

CSR Funding for NGOs – Compliance & Collaboration

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Q1: Why is compliance critical for securing CSR funding?

Compliance is foundational—not just for NGOs but also for corporates. It builds credibility and reassures companies that they're choosing the right partners. While it may feel like a burden, it's actually a leverage to open doors and strengthen funding relationships. Companies now have structured CSR processes, and boards are accountable for how funds are used.

Q2: What compliance challenges do NGOs face when applying for CSR funding?

Many NGOs aren't fully aware of the specific compliances they need. For instance, some may have 80G certificates but lack others required for specific focus areas like PWDs. Multinationals conduct detailed due diligence which can delay funding. Having all documents ready and understanding what's required is key.

Q3: What is the role of CSR policies in initiating a partnership?

Don't try to decode CSR policies on your own—ask the company directly. Each company designs its policy based on its core business. For example, engineering firms focus on STEM.



Understanding their language and interests helps you align your proposal better.

Q4: How can NGOs improve the chances of building long-term CSR relationships?

Trust and compliance are non-negotiable. Doing your homework, understanding the company's goals, and building relationships proactively—before asking for funds—helps. Small steps like asking for pro bono HR or finance support can lead to deeper engagement.

Q5: How should NGOs navigate the three-year CSR funding limitation?

You can plan multi-phase programs. If a program needs six years, phase it out. Show what outcomes will be achieved in the first phase, and how it can be built upon. If you're transparent and show results, corporates are more likely to continue supporting your organisation.

Q6: What are corporates expecting in terms of impact and reporting?

Keep reports simple and transparent. Don't overpromise. Focus on outcomes and real stories backed by data. Avoid emotional manipulation. Attach all compliance documents. Transparency builds trust.

Q7: What are three practical steps NGOs can take to ensure financial transparency?

To ensure financial transparency, NGOs should ask donors upfront what builds their confidence—whether it's bills, reports, or documentation—to set clear expectations. Maintaining consistency in reporting across donors avoids discrepancies, while proactively sharing audits and certificates without being asked builds trust and shows a strong commitment to accountability.

Q8: How should NGOs communicate changes in projects or staffing?

Schedule regular check-ins—even quarterly. If there's a change in location, team, or structure, inform your partner promptly. Transparency allows flexibility and builds goodwill.

Q9: How do you identify the right CSR funder?

Do your research—read annual reports, attend conferences, network. Stick to your geography. Local companies or family businesses may be more open than big names.

Q10: What are best practices for first-time NGO outreach to corporates?

Start with credibility—strong governance, good boards, clear messaging. Have a 5-slide deck and a crisp website. Reach out for partnerships beyond money, like volunteering or knowledge support. Avoid generic cold emails—make your outreach personal and aligned.
