.

Please be aware, where significant changes arise as a result of the adaptive management of a project, such as changes to the project logframe, project staff or large changes to project activities, the Grantee should consider submitting these changes via a change request. Further information regarding the change request process is highlighted in section 4.3.

4.2. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

Understanding how gender and social characteristics (such as disability, migration and displacement status, ethnicity, race, indigeneity, age, sexual orientation and gender identity) impact inequalities in access to and control over resources, information, assets, and decision-making is critical to inform successful marine protection and poverty reduction actions.

Grantees must ensure that their project will do no harm and will not exacerbate inequality, in line with what was declared in their grant application. **Community Grant projects must, at minimum, have a GEDSI responsive approach. Partnership Grant projects must, at minimum, demonstrate that they are GEDSI empowering**. Grantees must continue to meet the expected standards and should strive toward higher ambition where possible.

GEDSI considerations are reviewed through the formal reporting process (see 6.1). Indicators relevant to GEDSI considerations are tracked via the MEL framework and logframe and should

be included in formal reporting. Whenever possible, indicators should be disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and location.

The **OCEAN GEDSI Manager** is also available via helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk as a resource to provide support on questions about implementing or strengthening a project's GEDSI approach.

> **Further detail on mainstreaming GEDSI approaches is provided in the *OCEAN Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Guidance*.**

4.3. Change Requests

In cases of emerging significant project needs or changes, Grantees must submit a Change Request form (see the OCEAN Website Resources Page) **to finance@oceangrants.org.uk.** The change request process allows grantees to submit requests to the Grant Administrator to seek approval to make changes to their projects. Grantees are encouraged to use this process when changes are needed to support the adaptive management of their project.

Change Requests fall into two types: **Financial** (moving funds between financial years) and **Other** (changes to staffing, logframes, or moving funds within the same financial year). Financial Change Requests only be made to **current and future years**; late requests or changes to past years are only agreed in clearly justified, exceptional cases (for example, conflict, natural disaster, or a new epidemic) and will not be approved where problems are due to poor planning or avoidable delays. Any **financial change that involves movement of budget between financial years** must be submitted **before 31 December** of every year.

In the change request form, Grantees are required to detail why they need to submit a change request, what specific changes they would like to make and how they are different to what agreed, what actions have been taken to prevent the need for a change request, and what will still be deliverable in case the request is not approved. Grantees are expected to explain clearly why their programme management (including their approach to risk management) could not foresee and prevent the need for a change request.

All Financial Change Requests must be agreed with your organisation's finance team, include a revised budget, and are checked by NIRAS before being sent to Defra. Grantees do not need approval for changes to activities unless these affect indicators, outputs, the outcome, or the budget; Other Change Requests can be submitted at any time before the change is needed and are usually handled by NIRAS, with significant changes referred to Defra.

All change requests must receive approval before being applied. Approval is provided by Defra in case of financial change requests and significant technical change requests, and by the Grant Administrator in all other cases. **Approval is not guaranteed and will not be granted in instances of poor financial or project management.**

> **Further detail on how to complete a change request is provided in the *OCEAN Change Request Template*.**

4.4. Management of Partner Organisations

Lead Organisations are responsible for coordinating and managing inputs from Partner Organisation. This includes ensuring timely reporting from Partner Organisations as well as

compliance with the Conditions of the Grant (see 2.1.2) and requirements around GEDSI (see 4.2) and SEAH (see 4.7). **Lead Organisations are also responsible for disbursing funds to Partner Organisation in a timely manner** (see 5).

To support strengthening of partner knowledge and skills, project staff and wider members from **Partner Organisations are encouraged to join the online webinars and learning events** (see 3.1 and 8.1) organised by the Grant Administrator.

4.5. Risk Management

Grantees are required to proactively identify and manage risk throughout the life of their project. This means regularly identifying and assessing risks, taking action to reduce or treat them, and monitoring and reporting them. Risk management is a continuous process that should be improved over time through learning and experience, not a one-off task at the start of the project.

To support this, all projects must maintain an up-to-date Risk Register, including a Delivery Chain Risk Map (DCRM) and an Issues Log and submit this as part of the required reporting (see 6.1). These are active tools that help grantees track different types of risk (see table below), record actions to manage them, and note who is responsible.

See examples of different risk types and descriptions in the table below.

Risk Type	Description
Contextual	in-country socio-political events or unrest, or natural disasters.
Delivery	associated with achieving the aims and objectives of the project (likely to be higher for innovative or high impact programmes).
GEDSI	potential negative impact that your project or its activities may have on gender equality and/or other marginalised or vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities within a society or community
Safeguarding	'doing harm' including sexual exploitation abuse and harassment, safety and welfare, or unintended harm to beneficiaries, the public, implementing partners, and staff.
Operational	internal capacity and capability to manage the project (professional competence, experience, and appropriate level of resource in managing programmes and funds).
Fiduciary (financial)	funds not used for intended purposes or not accounted for (fraud, corruption, mishandling or misappropriated).
Reputational	interventions or delivery partners' actions risk any partner's, including Defra's, reputation

As set out at application stage, grantees identified key fiduciary, safeguarding, delivery chain and GEDSI-related risks. Through project delivery risks should be reviewed regularly and updated as the project progresses, adding new risks or changing ratings and mitigation measures where

needed. **Risk tools should be treated as live documents and updated whenever there are important changes, and in any case before each reporting point.**

If serious or urgent risks arise between reporting periods – for example, concerns about safeguarding, fraud, or major changes in context – Grantees should not wait for the next report and instead contact the Grant Administrator promptly to discuss the issue and agree next steps. A proactive approach to risk management helps protect participants, partners, and funds, and supports successful project delivery.

