



KEYSTONE'S EAST AFRICAN  
**Grantee Feedback Report 2009**

**FOUNDATION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**



# Introduction

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This report presents a summary of what 174 grant recipients (out of a total of 305 surveyed) of the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) say about their experience of FCS as a grantmaker.

In 2008, a group of eight East African grantmakers contracted Keystone to conduct a comparative survey of all their current grantees. The same survey instrument was simultaneously administered to the grantees of seven other East African grantmakers.

This report presents the responses of the FCS grantees alongside the responses of the grantees of the other grantmakers in the group. FCS is thus able to compare the feedback it received from its grantees with how all the grantmakers were rated by their grantees. This makes it easier to identify areas of relatively strong and weak performance, and pinpoint potential areas for improvement for each individual grantmaker and across the entire field of grantmaking in East Africa.

Grantee responses are grouped into six separate sections, each describing a key area of grant-making practice:

- Nature of funding
- Application process
- Monitoring, reporting and evaluation
- Relationship during the grant period
- Non-financial support
- Grantmaker's knowledge and influence

## CHARTS AND QUARTILES

We have used a variety of charts to present the findings of the survey. Some are simple bar graphs that do not need much explanation. Sometimes we show the performance of the whole group of grantmakers alongside FCS's performance by grouping the scores into quartiles.

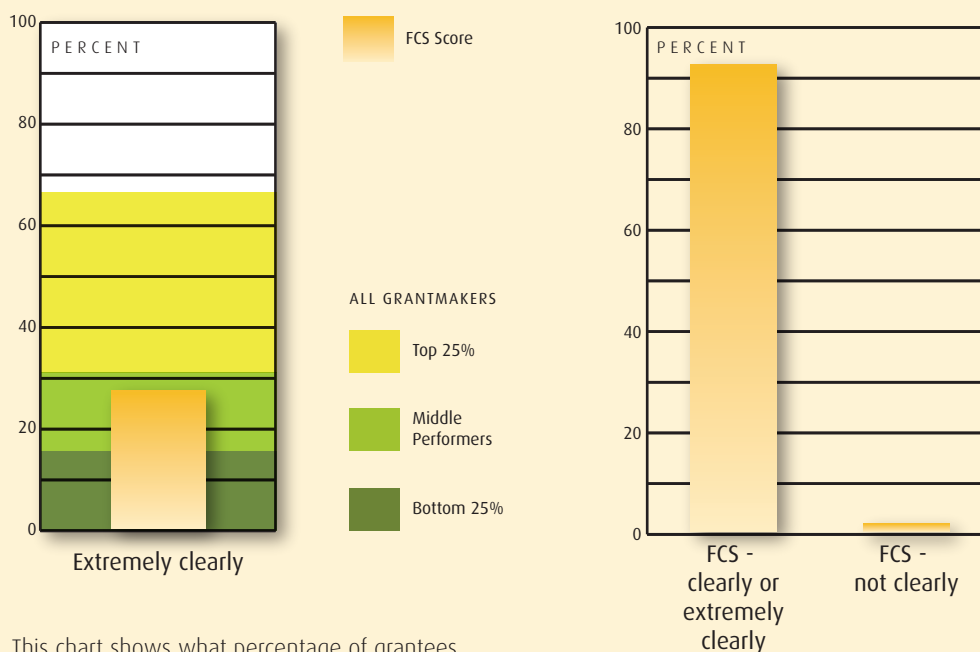
A quartile is a sub-group of 25% (or a quarter) of the whole group of grantmakers.

In these charts, a shaded background shows the performance of all grantmakers using quartiles. The top quartile shows the performance of the highest-rated 25% of grantmakers. It is shaded yellow. The lowest-rated 25% of grantmakers fall in the bottom quartile, which is shaded dark green. The middle performing group includes two quartiles, or 50% of the whole group. It is shaded light green.

When you compare FCS's score to the shaded area, you will be able to see whether you are among the top 25% of performers, the middle 50% of performers, or the lowest 25% of performers of the whole group.

Quartiles are particularly well suited for comparing this type of perceptual data which is often subjective and not precisely accurate. Understanding which quartile we sit in gives us a reasonably accurate basis for comparing our performance against that of other grantmakers. Quartiles also help to reduce distortions that can be caused by single data points that are very different from the rest of the group.

## AN EXAMPLE OF USING QUARTILES



This chart shows what percentage of grantees rate FCS as excellent or competent in a specific area of performance (the yellow column) against a shaded background that shows the equivalent competency rating for all grantmakers grouped into quartiles.

This chart shows the percentage of grantees that rate FCS's explanation as 'clear and extremely clear' (92%) and 'not clear' (only 2%).

In this chart, the top quartile of grantmakers is made up of those who were rated 'extremely clear' by between 32% and 67% of their grantees. These are the highest performing grantmakers in the group. However, in this area, even the top performers can clearly improve further.

The next 50% of grantmakers were rated as 'extremely clear' by between 17% and 31% of their grantees. These are the mid-level performers across the whole group of grantmakers.

The grantmakers in the bottom quartile were rated as 'extremely clear' by only 16% or fewer of their grantees. These are the lowest performing grantmakers. They have a long way to go.

So, you can see that FCS's score of 27% of grantees who find its explanations extremely clear places it within the middle performers of the group of 10 grantmakers. FCS might respond to this feedback by asking grantees what they found not so clear and seek to improve on it. But they would also know from looking at the right hand chart that they are performing quite well as over 90% of grantees think that their explanations are generally clear.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this survey, data was collected through an anonymous questionnaire, independently administered by Keystone with help from Allavida (a Kenyan civil society organisation based in Nairobi) from September to December 2008.

Every grantmaker was asked to supply the names and contact details of all of their current grantees. English versions of the questionnaire were sent by email, post or by hand to grantees that grantmakers indicated were proficient in English, and a Kiswahili translation was sent to the others.

The survey questionnaire was designed by Keystone building on the model of the highly regarded Grantee Perception Reports of the Centre for Effective Philanthropy (CEP). The questionnaire was further refined in consultation with participating grantmakers, and drawing on Keystone's own extensive experience in the field.

A total of 602 questionnaires were sent out and 304 returned. This gives an overall response rate of 51%. Grantees were scattered all over East Africa from urban centres to remote rural villages. For FCS, questionnaires were sent to 305 grantees, and 174 were returned giving a response rate of 59% - the highest of all the Grantmakers.

Completed questionnaires were processed by a South African social research firm, Outsourced Insight. This included translating responses from Kiswahili to English, capturing the responses, coding open-ended responses, cleaning data, and statistical analysis.

Keystone gratefully acknowledges the inspiration and assistance of the Centre for Effective Philanthropy ([www.effectivephilanthropy.org](http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org)) in the design of this pilot survey, and the Ford Foundation's East Africa Office for funding this pilot.

## **PARTICIPATING GRANTMAKERS**

The participating grantmakers included representatives from three important segments of East African grantmaking:

### **Trusts and 'Community Grantmakers'**

- Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF)
- Urgent Action Fund – Africa
- Kilimo Trust (Uganda)
- Social Action Trust Fund (SATF – Tanzania)
- Foundation for Civil Society (FCS – Tanzania)

