CHEAT SHEET
DONOR RESEARCH

Donor Research is the process of researching potential donors to find out if they would be willing to fund your project or your organization. The main questions you should answer during your donor research process are:

- **Which foundations fund in my country?**
- **Which foundations fund in my thematic focus area?**
- **How wealthy are they? How likely are they to give again?**
- **Might they fund my organization?**

THE BEST WAYS TO DO DONOR RESEARCH:

1. Research like minded organizations
2. Use your own network and talk to people
3. Online directories and databases
4. Donor newsletters and alerts
5. Internet search

So now you have a name – and its time to find out more about the foundations you have identified as a potential match. Here are the easiest ways to find out more about a potential donor:

- *Internet research*
- *Annual reports*
- *Tax forms*
- *Online directories and databases*
- *Personal contact*

How can I organize my donor research?

- *Prepare a prospect table with three categories: low, middle and high prospect*
- *Include: Name, website, focus area, range of grant, rank, application information, notes, to do and deadline*

COMMON MISTAKES WHEN DOING DONOR RESEARCH:

Not dedicating enough time and resources to the research stage
Donor research is a crucial step in the grant cycle and needs time and resources

Not embedding the research within a broader fundraising strategy
Donor research needs to be embedded in a strategy with roles and responsibilities attached to have an impact

Not using all the available channels
Sometimes the most direct way is the easiest

Not looking deep enough
Not going deep enough with the donor research will cost time and resources later

Not using any system to organize research
If the research is not organized in a system, important takeaways and deadlines will get lost