> **Further detail on how to complete a Risk Register, Delivery Chain Risk Map, and Issues Log is provided in the *OCEAN Risk Register Template*.**

4.6.   Code of Conduct

By signing the grant funding agreement, **Grantees confirm that they will adhere to the [Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants](#)** published by the Cabinet Office in November 2018, including any subsequent updates from time to time. Grantee are expected to immediately notify Defra if they become aware of any actual or suspected breaches of the principles outlined in the code of conduct, and acknowledge that a failure to notify Defra of an actual or suspected breach of the code of conduct may result in funds being suspended or terminated (see 9.2).

Grantees are expected to follow high ethical and professional standards, treat people respectfully, and follow laws on equality, human rights, and anti-corruption. They must protect vulnerable groups, manage risks properly, and avoid unfair practices. They should work openly with government, avoid conflicts of interest, and support social responsibility, including diversity and sustainability. Grantees must protect sensitive data, report fraud or misconduct, and help government meet transparency and environmental goals. They must also ensure their staff and partners follow these rules and report any breaches quickly and honestly.

4.7.   Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH)

Defra has a zero-tolerance to inaction approach to SEAH. This means that no form of SEAH will be ignored, and all concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon. **Grantees and their delivery partners are expected to take all reasonable steps to prevent SEAH** involving anyone connected to the delivery of their project, **and to respond appropriately** if any concerns or incidents arise.

Grantees must apply the **[Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)** and adhere to the **[IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)](#)** and/or the [relevant sections](#) of the **[Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) on Quality and Accountability](#)**. These frameworks set out the minimum expectations for behaviour, prevention, and response in relation to SEAH.

All safeguarding and protection from SEAH work within OCEAN grants is based upon the [6 minimum recommended actions](#) from the Common Approach to Protection from SEAH ([CAPSEAH](#)).

Defra are aware that even with all preventative measures in place, SEAH can occur within OCEAN projects. Grantees must **report any allegations** of SEAH immediately to Defra by contacting **ODA.safeguarding@defra.gov.uk**. This includes allegations linked directly to the delivery of their project, as well as any unrelated allegations that could significantly affect the Grantee's partnership with Defra.

If a Grantee becomes aware of any **suspicion, concern, or complaint of SEAH**, they must take **swift and appropriate action** to prevent further harm, investigate the issue, and report to the relevant authorities for criminal matters where it is safe and appropriate to do so, considering the wishes and safety of the survivor.All reporting and investigation processes must be handled in a way that protects the **safety, security, privacy, and due process rights** of everyone involved through a victim-survivor centred approach. Grantees must be prepared to respond to allegations of SEAH by ensuring a referral pathway is in place to support victim-survivors and to appropriately lead an investigation.

Please contact the OCEAN helpdesk for any queries or concerns on how to implement safeguarding and PSEAH within their project.

4.8.   Reporting a Concern

OCEAN is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical behaviour, transparency, accountability, and conduct in the delivery of its services and compliance with all applicable international and national policies, laws, rules and regulations. As part of this commitment, Grantees, together with applicants, delivery partners, and other stakeholders, are encouraged to **report any concerns, complaints, or suspected wrongdoing associated with OCEAN and its projects via the identified reporting channels**.

The OCEAN Grant Administrators (NIRAS) are the first point of contact for any minor concerns you may have. If you feel comfortable raising your concern with NIRAS directly and feel that this is not a serious wrongdoing that needs escalating to Defra, then please submit your report to:

- General reports and concerns: helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk

If your report is regarding a serious concern, incident or complaint, or if you do not feel comfortable submitting your report to NIRAS, then you should submit your report via email to Defra using the email addresses provided below. Please be aware that if your report is concerning a Fraud or Safeguarding concern, then these should be always submitted directly to Defra.

- Fraud and error concerns: fraudanderror@defra.gov.uk

- Safeguarding concerns (including SEAH): ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk

- Other concerns: OCEAN Secretariat: OCEAN@defra.gov.uk

OCEAN also has a **Whistleblowing Policy** available on the OCEAN website that provides further information on how to report such matters confidentially, without fear of retaliation.

5. Finances

Grantees are expected to provide accurate and realistic budgets at the outset and throughout their project and manage their funds to a high standard including through accurate forecasting, financial management and reporting (see 5.1). This section provides helpful information on the financial management of your projects, how to submit financial claims and wider financial processes associated with your grant.

> **Full details on financial management and requirements are outlined in the *OCEAN Finance Guidance* and the *Claim Form Guidance* (see 0). Schedule 2 of the *Conditions of the Grant* reports the standard payment schedule.**

5.1.   Forecasting

A forecast is a prediction or estimate of project expenditure that is likely to be incurred over any given period, predicting and planning for cash flow requirements as well as aiding resource planning. This is an ongoing process and should be regularly reviewed to support the adaptive management of your project. For Grantees and their partners, forecasts allow you to plan future events, based on an analysis of what has happened in the past. Forecast should predict and reflect what is needed to allow you to be able to deliver everything you have planned to do.

Soon after project award (see 2) and ahead of the start of each financial year, Grantees are requested via email to undertake a forecasting exercise. As part of this process, Grantees will be requested to provide **an accurate estimate of their total projected spend for the full upcoming financial year (April to March) broken down by quarters**.

Throughout the financial year, grantees are expected to review and update their forecasts as part of the quarterly claims process. You are encouraged to review, and if needed, adjust your forecast each quarter so it reflects your actual and anticipated spend as closely as possible. This not only helps Defra plan and manage funds accurately but also supports Grantees to have the money they need for effective project delivery.