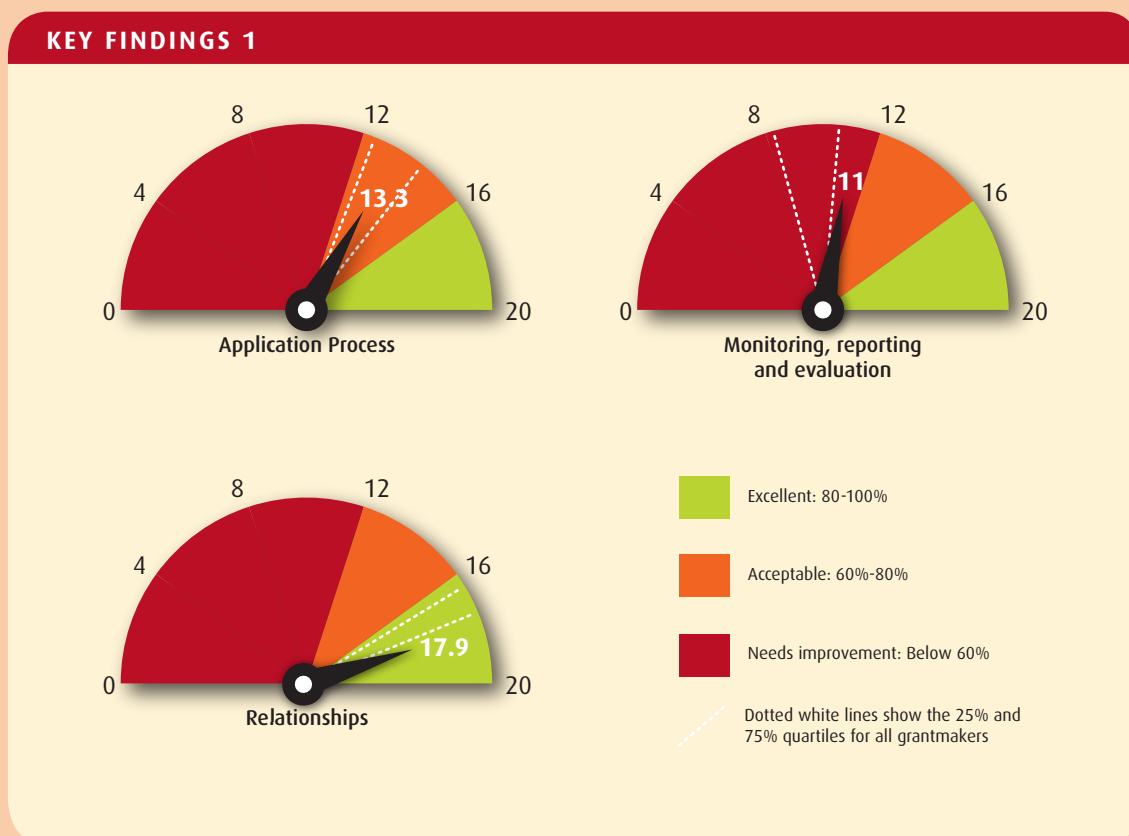
### **International Foundations**

- Ford Foundation, East Africa
- The Aga Khan Foundation, East Africa

### **Corporate Foundations**

- KCB Foundation (Kenya Commercial Bank)

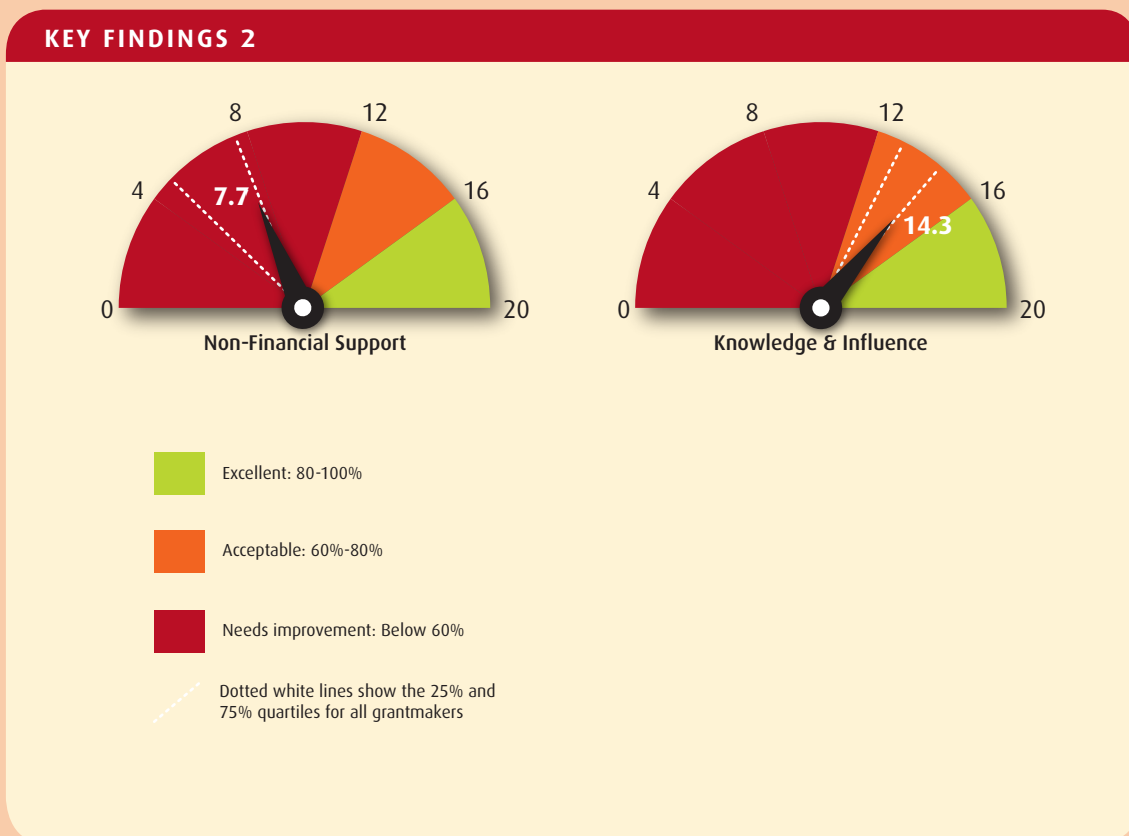
# Key findings



**This dashboard shows grantees' satisfaction ratings for five key areas of grantmaker performance. Each one converts responses to several specific questions into a single rating, between 0 and 20.**

- FCS's grantees were reasonably satisfied with FCS's application processes, rating it 13.3 out of 20. This score places FCS 5th out of the whole group of grantmakers. Nevertheless, grantees clearly feel that some improvements could be made.
- FCS's grantees rate FCS's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes at 11 out of 20, above the 9.2 average for grantmakers in the group. Although this is positive relative to other grantmakers, M&E remains one of the areas in which grantees are least satisfied across all grantmakers.
- Grantees rated FCS at 17.9 out of 20 for relationships. This is the highest of the eight grant makers in the group, suggesting a high level of confidence and trust, and that FCS is communicating well with its grantees.

# Key findings



- FCS’s grantees rated it 7.7 out of 20 for non-financial support (e.g. capacity building or advice). FCS came second out of the eight (average 5.8), although it should be noted that all grantmakers struggle in this area and need to engage with grantees to rethink their approaches.
- FCS grantees are reasonably satisfied with FCS’s knowledge of the contexts and fields in which they work. They rate FCS at 14.3 out of 20. This is the third highest rating (13.5 average).



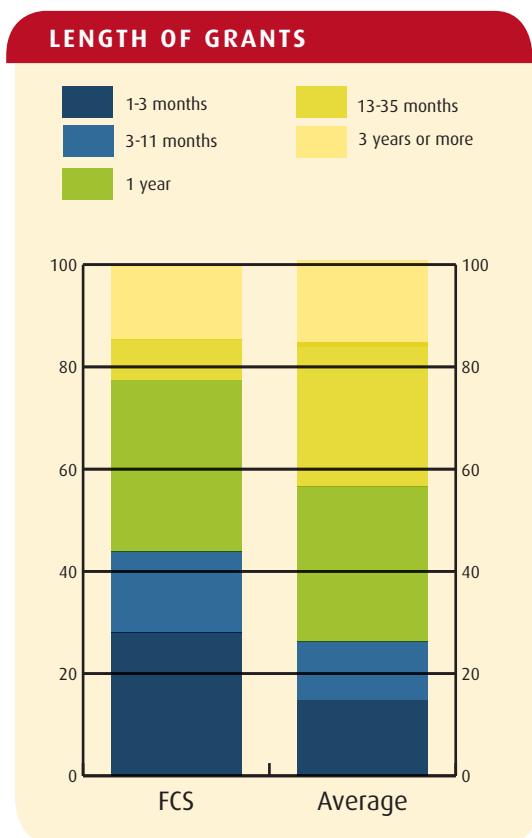
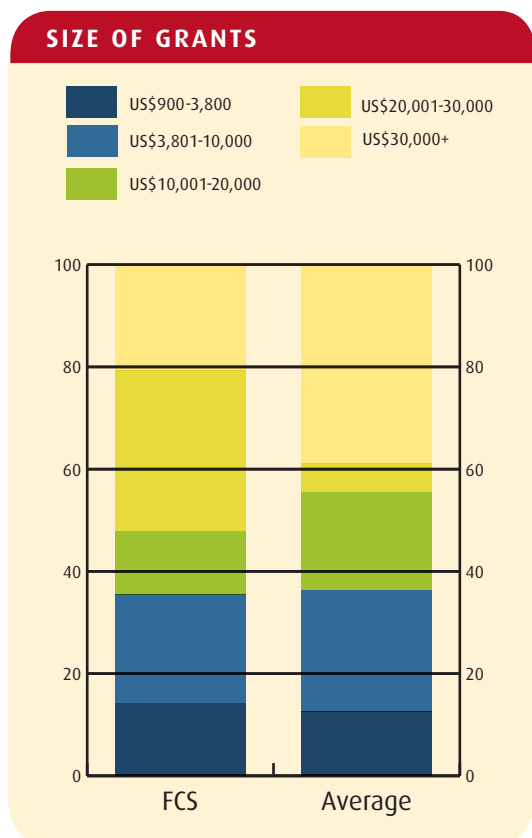


