

Name of your organisation	River Action UK
Date of TFN event which you pitched at	30/03/2023
Name of the project TFN funded	Rescue Britain's Rivers
Were you able to undertake your project as you outlined in the application?	Yes
Can you describe and/or demonstrate the specific impact that TFN funding has had against your initial objectives?	<p>River Action is an impactful charity on a mission to rescue Britain's rivers from the environmental calamity caused by the deluge of pollution and over-abstraction.</p> <p>Our solution has three strategic goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empower and fund community-level activism and citizen science via a toolkit to rescue local river catchments systematically across the UK and gather evidence of pollution. - Mobilise public opinion about river pollution and natural solutions, and use that momentum to bring about consumer and voter behaviour change, and pressure government and industry to invest in better practices. - Advocate Government policy and industry practice change to protect and restore our rivers, and shift industry supply chains towards the health of rivers. <p>Since we received the generous donations from the TFN Live Event, River Action has achieved the following impact against our goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Galvanised a group of river activists on the River Thames - including Sir Steve Redgrave and Steve Backshall - creating a campaign around the 2023 Henley Royal Regatta with pathogen testing results for E.coli used to target Thames Water, England's biggest river polluter, pressuring board level discussions to expedite sewage investment. We then built on this success for the Boat Race in March 2024 where our E.Coli testing results discovered 10 times safe bathing water levels, and the story generated 1751 news stories across the UK and international media. - Empowered over 15 different community groups and over 100 activists across the country to rescue local river catchments, providing practical advice, research to understand and resolve the challenges, and public communications. - Produced a series of animation films, cheekily called "This is Sh*t", alongside leading 'Shaun the Sheep' animators with celebrity voice-overs including Paul Whitehouse, Stephen Fry, Alexander Armstrong and Megan McCubbin, reaching an audience of over 660k views. - Executive Produced and premiered Black Samphire, a gothic horror short film highlighting the insidious danger of water pollution, ahead of World Water Day. It was held at the Brixton Ritzy cinema with impressive media coverage - 160 people attended and as well as the film and documentary, were treated to a panel discussion including Feargal Sharkey on the hot topic of how to reform the water industry.

- Developed and launched the Charter for Rivers - a call to action which sets out 10 policies required to achieve healthy rivers by 2030 - supported by over 70 cross sector of organisations from national eNGOs such as National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, WWF and Greenpeace; Sustainable farming organisations such as Soil Association, Nature Friendly Framing Network and Sustain; national governing bodies including British Rowing, Swim England, Angling Trust, British Canoeing; and a wide range of local community groups. We co-hosted a parliamentary event with Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, to launch the Charter.
- Launched a petition - Rescue our Rivers - in May 2023 calling for the support of our Charter. Our petition received over 108,000 signatories. We presented the petition to No 10 Downing Street and to the headquarters of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.
- Developed a Local Charter for Rivers and accompanying resources pack for dissemination to voters ahead of the 2024 local and mayoral election. This was launched in partnership with the WI, Rivers Trust and other Charter signatories, achieving over 200 downloads.
- Took the Environment Agency and DEFRA to court for failing to enforce the Farming Rules for Water and protect the River Wye in February 2024. Whilst the claim was dismissed by the Judge, the judgement resulted in a number of wins for River Action, including the Judge's recognition that our campaign and legal action resulted in Defra changing it's guidance on law enforcement, an acknowledgement of the severe levels of pollution caused by excessive phosphorus entering the river, and the recognition that farming practices must change, and the Judge's rebuttal of the NFU's intervention in the case. The media coverage reached millions of people, and a crowdfunder raised nearly £47,000. We are appealing the judgement on a number of grounds. Submitted three complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority accusing Red Tractor's advertising and other publicity materials of falsely representing environmental performance.
- Actively worked with the Wye community and Leigh Day Solicitors, connecting them together with the thousands of people and businesses that have suffered with loss of income by the pollution in the River Wye. This is a group legal action being taken by Leigh Day (we are a supporting role) against Avara, the main poultry producer along the Wye, using statutory nuisance law.
- Hosted and presented on panels at the centre of a wide variety of river-related events including the UK River Summit and Festival 2024 - in which we declared and discussed the Freshwater Emergency with senior politicians, industry leaders, media and environmentalists including CEOs of a water company, regulator and Feargal Sharkey - and speaking at 'Getting what you pay for', at the RSA in February 2024, and gave a speech at The national Church in Wales AGM.
- Co-hosted a 'Rivers Event' in London to discuss mitigating the huge problem of river pollution caused by intensive agricultural

	<p>practices that was attended by 130 attendees including NGOs, influencers and the press, a group of waste to resource technology providers - to promote nutrient trading - and the now Minister for Agriculture and Chair of the Environment Agency.</p> <p>- Increased our online presence and following through producing high quality and inspiring content. Significantly grew our media coverage and reach. Latest figures show that between Jan 1 and March 31 2024 we generated 3,287 media stories. Our share of voice, in comparison to other environmental campaigners, was 42%.</p>
What portion of the project did TFN fund?	2%
How many direct beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	We directly supported 15 different community groups, and over 100 individual activists
How many indirect beneficiaries did the TFN funded project reach?	The whole UK population benefits from our work to rescue Britain's rivers
Were you able to leverage further funding as a result of TFN support?	Yes
If yes, how much were you able to raise and from whom?	£40,000 multiyear grant from an anonymous donor
Did you receive any pro-bono support, volunteer offers or introductions as a result of the event?	No
If yes, please can you provide details of the support you received?	
How important was TFN funding in helping you achieve your objectives?	We wouldn't have been able to achieve our objectives without TFN funding
Has the training you received from TFN better prepared you in pitching your organisation to potential funders?	Yes
Has TFN increased your capacity to raise further funds?	Yes
Can you tell us any personal stories to highlight the value of the project?	<p>The foundation of our work at River Action is to empower local communities to rescue their local rivers. Here are two personal stories from community members that highlight the value of River Action's support to them and the Rivers Wye and Thames.</p> <p>Dave Wallace is a citizen scientist on the River Thames, River Action supported him with equipment and training which led to a thriving community of river testers holding polluters to account. He says "It has been incredible to be part of this journey; although it feels like we have only managed to tackle the snowflake on top of a giant iceberg, doing something is proving to be so much better than doing nothing. There is so much more to be done. We have been and continue to be supported by River Action. It is incredible to be part of a wide community of like-minded people who really care about what is happening to our rivers. Our rivers need a voice. They need you!"</p>

	<p>Nicola Cutcher is part of the pioneering community group Friends of the River Wye. They started as a group of concerned local people, and with River Action's support are now a registered charity successfully campaigning for the health of their river. Nicola says "I've met so many amazing and inspiring people and made great friends. As a collective, we can't tolerate living alongside a river in decline We're determined to restore the Wye so it can teem with life once more".</p>
<p>Since presenting at TFN, has your organisation undergone any other significant changes?</p>	<p>Since we presented at TFN Live Event in March 2023 have grown our team to 11 committed river campaigners, bringing with them a range of experience and skills in campaigning, communications, and media – this has correspondingly increased our impact, whilst also ensuring we remain agile and responsive.</p>
<p>Do you have any other comments or feedback on the experience of the TFN process?</p>	<p>The experience of presenting our work at a live event to potential funders was fantastic, we were able to respond to questions in real time encouraging discussion and collaborations across lots of partners in support of our mission. Thank you for the opportunity to present at a TFN live event!</p>