5.2.   Disbursement of Grants

The Grant Administrator is responsible for disbursing the grant to the Lead Organisation only. This will be actioned upon receiving and approving a valid claim form; invoices cannot be accepted. **It is the responsibility of the Lead Organisation to disburse funds to Partner Organisations.**

Grants are disbursed quarterly - or bi-annually for projects under £100,000 – and are only disbursed once a valid claim form has been approved by the Grant Administrator. The Claim Form Template is available from the OCEAN Website Resources Page. Guidance on how to complete the claim form is provided in the template and additional guidance is available in Annex A. Bank details on each claim form must match details provided on the supplier form (see 2.1.3) for it to be valid. Claims must also be signed by an authorised signatory (see 2.1.3) and submitted by email to finance@oceangrants.org.uk. Grantees will be notified once the claim has been sent for payment.

Two payment dates are scheduled in each quarter: one in the middle of the month and one at the beginning of the following month. These dates will be confirmed by email before each quarter starts. Grants will be paid on one of these two dates if a valid claim form is received at least one day before the payment date. **It is very important to submit claims within these periods, otherwise payments may be delayed until the next quarter.**

5.2.1. Grants with a Total Project Budget Over £50,000

For the first payment, Grantees will be requested via email to submit their **first quarterly advance claim soon after project award (see 2)**. Instructions on how to submit the initial claim will be provided via email.

After the initial payment, grantees must follow the standard quarterly claims schedule set out below. In each financial year, grantees are expected to submit quarterly **advance** claims for April–June (Q1), July–September (Q2), and October–December (Q3), based on forecast figures (see 5.1). To provide assurance on how advance funds are used, grantees must, with each quarterly claim, update their yearly forecast (see 5.1) and report their **total actual spend** for the previous quarter. Advance payments will be made on one of the two payment dates set in at the start of each quarter and as detailed below.

Claim	Amount	Covering the period	When due	When paid
Q1 advance claim	Q1 forecasted amount	01 April - 30 June	01 - 30 April	By early May
Q2 advance claim	Q2 forecasted amount	01 July - 30 September	01 - 31 July	By early August
Q3 advance claim	Q3 forecasted amount	01 October - 31 December	01 - 31 October	By early November

The final quarter of the year – January to March (Q4) – is paid **in arrears**. This means project spending must be reported on an actual (real) basis. The Q4 claim (called the **actual claim**) is calculated as the total actual expenditure for the whole year minus the advance payments already made. Grantees must submit an actual claim even if no additional funds are requested. The actual claim must be submitted between **01 - 31 May** each year and will be paid on the subsequent payment dates in mid-May and early June.

Claim	Amount	Covering the period	When due	When paid
Actual Claim	Expenditure for the year, less the advance claims	01 April - 31 March	01 - 31 May, pending approval of the annual report (see 6.1.2)	Between mid-May and early-June

5.2.2. Grants with a Total Project Budget of £50,000 and Under; or with an Annual Project Budget of £25,000 and Under

Grants with a total project budget under £50,000, or an annual project budget under £25,000, are paid in instalments and must be accounted for on an actuals (real) basis. This will include an initial

advance claim and a subsequent actual claim. The **actual claim** is calculated as the total actual expenditure minus the advance payment.

For **projects of 12 months**, the grant is disbursed in **two instalments in total**. Within the first month from the start of the project, grantees will be asked by email to submit an advance claim of up to **75% of the total grant**. The remaining amount will then be claimed through a final actual claim. Grantees must submit their final actual claim within **one month** of the end of the project.

For projects longer than 12 months, the grant is disbursed in **two instalments per financial year**. Within the first month of each financial year in which the project is active, grantees will be asked to submit an **advance claim of up to 75%** of the grant amount for that year. They must then submit an **actual claim** between **01 and 31 May**, calculated as the total actual expenditure for that year minus the advance paid. This pattern (an advance claim at the start of each financial year followed by an actual claim in May) continues for each year the project is active. A **final actual claim** must be submitted within **three months** of the project end date.

Actual claims submitted more than **three months** after the end of the financial year or the end of the project may not be paid and may result in suspension or termination of the grant funding agreement.

5.3.   Underspends and Overspends

Grantees are expected to manage their project budgets effectively to avoid both underspends and overspends. This should be managed as part of the ongoing adaptive management of your project.

- **Grantees can operate with some flexibility between budget lines within a financial year (<10% in any one high level budget line) but cannot change the total annual budget** without prior agreement from Defra.

- **If >10% change is needed to any budget line within a financial year**, prior agreement from Defra is required.

- **Underspends cannot be carried forward into future financial without submission and prior approval of an updated budget via the change request process.**

- Grantees **cannot apply any informal / internal transfers between different financial years** within their own project budget without Defra's agreement.

- **In case of overspend**, Grantees must ensure they cover that from another line or meet the additional costs from matched funding or from within the lead and partner organisations.

As soon as Grantees become aware of an issue and in need of a budget change, Grantees must request agreement from Defra by submitting a financial change request (see 4.3) to finance@oceangrants.org.uk.

Approval is not guaranteed and all financial change requests should be submitted before 31 December each Financial Year. In exceptional circumstances (e.g., where conflict or natural disasters have an impact on the grantee's ability to deliver), Defra may be able to offer some flexibility. Any such changes must be clearly justified. Changes submitted outside of the deadline

must be due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the project, rather than poor planning, delivery, or budgeting. **It is advisable to avoid significant activities or expenditure in the period January–March in case there are delays**, as moving unspent finance to the subsequent financial year may not be possible.