# Section 1

## Nature of funding

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# Nature of funding



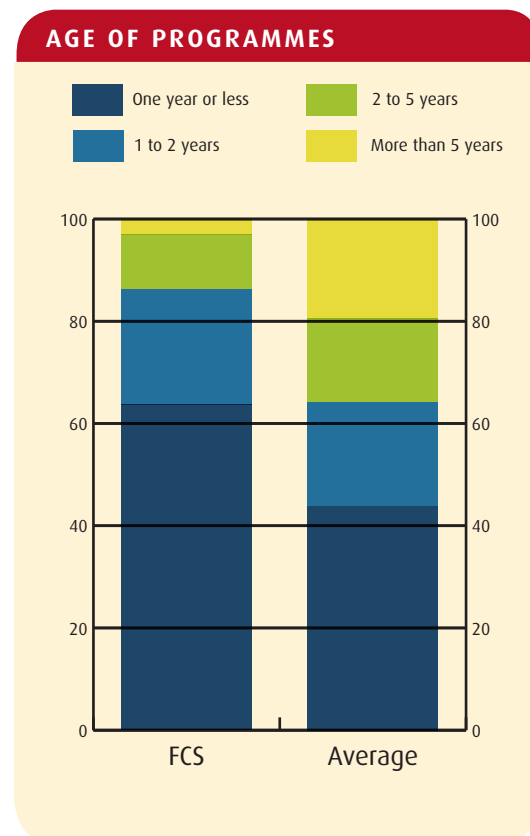
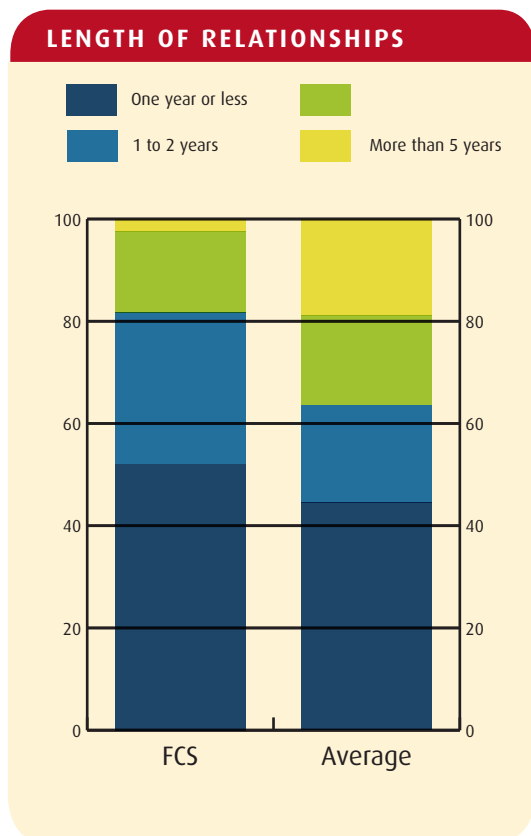
## SIZE OF GRANTS

- According to grantees, about half (48%) of grants made by FCS are of US\$20,000 or less.
- The average size of grants from FCS was US\$33,453, the fifth highest of the eight grant makers surveyed.

## LENGTH OF GRANTS

- More than three-quarters (77%) of FCS's grants are for one year or less. This is much higher than the average of 56% across all grantmakers.
- Conversely, only 23% of FCS's grants are for in excess of one year, somewhat lower than the average of 44%.

# Nature of funding



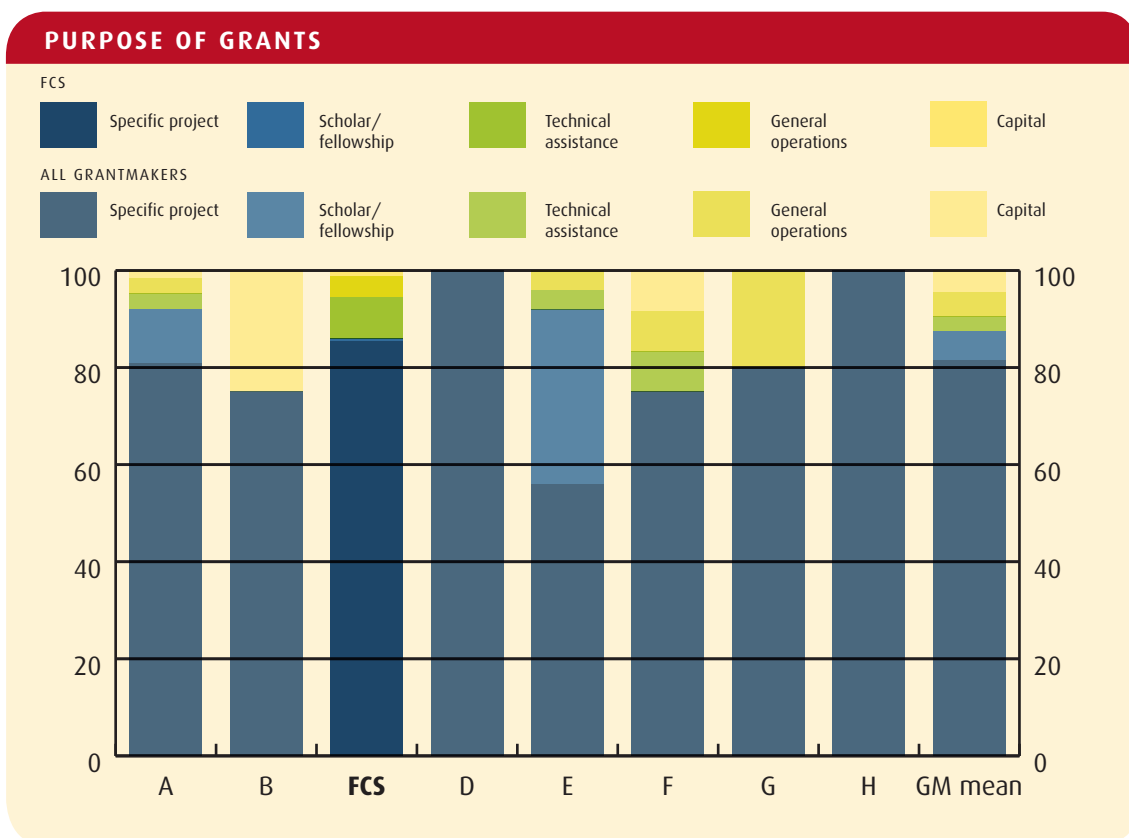
## LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP

- Forty-eight percent of FCS's grantees have received funds from FCS for more than a year; this is somewhat less than the 55% of all grantmakers in the survey.
- The other 52% of FCS's grantees have received funding for one year or less, as against a 45% average for all grantmakers.
- FCS appears to favour short-term relationships more than other grantmakers, which might create problems of sustainability for grantees.

## AGE OF PROGRAMMES

- Just over a third (37%) of the actual projects that FCS funds have been running for more than one year. This is far less than the average of 56% for all 8 grantmakers.

# Nature of funding



Note: this chart shows the single major purpose for each grant. It does not show a breakdown of purposes within grants.

