The Sansom Conservation Leadership Alumni Fund 2026-27: FAQs

Cambridge Conservation Initiative

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE ALUMNI
CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP ALUMNI NETWORK

FAQs

For further information regarding completing the application form, please see the 'Guidance for Applicants', available at: www.cl.geog.cam.ac.uk/sclafund

Eligibility criteria

1. Do I need to be an alumnus from the University of Cambridge Masters in Conservation Leadership in order to apply?
Yes, to apply for a Sansom Conservation Leadership Fund grant, you will need to have graduated from the University of Cambridge Masters in Conservation Leadership. The 2025-2026 outgoing cohort are also eligable to apply. See Q5 below regarding additional collaborators outside of the UCCLAN.

2. Do I apply as an individual or via my organisation?
Applications could be received from either individuals or their organisations, to allow for projects to take place outside of any existing organisational structure if appropriate.

3. Can the Lead Applicant be different from the Project Lead?
The Lead Applicant can be a different individual from the Project Lead. The Lead Applicant is responsible for the SCLA Fund administration, the Project Lead is responsible for delivering the project, both must be alumni.

4. How many alumni from the University of Cambridge Masters in Conservation Leadership can apply for a single project?
There is no upper limit. There is no strict requirement for applications to include more than one alumnus of the Masters in Conservation Leadership, but where appropriate such collaborations would be encouraged.

5. Can I include other collaborators from outside of the UCCLAN?
Where alumni do not have all the skills and expertise needed to deliver a project, other collaborators may be included in the project and funded by the grant.

6. Can a non-UCCLAN member/external supplier receive funding for their time in the collaboration?
Yes, collaborators external to UCCLAN included in the project as above, can be funded by the grant, subject to supplier contracting requirements being met.

7. Can I be named on more than one project application?
Yes, you can be a named applicant/collaborator on more than one application. You will be asked to confirm if you are involved in more than one project when making your application.

8. Can a team member mentioned in the application be replaced?
We would hope that project participants commit to deliver the project, however we understand that things come up, therefore a team member can be replaced if circumstances are unavoidable. As long as there is at least one alumni on the project then the project can go ahead. If this occurs please submit a case for the change form (available on request from sr445@cam.ac.uk)

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9. Can the funding support the purchase of land?
As long the purchase of the land has high impact for conservation then it is eligible. Within the application you must be able to demonstrate that it is a sustainable and ethical purchase with a clear plan for how the land would be maintained after the life of the grant. You must also demonstrate there was no detrimental impacts to those on or near the site.

10. Is it necessary to cite the articles/documents/reports from where the information is taken in the application?
This is not necessary, unless you feel it would strengthen your application, in which case please do in the relevant boxes where the information is written.

11. Can I use AI to when making an application?
While there is no practical way we can enforce non-use of AI, please be aware that AI generated responses tend to be quite bland and unimpressive for the review panel.

References

Each application requires the support of two referees (appropriate peers) from outside the UCCLAN and course team. The names, email addresses and phone numbers of referees should be listed in the application. Select a referee who has time to review the application fully and discourage the use of AI to ensure it has been scrutinised fully.

12. Can a referee support more than one application in the same round?
We do not require referees to be limited to just one application to the Fund, they can provide references to a number of applications.

13. Does a referee need to submit their reference independently from the application form?
Yes, references should be received by the Conservation Leadership Networks Manager, from the referee themselves, independently from the project application, as set out in the 'Guidance for Applicants'.

Project budget

The budget needs to be broken down into clearly identifiable parts - what equipment is required, what is being spent on subsistence, travel etc. Salaries other than essential subsistence payments are welcomed but must be justified in the application. You also need to outline what other sources of income there are. There needs to be enough detail on budget items to give a clear picture of what is needed.

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14. How much can I apply for?
The maximum size of any grant is £60,000 with a maximum project duration of three years. Applications can be made for existing projects, but with clear aims and objectives to be delivered within the proposed start and end date.

15. Does the Sansom Conservation Leadership Fund cover salaries and overhead costs?
The SCLA Fund pays full salaries with a cap of 15% for any associated overheads. Overhead expenses are what it costs to run the business, including rent, insurance, and utilities (but does not include salary costs)

16. What does the funding cover?
The fund covers staff time, materials, communications, travel, and other appropriate costs needed to complete your project.

17. Does the fund support research?
No, the SCLA Fund does not currently fund research.

18. Can I amend my budget?
If the project changes in an unanticipated way and funds need to be redirected, you can apply for an amendment using the change of use form available on request from the Conservation Leadership Networks Manager at: sr445@cam.ac.uk

Process

19. What is the process?
Full applications with references received before the deadline will be considered for the fund. Ineligible applications will be rejected. Applications will be scored against the selection criteria by members of the selection panel. The highest scoring projects will be reviewed at the Selection Panel meeting where grants will be awarded. Both successful and non-successful applicants will receive notification within ten weeks of the application deadline.

20. Gaining Permits/Permissions and the transferral of funds
Please ensure you have all the necessary permits or permissions from the relevant authorities needed to undertake the work. We may need to see evidence of these before funds are released.

Please also check that the country you are located in allows for the transfer of international funding/ funding from a UK University. If you anticipate any issues then please contact the Alumni and Communications Coordinator as soon as possible.

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The University of Cambridge has the following list:
Broadly Restricted Countries
Cuba, Crimea (region), Iran, North Koreas (aka The Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Russia, Syria, and Venezuela. +Donetsk People's Republic (DNR), Luhansk People's Republic (LNR), Kherson (region of Ukraine), Zaporizhzhia (region of Ukraine)

Narrowly Restricted Countries (where there is a connection to a government agency or government-owned entity)
Afghanistan, Belarus, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Myanmar (Burma), Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

If you are applying from any of these countries please contact the Conservation Leadership Networks Manager as soon as possible about eligibility.

21. Who will evaluate my application?
The SCLA Fund Selection Panel, consisting of:

- Chris Sandbrook, Director of the Masters
- A representative of CCI
- 2 alumni representatives

All panel members will be required to declare any conflicts of interest and will not take part in evaluating applications where any such conflict is identified.

22. Can I reapply?
You can reapply for future funding rounds, for as long as the fund continues to be available.

23. Where can I find more information?
If you require further information please contact the Conservation Leadership Networks Manager Shelley Bolderson (sr445@cam.ac.uk) or visit www.cl.geog.cam.ac.uk/sclafund