5.4.   Retention

For all projects, Defra will retain a portion of the grant until all the reporting and financial requirements are met. If your project has a very small award figure in the final year, some of the balance from the previous financial year may also be retained. This will impact when you receive the last payment for your project and you should ensure you budget with this in mind.

- **Budgets of £600,001 or greater:** Either 25% of the grant for the final financial year of the funding period or £50,000, whichever is greater, will be withheld. These funds will be paid on acceptance of the final report and audit statement.

- **Budgets between £100,001 - £600,000**: Either 25% of the total award for the grant for the final financial year of the funding period or £20,000, whichever is greater, will be withheld. These funds will be paid on acceptance of the final report and audit statement.

- **Budgets between £50,001 - £100,000**: Either 25% of the total award for the grant for the final financial year of the funding period or £5,000, whichever is greater, will be withheld. These funds will be paid on acceptance of the final report and, for grants greater than or equal to £50,000 but under £100,000, the grant statement.

- **Budgets up to £50,000**: Either 25% of the total award for the grant for the final financial year of the funding period or £3,000, whichever is greater, will be withheld. These funds will be paid on acceptance of the final report and the grant statement.

Where issues of probity, governance or control are discovered, Defra retains the right to recover or withhold funds. Quarterly payments may be put on hold at any time where issues of probity, governance or control are discovered.

5.5.   Financial Assurance

Grantees must provide **independent financial assurance that the grant has been spent in accordance with the terms of the Grant Funding Agreement**. The Lead Organisation should sign off all accounts and certify that the funding has been spent on eligible expenditure only (see 5.8). The level of assurance is **linked to the size of the grant**.

| | | Grant Statement Provided by | | |
Total Grant	Spot Audits	Self-declaration	Independent Examiner	Auditor
Less than £50,000	Yes	Per claim, Project End	No	No
£50,000 to £99,999	Yes	Per claim	Project End	No
£100,000 to £599,999	Yes	Per claim	No	Project End
More than £600,000	Yes	Per claim	Annually	Project End

The project end statement (audit, independent examiner and self-declaration) (see 9.1) is in reference to the entire project grant. Any matched funding does not need to be included in the audit of the grant.

5.6. Spot Audits

Every year, Defra selects a sample of projects for a spot audit. Spot audits are conducted to ensure selected grants have been spent their grant in accordance with the agreement with Defra.

Grantees must be able to provide electronic information about all the transactions accounted for, and to produce copies of original receipts and invoices backing up claims if requested. The spot audits may include a review of internal financial controls and procedures, a record of which should be kept.

5.7. Foreign Exchange

For projects that incur costs in currency other than GBP, Grantees must **apply their organisation's approach to exchange rates and manage the currency exchange risk** themselves. Grantees should ensure that at least monthly exchange rate records are maintained throughout the project and that any exchange rates used are appropriate. Grantees may be asked to provide evidence of the exchange rate used as part of a project spot audit (see 5.6) to ensure it has been appropriately calculated.

5.8. Items Ineligible for Funding

Grantees are reminded that, in addition to the items not acceptable for funding set out in the Conditions of the Grant (see clause 5 *Eligible and Ineligible Expenditure* and clause 22 *Spending Controls – Marketing, Advertising, Communications and Consultancy*), there are additional items that are not considered eligible for OCEAN funds. These are summarised in **Annex A of the Finance Guidance**.

5.9. Change in Authorised Signatory

If needs arise, **authorised signatories can be removed and/or replaced**. To do so, Grantees must submit a **change of signatory panel form** (see [OCEAN Website Resources Page](#)) to finance@oceangrants.org.uk. Any change of signatory must be signed by two existing authorised signatories to approve the change.

5.10. Change in Supplier Form

If needs arise (e.g., a change in the bank account), Grantees can **update the information on their supplier form** (see 2.1.3). To do so, Grantees must submit a **new supplier form** (see [OCEAN Website Resources Page](#)) to helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk. At least two authorised signatories must sign and independently submit the same form to approve the change.

5.11. Assets

Assets are defined by Defra as any equipment or supplies purchased in whole or in part with Defra funds that have a useful life of more than one year, and either have an individual purchase or

development cost exceeding £500 (or equivalent in local currency); or are a group of lower-value, portable, and attractive items (e.g., mobile phones, cameras, laptops, tablets, satellite phones, vehicles, food, pharmaceutical products, relief packs, etc.) with a combined cost exceeding £500 (or equivalent in local currency). **Assets are property of Defra, unless Defra gives written approval for their transfer or disposal.**

5.11.1. Asset Register

Within three months of the project's start date, Grantees should set up an Asset Register. This is an **active tool** listing all assets purchased, improved, or developed using the grant, that Grantees must **regularly update and submit to the Grant Administrator together with their annual report** (see 6.1.2).

OCEAN currently does not have an Asset Register template and instead is happy for the Lead Organisation to use their existing template and process to capture this. If you need to establish an Asset Register, then a suggested structure is provided in the Asset Disposal Plan template available on the OCEAN Website Resources Page.

5.11.2. Asset Disposal Plan

Two months prior to the project's end date, Grantees must complete an Asset Disposal Plan (see OCEAN Website Resources Page) and submit it to finance@oceangrants.org.uk.

This allows Grantees to **propose how they intend to dispose of the assets they have purchased via their grant** at the end of their project. Disposal means getting rid of an asset (for example, by selling it, transferring it to someone else, or making an agreement to do so). **The Asset Disposal Plan must be approved by Defra** (via the Grant Administrator) prior to the end of the project.