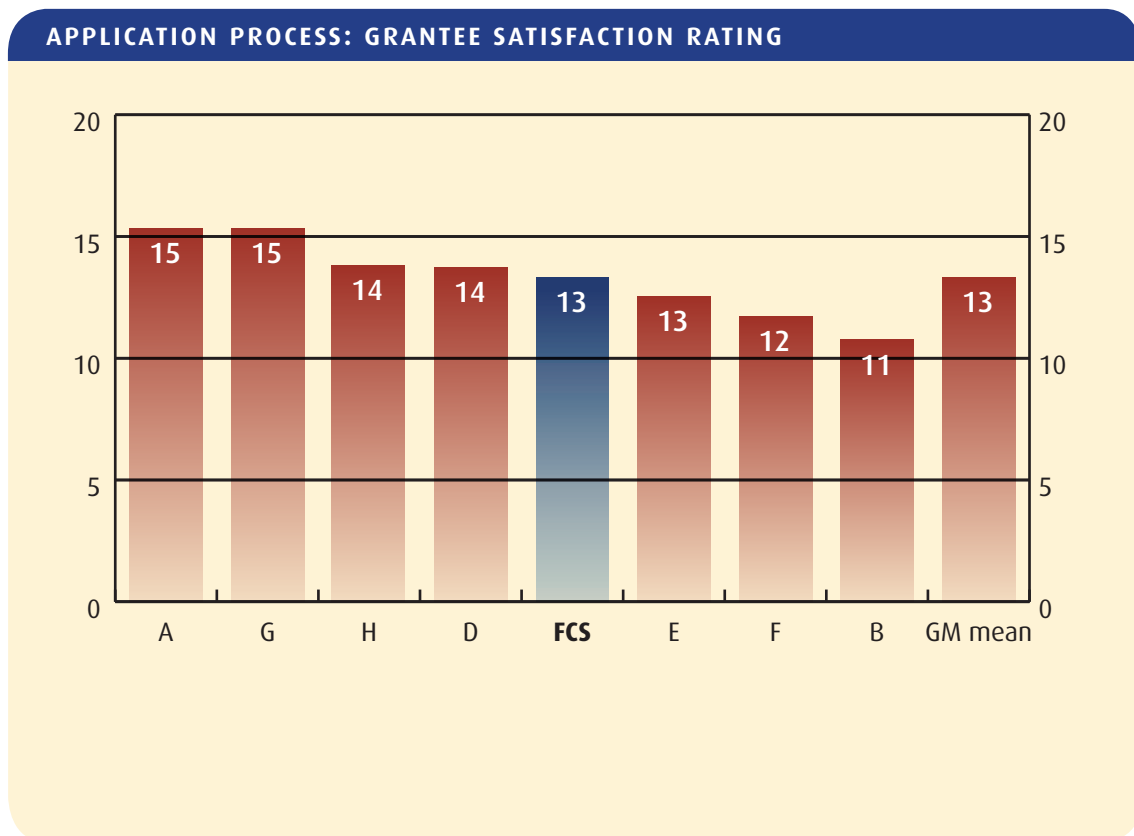
- Most (85%) of FCS’s grantees received grants whose main purpose was for specific projects or programmes (grantmaker mean 82%).
- Smaller proportions of FCS’s grants were for technical assistance (8%) or general operations (4%).

## Section 2

### Application process

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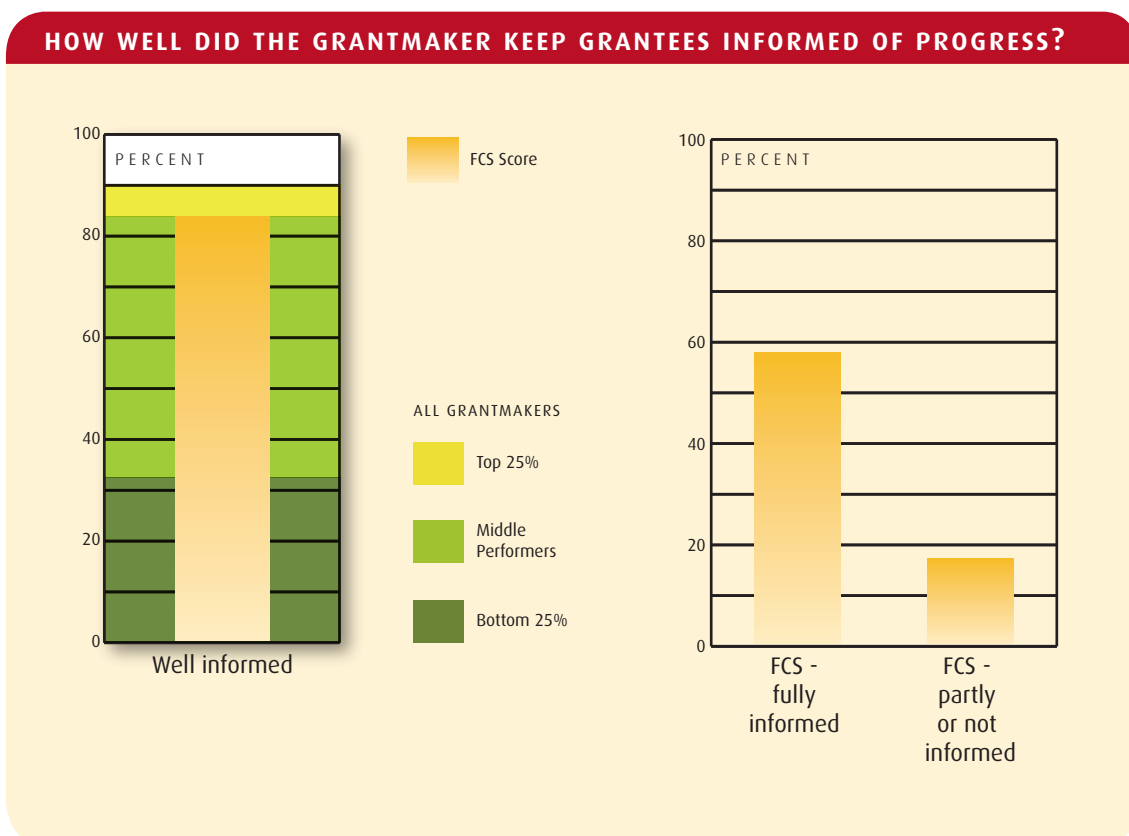
# Application process



- Grantee satisfaction with FCS’s application process is reflected as 13.3 out of 20. This is fifth among the group and equal to the mean.
- Commenting on the process, almost half (48%) of the grantees referred to the amount of time taken to apply and receive approval. Typical comments were: “we would suggest that the time between the commitment and the actual cash disbursement be reduced so as to give enough time for the organisations to implement their annual plans”; or “although the guidelines helped but the information required is massive”; “funds disbursement sometimes is not done in time, therefore it affects implementation of the activities in time”.
- Nevertheless, 18% made positive comments such as that their capacity had been built, that the process went well or that they had learnt how to write good proposals.

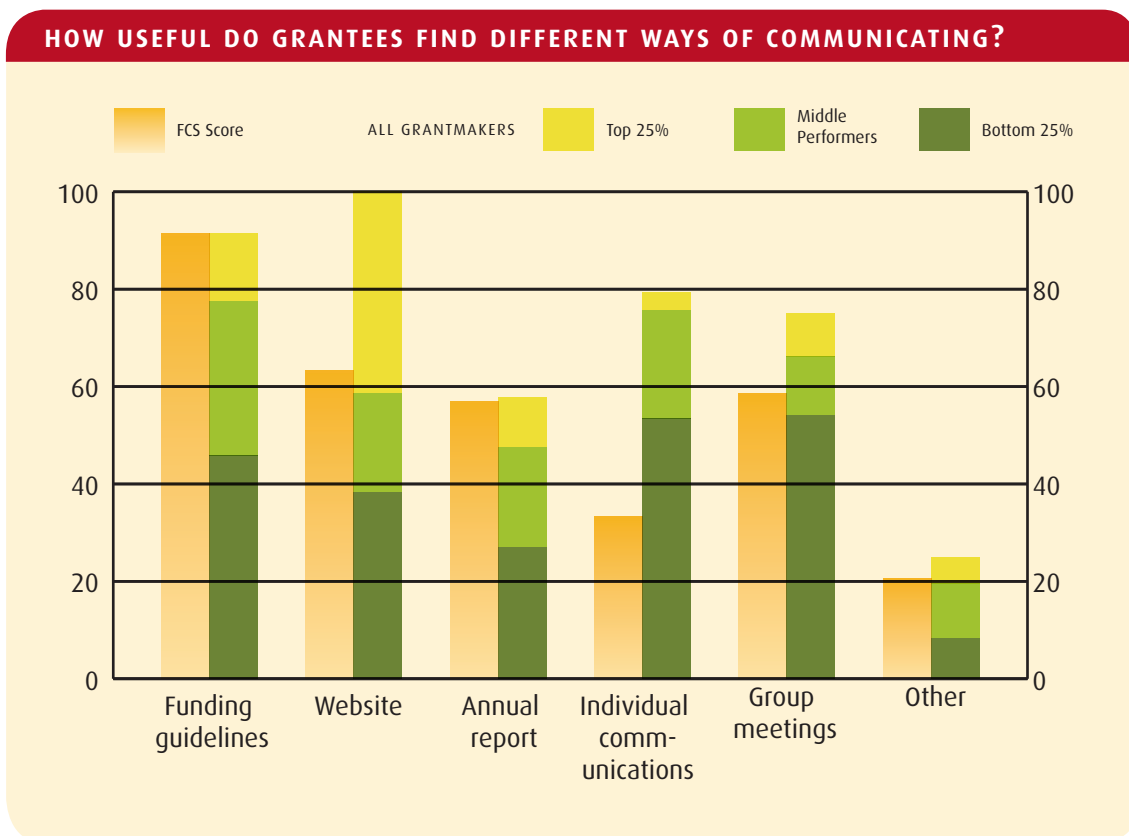
Note: This report only shows feedback from successful applicants. It does not include organisations which applied to FCS for funding but did not get it.

