

Funding Sources

There are three main competitive funding sources that researchers and communities can apply to for funding:

1. **General research grant bodies** for the Humanities and Social Sciences set up by governments, such as the UK AHRC and SSRC, Australian ARC, Norwegian Forskningsrådet, German DFG and so on;
2. **Non-government grant bodies** such as [Unesco](#), the [Christensen Fund](#), the [Endangered Archives Programme](#) sponsored by [Arcadia](#) and managed by the British Library (this funds archival work which can include endangered languages materials) and so on;
3. **Endangered languages grant bodies** which deal with research on endangered languages only, such as:
 - o [DoBeS](#) project of the [Volkswagen Foundation](#)
 - o [ELDP](#) Endangered Languages Documentation Programme sponsored by Arcadia.
 - o [DEL](#) interagency programme of the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment of the Humanities
 - o [FEL](#) Foundation for Endangered Languages
 - o [ELF](#) Endangered Languages Fund
 - o [GBS](#), Gesellschaft für bedrohte Sprachen, whose current call for grant proposals is available in English [here](#) [pdf].

I will refer to the second group as “NGO grant bodies”, and the last group as “EL grant bodies” below. Note that I am not discussing other funding sources that may be used to support language work such as local employment creation projects; these are usually specific to particular places and it is difficult to generalise about them.

Each granting body has its own rules and regulations, and its own particular areas of interest, however the specialist EL grant bodies do have some similarities in common (as well as a few differences):

- they each have a selection panel of experts who decide on the grants – this means that applicants generally get a better treatment for their applications since many of the selection panels for general research grant bodies or NGO bodies cover a wide range of disciplines (eg. the ARC Humanities and Creative Arts Panel covers linguistics, languages, education, art, drama etc) and even if there are one or two linguists on the panel they may not be specialists in language documentation or the relevant language area. This also means that EL bodies are ‘fairer’ to applicants in that they understand the research area well and can identify errors or omissions more easily, and also often are able to identify technical inconsistencies (eg. an application that requests money for video equipment without demonstrating that the applicant has the required skills or research methods to use the equipment, or one that asks for a particular microphone

which is incompatible with the recorder selected). Some bodies, eg. ELDP, publish their list of experts, others do not.

- they all use a system of referee's reports on applications as part of the decision-making process. Some bodies, eg. ELDP, invite the applicant to nominate referees and to have them send in references, others, eg. NSF and Volkswagen, only collect their own references (ELDP uses both types of references). Some provide the references anonymously to the selection panel (so they cannot be influenced by the name of the referee) while others name the referees. Some agencies allow the applicant to name persons who they do **not** want to referee an application, however no EL granting body does this to my knowledge.
- they all provide a degree of feedback to the applicant, successful or not. Generally only a summary of the selection panel's decision is given – several of the non-EL bodies provide the referee's reports to the applicant, and the ARC, AHRC and ESRC allow the possibility of applicants to respond to the referee reports, but none of the EL bodies does.
- it is generally worthwhile looking at the lists of successful grant applications to identify the kinds of projects which each EL grant body favours. While it is not advisable to mimic such applications and it is necessary for each project to justify itself in its own terms, the kinds of research **not** supported by particular bodies, e.g. projects on sign language or projects with a major revitalisation focus, can assist in delineating the preferred focus of an application.

Researchers and communities concerned with endangered languages currently have a range of possibilities for applying for funding support, however some prior research on what makes a successful application for each different granting agency can be very helpful. It may also be useful to contact successful grantees who currently have or recently had funded projects in the geographical area you are interested in to open up the possibility of sharing their experiences of applying for funds.

From: http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/2008/03/so_where_do_you_get_the_dosh_f_1.html, a post by Peter Austin on *Transient Languages and Cultures* <http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/> (March 7, 2008).

See also: <http://www.ling.hawaii.edu/research/resources.html> Scroll down to *Funding sources and information*.