5.12. Fraud

By signing the grant funding agreement, Grantees **confirm to have a sound administration and audit process**, including internal financial controls to safeguard against fraud, theft, money laundering, counter terrorist financing or any other impropriety, or mismanagement in connection with the administration of the grant (see clause 9 *Financial Management and Prevention of Bribery, Corruption, Fraud and Other Irregularity* of the *Conditions of the Grant*).

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Grantees are expected to effectively monitor their projects and assess how well they are achieving their planned activities and targets. Monitoring is the ongoing collection and use of information to track project progress and results. It enables project teams to understand how their work is performing, identify challenges early, and make informed decisions to stay on course. **Effective monitoring is essential for good management, learning, and accountability. It ensures that projects remain relevant, efficient, and able to adapt to change.**

Different types of monitoring - such as results, activity, financial, compliance, and context monitoring - help provide a complete picture of project performance. Further detail on each type of monitoring is provided in the *OCEAN Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Guidance*.

6.1. Reporting

Grantees are required to submit progress reports via email to reports@oceangrants.org.uk. These are reviewed by the Grant Administrator and scored for project progress against outputs, report quality, and GEDSI (see 0). Report templates are available for download from the OCEAN Website Resources Page. There are different templates for grants over and under £100,000. Guidance on reporting is shared in webinars for Grantees (see 3.1). The different types of report and timings of each are detailed below.

6.1.1. Mid-Year Report

By 31 October of every year, Grantees are required to submit a short update on progress. This should highlight any changes to plans, or any challenges or lessons learned from the past six months of project delivery. The mid-year report should be accompanied by an updated risk register (see 3.3.3).

6.1.2. Annual Report

By 30 April of every year, Grantees are required to submit a detailed report. This should reflect on the past year of project delivery. Performance will be measured against the agreed workplan and targets set in the project's logframe. Grantees are required to provide evidence to show what has been achieved so far and to reflect on any emerging lessons and recommendations to improve project delivery. The annual report should be accompanied by an updated risk register, the latest agreed logframe, annual standard indicators results, as well as an updated assets register (see 5.11).

6.1.3. Final Report

Within three months of the project's end date (one month for single-year grants), Grantees are required to submit a detailed final report. This should outline the extent to which objectives were achieved as well as contribution to a wider impact was made. Performance will be measured against the indicators set in the project's logframe as well as any changes observed since the project began. This final report should be accompanied by a final claim and an end statement (see 9.1).

6.2. Monitoring Reviews

Every year, Defra selects a sample of projects for a monitoring review. Monitoring Reviews are conducted to verify and validate reporting and facilitate tailored feedback and support to selected projects. Monitoring reviews can be carried out **in-person, remotely or a hybrid approach** and last up to five working days.

In-person reviews typically involve a visit to an active project site and discussions with key project participants. The details and scope of any visit, including any expected costs associated with convening key stakeholders, are agreed beforehand between the Grantee and Grant Administrator to ensure there is minimal impact on the project team's ability to carry out its planned activities.

6.3. OCEAN Independent Evaluation

OCEAN has its own Independent Evaluator (Itad). **From time to time, Grantees might be approached via email by the OCEAN Independent Evaluator to provide inputs** into deep dives or case studies. This may involve online interviews and/or site visits. The details and scope of any visit, including any expected costs associated with convening key stakeholders, are agreed beforehand between the Grantee and OCEAN Independent Evaluator to ensure there is minimal impact on the project team's ability to carry out its planned activities.

6.4. Grant Independent Evaluation

Grantees for projects over £1million must arrange for an independent evaluation which is an evaluation carried out by a specialist evaluator that is not a project stakeholder. This should be included in the overall project budget at the application stage.

Three months prior to the project's end date, Grantees must share the terms of reference for the evaluation with the Grant Administrator. **The final evaluation report must be submitted three months after the project's end date.**

7. Communication

Grantees are encouraged to share news on the grant they have received and of their project's achievements as they happen online and on social media (see 8.4). Grantees are not required to seek approval from the Grant Administrator prior to publishing content about their project but **must adhere to a few important requirements**. These are detailed in the Conditions of the Grant (see 2.1.2) and summarised below. They are in place to ensure that OCEAN and Defra are represented consistently and accurately.

OCEAN has a dedicated communications emails address - comms@oceangrants.org.uk – that can be used for sharing media updates or getting in touch regarding communications-related enquiries.

> **The *OCEAN Communication Guidance available via the OCEAN website* provides detailed information around requirements Grantees must adhere to as well as some useful tips to help raise a project's profile and reach as wide an audience as possible. Grantees should also carefully review the *UK Government's Branding Guidance for ODA Funded Programmes*.**

7.1. Public Announcements

Grantees are asked to **inform the Grant Administrator of any planned engagements beforehand** so support can be provided (e.g., by sharing news on the OCEAN website or social media platforms (see 8.5)). Grantees are required to provide evidence of engagement as part of their reporting requirements (see 6.1).

7.2. Branding

Any publicity material for funded activities **must comply with the OCEAN Communication Guidance and the UK Government's Branding Guidance for ODA Funded Programmes, and feature the OCEAN Grantee and UK International Development logos (see 3.4)**. This includes, but is not limited to, information leaflets, banners and displays, event invitations and reports.

Funding received by OCEAN must not be used to pay for communications materials and activities that do not directly support agreed programme outcomes. These include, but are not limited to, branded promotional goods, including stationary, mugs, bags, small personal goods, hats, caps, t-shirts, communications activity, and materials to promote the implementing Partner Organisation themselves.