# Application process



- More than four-fifths (83%) of FCS’s grantees said they were kept well informed of progress during the application and approval process. This is much better than the 61% average for all 8 surveyed grantmakers.
- Of these, 57% of FCS’s grantees said they were kept ‘fully’ informed.
- Conversely, and what should concern FCS is that a further 17% said they were ‘partly’ or ‘not’ informed.
- Seven percent of grantees requested that communication during the process should be improved. Some comments called for greater “**transparency and honesty in exchanging of information**”; and “**we submitted our application in October 2007 but there was no acknowledgement until in March 2008 when we learnt from the website that our request has been approved, I think this system need to be revised**”.

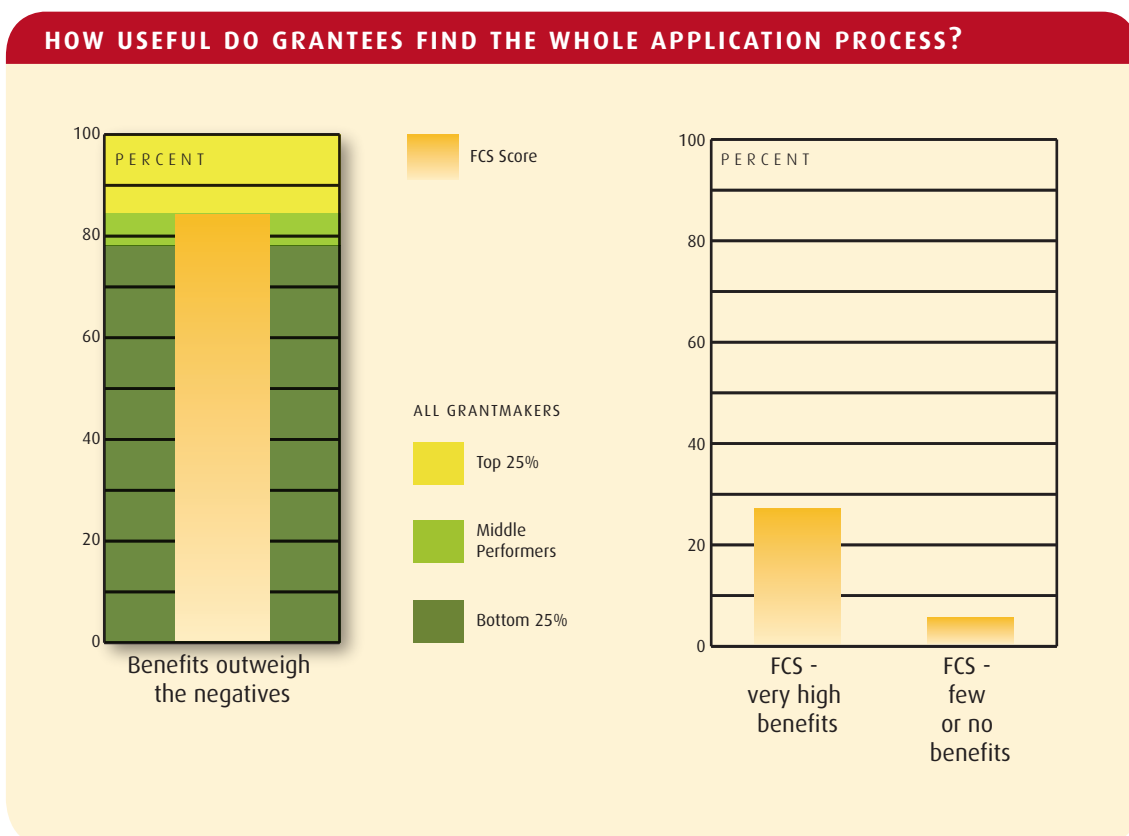
# Application process



- Almost all (91%) of FCS’s grantees rated FCS’s funding guidelines as ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful. This places FCS first out of the eight grantmakers.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) said that FCS’s website was ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful, second best of the eight grantmakers.
- Almost three-fifths felt the same about FCS’s group meetings (59%) and a further 57%, about FCS’s annual report.
- In contrast, only one-third or less thought that FCS’s individual communications (33%) or other means of communication (21%) during the application and approval process were ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful.
- Information provided by FCS communication resources is seen as ‘mostly clear and consistent’ by 62%. This compares favourably with the averages of 32% and 43% respectively, for all the surveyed grantees.
- Only 2% of grantees said that they did not make use of any of these resources.