7.3. Images

Grantees must ensure that any photos taken as part of their project that they would like OCEAN to use (e.g., on the OCEAN website or social media) **must be obtained with explicit individual consent from the subjects**.

Subjects must be fully informed about the purpose of the photos, how they will be used, and who will have access to them in their native language. Consent must be documented through a written agreement with a signature or thumbprint or recorded verbally on video and supplied to the Grant Administrator. Subjects have the right to withdraw their consent at any time. All

practices must comply with relevant data protection and privacy laws. Grantees should also **provide captions for context and acknowledge the photographer**. Stories can also be told through images that do not reveal the subject's identity and respects anonymity. Aerial shots or photos of people's hands are two examples of photos that do this well.

Additional information, including OCEAN's guidance on taking photos of children, is available in the Communications Guidance.

7.4.   Media Coverage

Grantees are encouraged to share news about their projects with the media. However, when doing so, Grantees are acting as representatives of their own organisation, not as spokespeople for OCEAN. Grantees **must share any media coverage of their project with the Grant Administrator**. **If approached with a media request concerning OCEAN**, Grantees should refer the contact to comms@oceangrants.org.uk for an official response.

7.5.   Open Access

Projects are likely to generate significant outputs including datasets, best practices, peer reviewed journal articles and technical reports which will be of value to other countries and stakeholders. Grantees **must make all evidence and data produced freely available and accessible to the public**, unless there are sensitivities involved. For instance, Grantees could utilise Creative Commons tools. As another example, Grantees working on coral monitoring, could use MERMAID - Marine Ecological Research Management Aid | MERMAID and ReefCloud.

7.6.   Transparency

To support understanding and in line with the aim of OCEAN, information about successful projects will be **published on the OCEAN website**. This might include applications and subsequent reporting (see 6.1). **If there are any sensitivities** within any of these (e.g., political sensitivities, or prosecutions for illegal activities, or security of staff), Grantees should inform the Grant Administrator by emailing comms@oceangrants.org.uk so that sensitivities can be considered for redaction prior to publication.

8.   Engagement & Networking

OCEAN is committed to supporting Grantees throughout the implementation of their projects in a full-rounded manner. This includes, among others, contractual and management aspects, financial matters, MEL perspective, GEDSI and SEAH requirements, as well as communication. **OCEAN is also committed to fostering networking opportunities for Grantees and supporting Grantees raise their project's profiles.**

8.1.   Online Events

Grantees are invited to attend **a series of online learning events run by the Grant Administrator**. These events are intended to support Grantees in the successful implementation of their project and have the aim of **developing capacity** and **facilitating peer-to-peer learning and networking**.

8.1.1. Onboarding & Project Workshops

Project workshops include the **onboarding webinars** (see 3.1) and **annual project workshops and are designed to** support projects to meet the conditions of the grant (see 2.1.2). They include key information relating to project management, reporting and financial processes (see 4 and 5), and reporting (see 6.1). Annual project workshops will be held at the end of March each year, ahead of the Annual Reporting period.

Onboarding and Project workshop events require **mandatory attendance by the Project Leader** and are optional for a limited number of key project staff from either the Lead Organisation or Partner Organisations (e.g., finance lead, MEL focal point).

8.1.2.   Grantee Learning Events

Grantee Learning Events are a series of demand-led webinars hosted by the Grant Administrators. They focus on **developing organisational capacity** and **strengthening project management skills for Grantees** and are held on a **quarterly basis**. These events centred around topics of interest suggested by Grantees and include Grantees presenters to support peer-to-peer sharing of expertise and experience with the wider group.

Grantee Learning Events are optional, but OCEAN encourages grantees to take part where possible. Lead Organisations are encouraged to share information about these events with relevant team members and project partner organisations, and to invite them to attend, so that learning is shared across the whole project partnership.

Details of events planned and how to register will be shared with Grantees via email. Events are held on Zoom and require Grantees to register.

8.2.   In-person Meetings

Through email and social media channels (see 8.5), the Grant Administrator announces conferences and international events attended by the OCEAN Fund Engagement Manager and/or members of the OCEAN Experts Committee and/or representatives of the Blue Planet

Fund. Usually, OCEAN organises side events and presentations to enhance knowledge of the fund as well as to support Grantees expand their network of contacts.

Grantees planning to attend local, regional, national or international events, are encouraged to contact the OCEAN Fund Engagement Manager via helpdesk@oceangrants.org.uk to discuss potential activities and networking OCEAN could facilitate.

8.3. Engagement Visits

From time to time, the Grant Administrator and/or members of the OCEAN Experts Committee and/or members of Defra may organise in-person project visits to engage with Grantees and experience first-hand what their project is delivering on the ground including any challenges and opportunities they face. **This will help the Grant Administrator and Defra in the process of continuously improving OCEAN and the support that can be provided to Grantees**.

The details and scope of any visit, including any expected costs associated with convening key stakeholders, are agreed beforehand between the grantee and Grant Administrator to ensure there is minimal impact on the project team's ability to carry out its planned activities.

8.4. OCEAN's News & Storytelling

Grantees are encouraged to **share news from their projects to raise their project's profile and inspire others working towards ocean conservation and poverty reduction**. Grantees are invited by the OCEAN Communications team to contribute to the OCEAN newsletter and / or blogs by sharing materials (e.g., photos or news stories) (see 7) by emailing comms@oceangrants.org.uk.

The OCEAN newsletter will showcase Grantees and their projects and therefore we encourage all grantees to share news where possible to support sharing of Grantee updates.

8.5. OCEAN's Social Media

Grantees are encouraged to **follow OCEAN on social media at [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)**. Grantees are also encouraged to **tag OCEAN** in their online posts **to allow the OCEAN Communications team to re-post their stories**. Online platforms offer a valuable opportunity to keep informed on the latest news on OCEAN, hear success stories from other Grantees facilitating peer-to-peer learning and networking, and share Grantees' own project stories celebrating achievements and success.

8.6. Languages

In an effort to promote language inclusivity, OCEAN supports engagement with Grantees in **French, Indonesian, Spanish** and **Portuguese.** Grantees are encouraged to manage their projects and communicate with Grant Administrators in any of the listed languages, including via email, reporting and grant management forms such as Change Requests.

Live interpretation will be provided at all Grantee Learning Events upon request at registration. Interpretation can also be arranged for online calls and meetings. Please ensure to let the Grant Administrator know in advance if interpretation is required, to allow enough time to arrange support.

9. Project Close

Grantees are expected to conclude their projects on the official end date specified in the Grant Offer Letter (see 2.1.1).

9.1.   Final Report and Claim & Supporting Documents

Once project's activities are completed within the funding period, Grantees must submit via email to reports@oceangrants.org.uk:

- A **final report (see 6.1.3)**.

- A **final actual claim** detailing the actual expenditure in the final year.

- **Where applicable (see 5.5)**, a **project end statement** (audit, independent examiner and self-declaration).

- **For all projects over £100,000**, a copy of the **annual audited accounts** for the project's Lead Organisation covering the funding period.

- **For all projects over £1million**, an **independent evaluation (see 6.3)**.

These documents must be submitted **within three months of the project's end date. For grants with a duration of 12 months**, this should be **within one month** from the project's end date.

The **payment of the final actual claim is dependent on** the review of the final report and any necessary supporting documentation deemed acceptable. **Late or sub-standard reporting may result in any outstanding claims being delayed or not being paid.**

9.2.   Grant Termination

Grantees and/or Defra may terminate the Grant Funding Agreement at any time by giving notice of at least three months or a timescale proportionate to the funding period. **Any funds unspent will need to be returned within 30 days from notifying Defra**.

Defra retains the right to terminate at any time any Grant Funding Agreement in case of events of default. These may occur, as examples, when the grantee uses the grant for a purpose other than the funded activities, when the grantee fails to comply with its obligations under the grant funding agreement, when the delivery of the funded activities does not start within three months of the grant's commencement date, when the grantee uses the grant for ineligible expenditure, when the grantee fails to make satisfactory progress with the funded activities.

When terminating a grant, Defra may suspend, terminate, or reduce payments, or require the Grantee to re-pay the whole or part of the amount previously paid.

Clause 27 *Clawback, Events of Default, Termination and Rights Reserved for Breach and Termination* **of the** *Conditions of the Grant* **provides complete information around reasons which may lead to an early termination of a grant.**

Annex A. Claim Form Guidance

The below guidance has been developed to support the submission of your quarterly advanced claims to OCEAN.

When completing your claim, you will need to complete both the **Claim Form** and **Forecast and Actuals** worksheets before sending a copy of your complete Claim Form to **finance@oceangrants.org.uk**. For **Q4 Claims,** you must complete the **Annual Actual Breakdown** and **Matched Funding** worksheets in addition to the above.

Step by step guidance and information on when to submit claims is provided below:

Forecast and Actuals Worksheet

Q1, 2 & 3 Claims:

1. Fill in your **Agreed Budget** breakdown and ensure that the **'Total'** adds up to your awarded budget for the year (this can be found in your GAF and Annual Award Letter, or latest approved change request if you have had an amendment to your budget approved by Defra).

2. To get the total amount you plan to spend (your claim), fill in the **Forecast columns** for each quarter.

3. When submitting your **Q1 Claim,** only fill in the forecast columns with your forecasted costs.

4. **For Q2 & Q3,** keep the forecast columns and update if needed. Then, fill in the relevant **Actual columns** (to show actual spend from the previous payment) in the previous Quarters (*e.g., Q1 Actuals should be filled in when submitting Q2 Claim, Q1 & Q2 should be filled in Q3 Claim).* You should not amend the actuals or forecast of any prior quarters that have already elapsed.

5. If you have under- or over-spent in one quarter, your next advance claim will be the difference between the balance left (or due) from the previous Quarter, plus the expected

spend for the next *(e.g., Underspend of £1000 in Q1 will be deducted from Q2 Advance Claim)*. If this is the case, you will be required to update your subsequent forecast quarters to reflect this.

Ensure that your total budget (B18) equals the total forecast budget (K18)

*PLEASE NOTE: **Your quarterly forecast and Annual Award Letter (or latest budget approved via a change request) should match. <u>If your quarterly forecast has changed</u>** from your Annual Award Letter, or previous claim, you need to justify the change in *the comments section:*

Q4 Claims:

1. Fill in your **Agreed Budget** breakdown and ensure that the **'Total'** adds up to your awarded budget for the year (this can be found in your GAF and Annual Award Letter or latest approved change request if you have had an amendment to your budget approved by Defra).

2. Fill in both **Q3 Forecast (£)** & **Actual (£)** columns to show what you have actually spent.

3. As **Q4 payments are paid in arrears** (after they have been spent, at the end of Q4), complete both **Q4 Forecast** & **Actual (£)** columns.

*PLEASE NOTE:

- **If you have an <u>approved</u> financial change request,** ensure that your Agreed Budget is in accordance with your revised budget.

- **If there is any underspend/overspend**, justify this in the comments section.