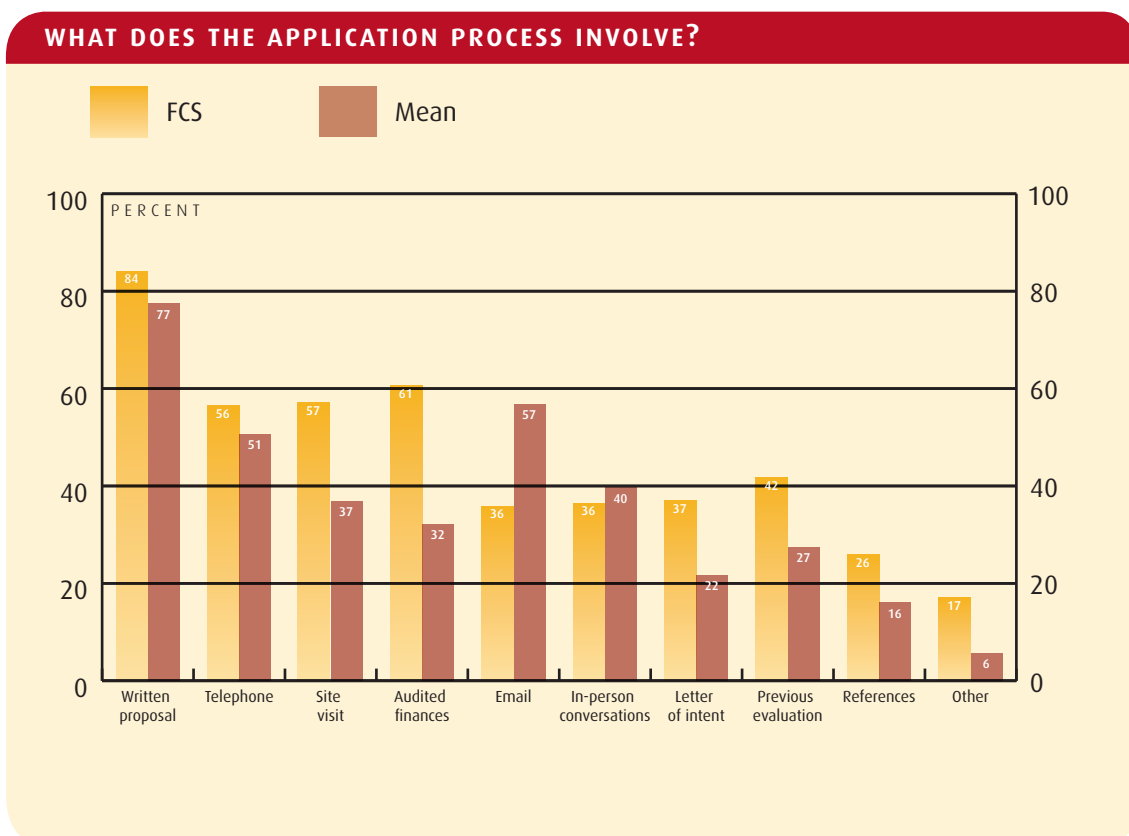


# Application process



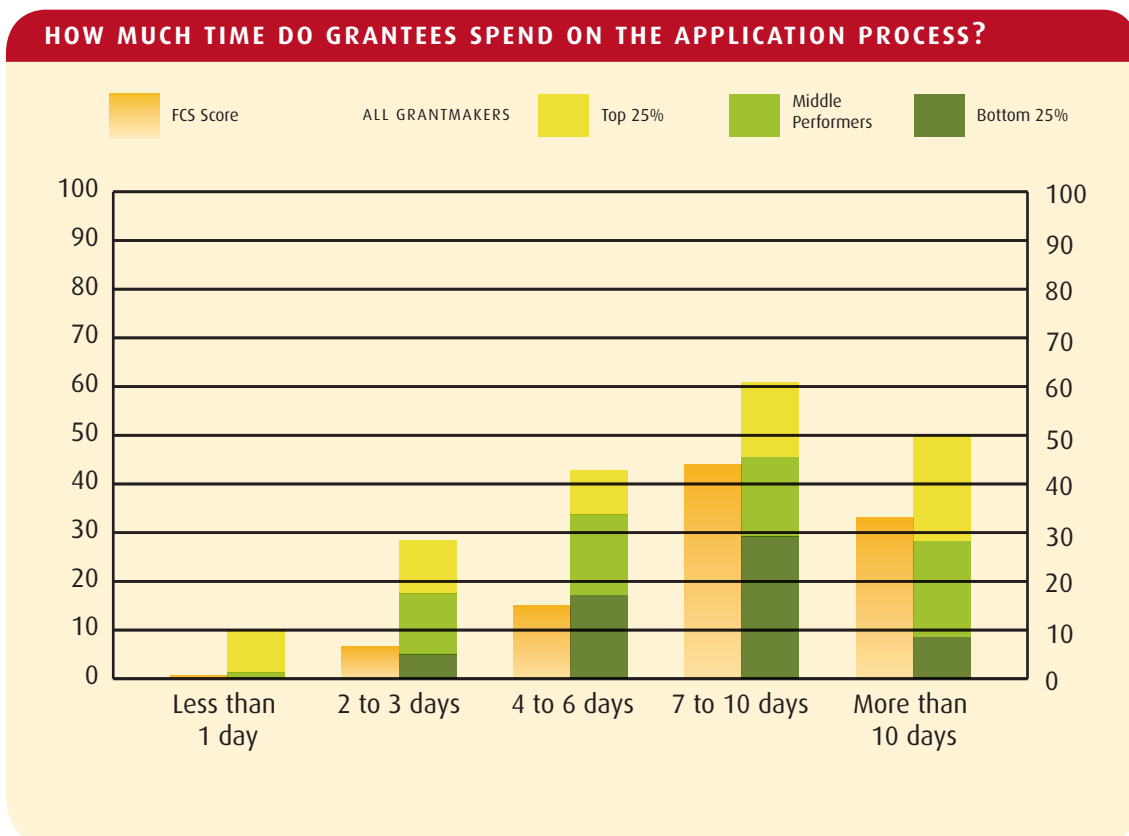
- Eighty-four percent of FCS’s grantees felt that the benefits of participating in FCS’s application process outweighed the negatives. This rating places FCS fourth of the group of 8 grantmakers.
- Of these, 27% of grantees said that the benefits ‘significantly’ outweighed the negatives.
- Nine percent of grantees commented that their capacity had been built or that they had learnt how to write proposals. Examples of such comments were: “generally the application and approval process helped the organisation to improve organisation capacity in all areas including management and financial”; “it helped us learn how grants are applied and gave us opportunity to have direct contact with grant officials”; and “the grant application and approval process by the Foundation for Civil Society was quite ideal, highly contributing to promote our organisation capacity building and it ensures that (a) the targeted beneficiaries are existing and surely reached by the project, and not otherwise; (b) there is proper allocation of project resources; and (c) the project bears the anticipated results”.

# Application process



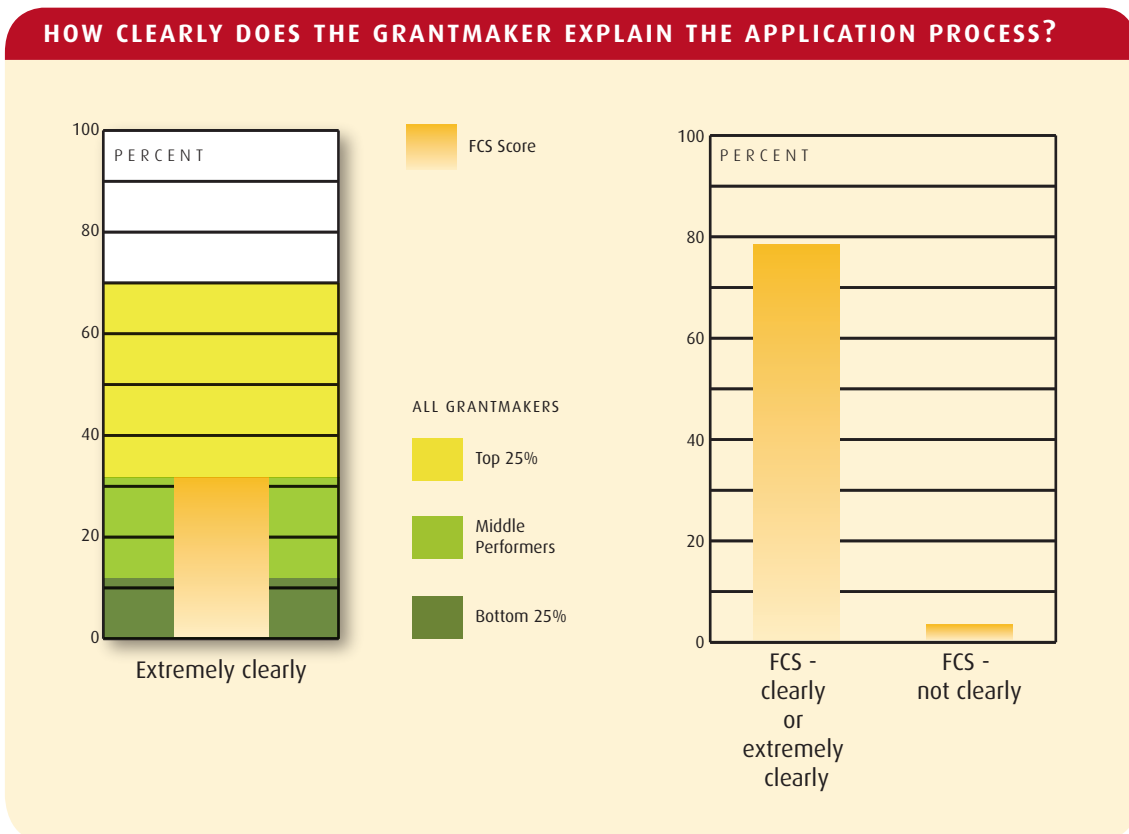
- FCS requires more effort than average from grantees compared to other grantmakers in the survey. Yet most grantees appear to appreciate this degree of rigour in the due diligence process.
- The majority (84%) submitted written proposals, and more than half submitted audited financials (61%) and/or received site visits (57%) and/or had telephone conversations with FCS. In all of these instances, the proportions were well above the averages for all eight grantmakers.
- Slightly smaller proportions submitted previous evaluations (42%), letters of intent (37%), had in-person conversations with FCS (36%) and/or email communication (36%).
- Conversely, only 26% of FCS's grantees were required to provide references and only 17% had to participate in other processes.
- One comment suggested "when going through the proposal we advise them (i.e. FCS) to contact the organisation before returning back the whole document".