4. Complete the **Annual Actual Breakdown** worksheet.

- Provide the actual total expenditure on employment of **staff, capital items, and other costs** that were funded under this year's grant. Add additional rows if necessary.

5. Complete the **Matched Funding** worksheet.

Claim Form Worksheet

1. **Complete Section 1** by filling in the light blue cells. The grey cells include formulas and should not be changed. They should help you work out the figures to include on the form.

2. **Only complete Section 2 if you are claiming for Q4.** If you have unspent funds at the end of the FY in Q4, you must confirm if you are surrendering funds to Defra.

   *If you are not surrendering unspent funds, you must submit a Change Request to move funds into future FYs (if applicable). **Please ensure that Change Requests are submitted by 31 December. Only exceptional Change Requests will be considered after this period.**

3. **Complete Section 3.** Ensure that the claim formed is signed by an authorised signatory on the original Grant Acceptance Form.

3. Claim Amount and Certification

I confirm that I have reviewed my quarterly forecast and provided actual expenditure for all previous quarters. I claim the Claim Amount detailed above from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, being a payment for work funded by OCEAN for the Financial Year detailed in the 1. Claim Period & Amount above. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information is accurate, the expenditure will be properly incurred and that no other grant has been or will be claimed from Central Government or government agency towards these costs without the full knowledge and agreement of the Department.

*Signed (please insert an image of the written signature):	
Date:	

*To be completed by signatory authorised on the original Grant Acceptance Form or notified to the Department thereafter via a change of signatory form.

4. **Fill out your bank details in Section 4.** Ensure bank details (and intermediary bank details) match those in your Grant Agreement Form. Confirm the currency in which you want your claim to be paid.

4. Confirmation of Bank Details

Please confirm your bank details and currency. Any details that do not match your supplier form will be checked with you and may delay payment. **Payments will be made in GBP by default. Please let us know if your account cannot accept GBP and payment can be made in either EUR or USD.**

Name of Organisation on Account:		**Bank Account / IBAN Number:**	
Bank Name:		**Bank Swift Code / Sort Code:**	
Confirm currency for payment:			

Please include any additional information to support the transfer:

Intermediary Bank Details:	
Other:	

5. **Complete Section 5.**

6. **Complete Section 6 (if applicable)**

Once completed, send this form to **finance@oceangrants.org.uk** for processing.

Annex B. Report Scoring Criteria

Below a copy of the scoring criteria the Grant Administrator applies to assess reports (see 6.1).

Project Progress & Results Score

Score	Criteria	Characteristics
Project Progress & Results Score		
Scoring Criteria and Characteristics Early stage= first 3 months of a 12-month project, first 6 months of longer projects. Later stage = 4 months in or later for a 12-month project, 7 months in or later for longer projects.		
5 – Excellent	Project demonstrates **excellent progress**, achieving or exceeding a high proportion of targets across all Outputs. Output and Outcome targets are likely to be **completely achieved or exceeded** by project end.	• If early-stage: Project set-up complete, activities on track, all key baselines and targets identified, early output targets or milestones achieved or exceeded. • If later-stage: Planned results at Output and Outcome level on track to be completely achieved or exceeded.
4 – Good	Project demonstrates **good progress**, achieving milestones/targets across most Outputs. Output and Outcome targets likely to be **mostly achieved** by project end.	• If early-stage: Project set-up complete, activities on track, most key baselines and targets identified, some early milestones achieved. • If later-stage: Most key targets on track to be achieved; others progressing with minor delays or deviations.
3 – Moderate	Project demonstrates **moderate progress**, i.e. mixed or slower than planned, with targets not being fully met across some Outputs. **Partial achievement** of Outputs or Outcome targets is likely by project end.	• If early-stage: Project set-up complete, but some key activities delayed, some key baselines and targets missing. • If later stage: Several key targets or activities moderately off-track or only likely to be partially achieved.
2 – Limited	Project demonstrates **limited progress**, or significant deviations from planned activities and results. Outputs and Outcome targets appear likely to be **achieved to a limited extent** by project end.	• If early-stage: Project setup incomplete, many key activities delayed, none or few baselines or targets identified. • If late-stage: Limited progress towards most Output and Outcome targets.

1 – Very Poor	Project demonstrates **very little or no progress** with poor or no justification. Activities are delayed or are misaligned with project targets. Outputs and Outcome **very unlikely to be achieved** by project end**.**	• At any stage: Major concerns over delivery, design, or management.
X – Not assessed	Insufficient information to assess progress.	• Only use if the report has not been submitted or has major gaps that prevent an assessment.

Report Quality & Evidence Score	
Score	**Criteria**
5 – Excellent	• Report is **very clear and complete**. • Gives a strong explanation of progress, what changed and why, with good context. • Includes relevant, well-explained evidence, including disaggregated data where expected.
4 – Good	• Report is **mostly clear and complete**, with **minor gaps or unclear parts**. • Explanation of progress and change is generally good, but some parts could be clearer. • Evidence is provided, with some minor issues of relevance, depth or disaggregation.
3 – Moderate	• Report is **partly clear** but some **important gaps or unclear sections**. • Explanation of progress or change is often unclear or missing key details. • Evidence provided is mixed, some major issues with relevance, depth or disaggregation.
2 – Poor	• Report is **hard to understand** or **missing many key parts**. • Explanation of progress or change is unclear throughout. • Evidence is minimal or not useful, and no disaggregation where expected.
1 – Very Poor	• Report is **incomplete** and/or **does not follow the instructions or template**. • No real attempt to explain progress, change or provide results. • No evidence or effort to meet reporting expectations.
X – Not assessed	No reporting provided/available