# Application process



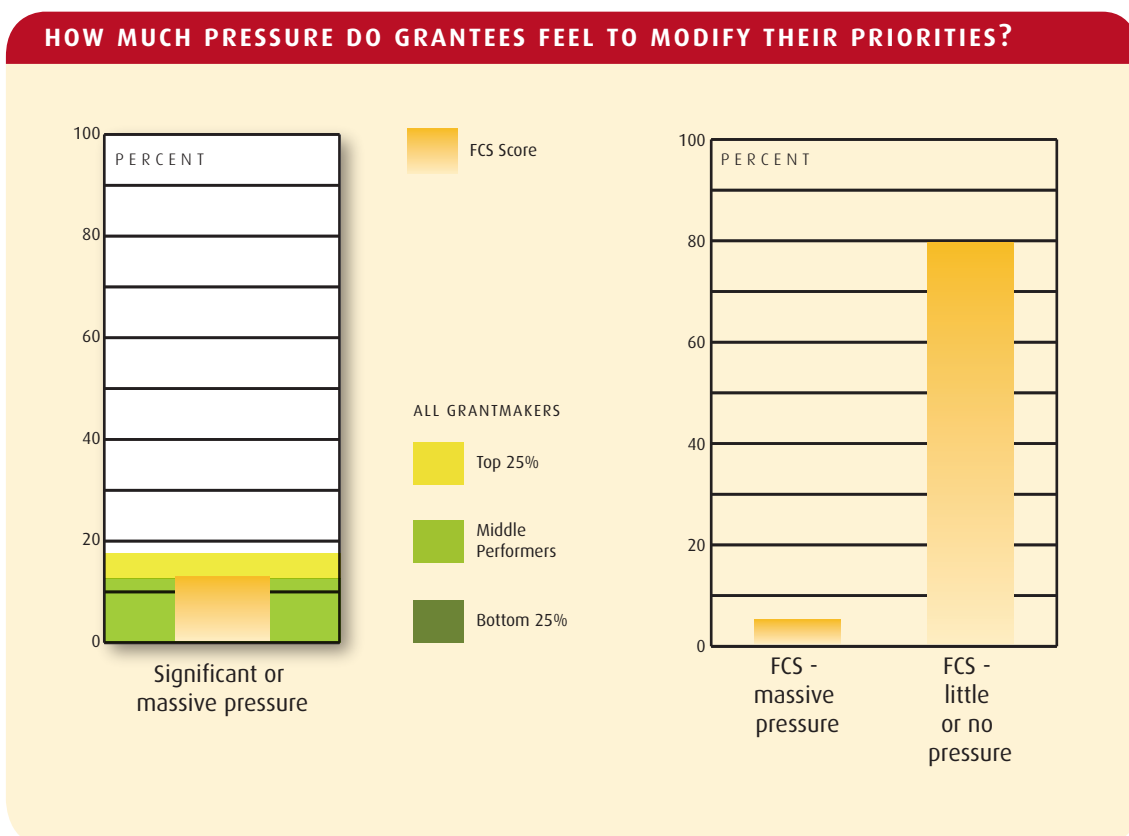
- Seventy-seven percent of FCS’s grantees spent seven days or more on FCS’s application and approval process. This is second highest of the eight grantmakers.
- Another 15% spent 4-6 days and 7% spent 2-3 days on the process.
- Almost half (48%) commented specifically on the duration of the process, especially in respect of receiving approval and actual funds.
- Some of the comments reflected this dissatisfaction such as *“the application form is too long with too much details”*

# Application process



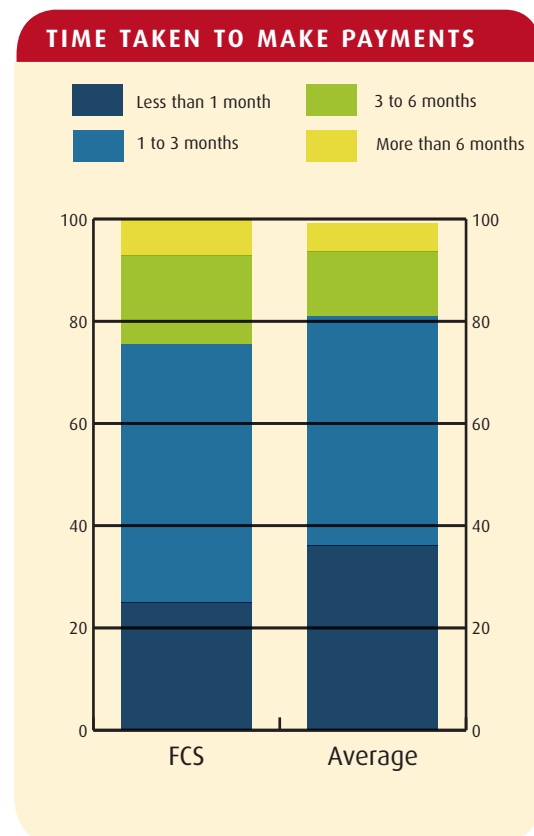
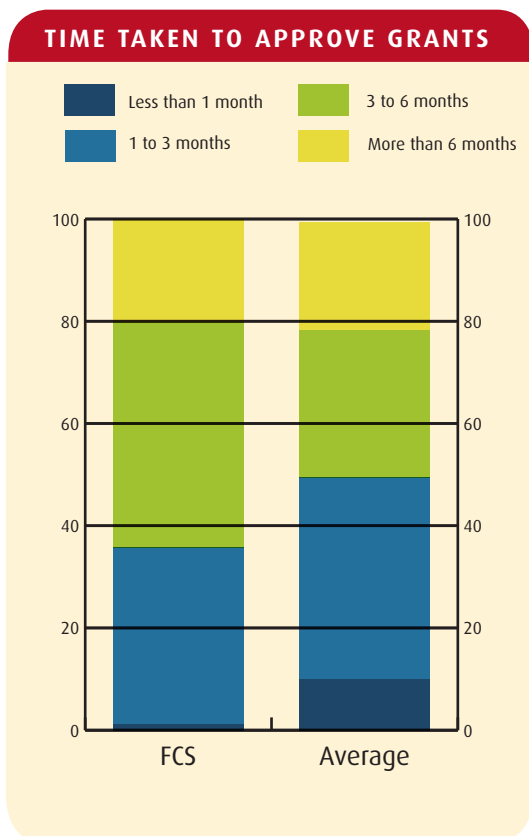
- About one-third (31%) of FCS’s grantees said that FCS explained their application process ‘extremely’ clearly. This places FCS third out of the group of 8 grantmakers.
- A further 47% of FCS’s grantees said that the application process was explained ‘clearly’.
- A few mentioned that they found the process complicated, for example “once the first application have shortbacks (sic), the applicant should be requested to correct the specific shortback, not to reapply with all application documents as at first”

# Application process



- About 13% of FCS’s grantees said that they felt ‘significant’ pressure to modify their priorities, during the application process. This is the second highest amongst the group of 8 grantmakers.
- In contrast, 79% of FCS’s grantees said that they felt little or no pressure to change their priorities.
- So, although it is not a problem for most grantees, FCS still puts more pressure on some of them to change their proposals than do other grant makers.

# Application process



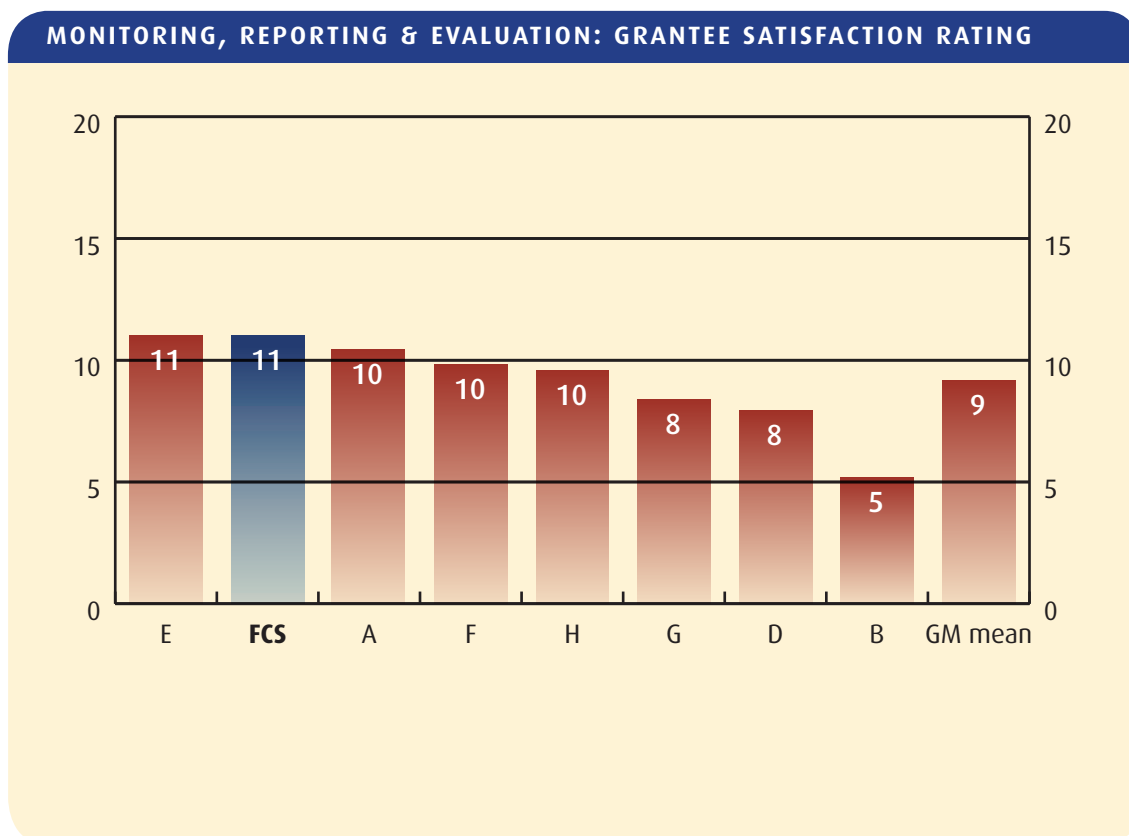
- Just over one-third (36%) of FCS’s grantees reported that FCS took 3 months or less to approve their grant. This is not as good the 49% average. Another 44% said that FCS took 3 – 6 months. This is more than the 29% average.
- One-fifth (20%) of FCS’s grantees said that they had to wait for more than 6 months, after submitting their proposal.
- Grantee comments included: “feedback and application takes longer time affecting project implementation”; “the grant application took a long time to be approved, by the time it was, prices of most of the budgeted items had already got high, therefore we get a very big difficulty in implementation”;
- 25% of FCS’s grantees received the first payment of their grant less than one month after the grant had been approved (average 36%). Another 51% received their first payment 1 – 3 months after approval. Seventeen percent had to wait for 3 – 6 months, and 7% for in excess of six months. The overall pattern is similar to the average. Typical comments were “late release of grant ... problematic affecting overhead costs not recoverable” and “they should improve on timely disbursement of funds”.

## Section 3

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

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# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

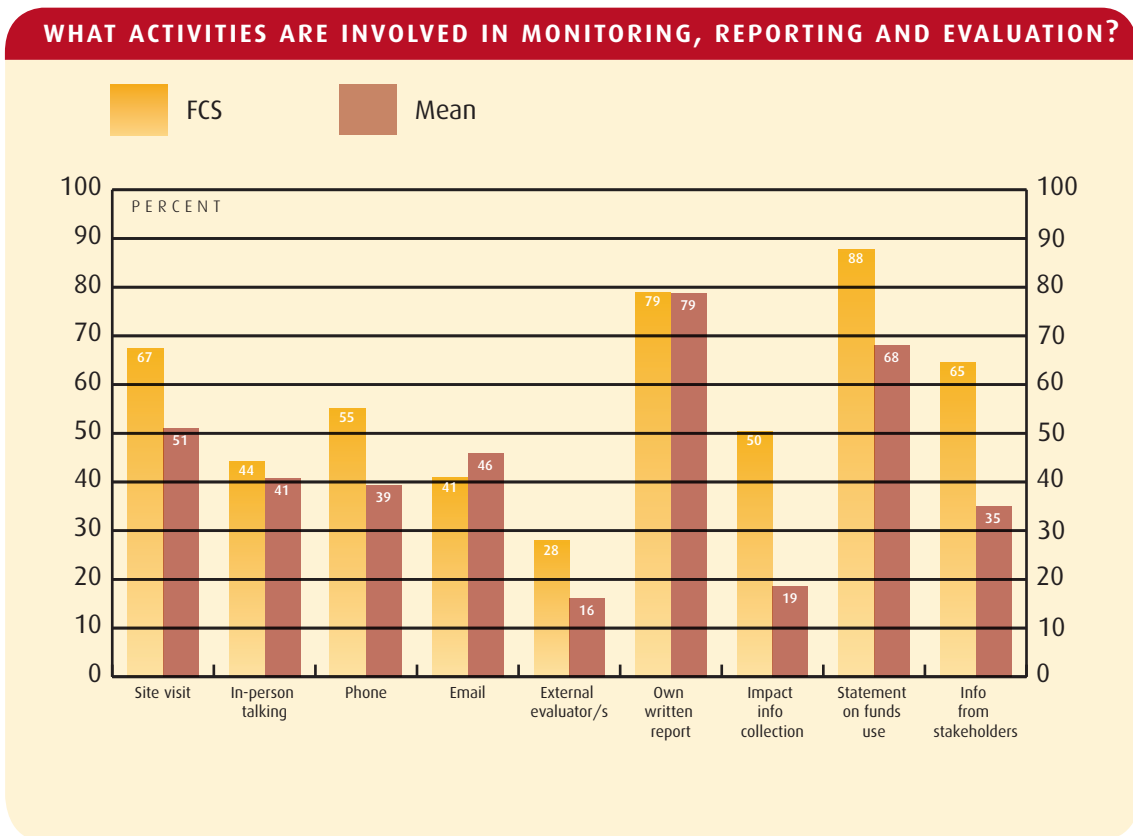


The maximum value of these eight questions was standardised to 20.

- Grantee satisfaction with FCS's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes came out at 11 out of 20 – the second highest in the group. All the grantmakers were rated low in this section.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from eight questions in the survey, about the usefulness, demands and funding for FCS's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of grantees expressed positive comments about the way monitoring, reporting and evaluation was done. These included
  - “monitoring and evaluation is effective, reporting process is very clear”; “the target group and my organisation gained lots of experience as they implemented the whole programme”; “monitoring is ok, it is fair and educative”
- 11% mentioned inadequate funding for monitoring: “the grantmaker should agree to allocate of about 25% of the total budget for monitoring and evaluation”; “no funds were allocated for internal monitoring purposes, especially travelling costs, therefore it makes difficult to go to the field where actual implementation is done”;
- Another common concern (8%) was the delay or lack of feedback: “we advise the grantmaker to give timely feedback”; “reports take a very long time to be reviewed and you get the comments very late”.

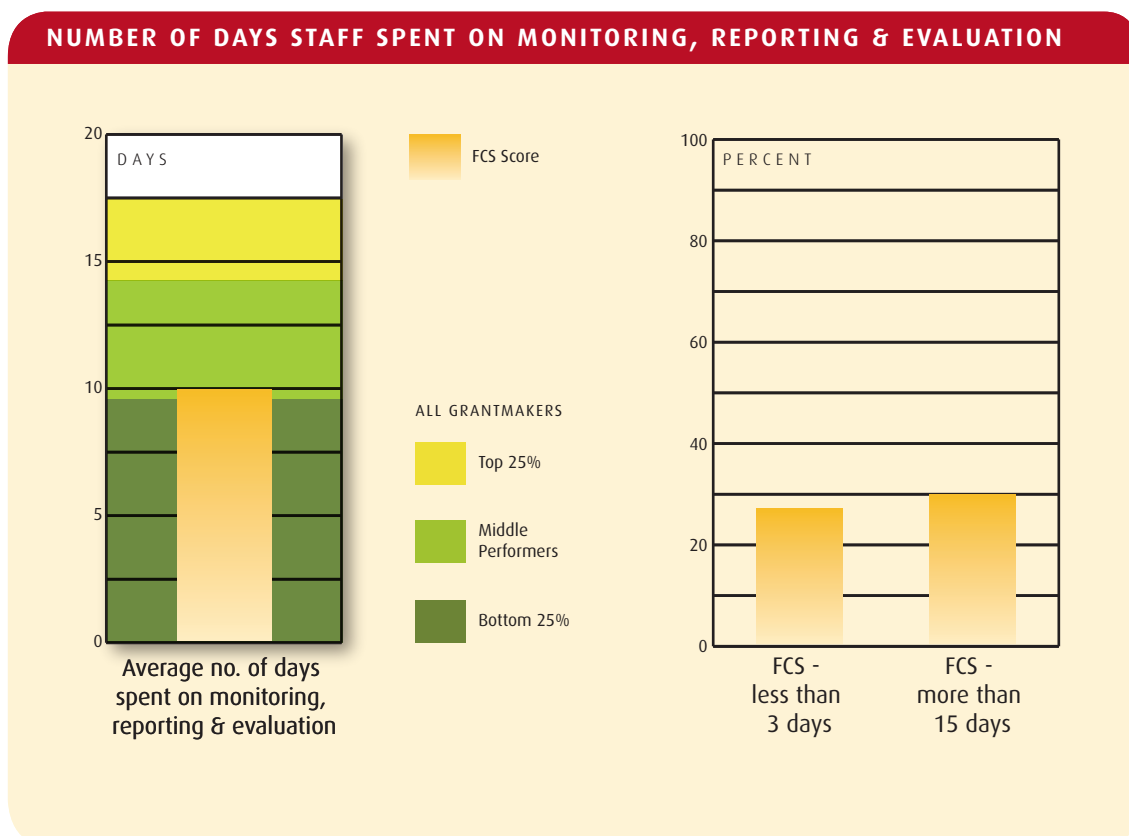


# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



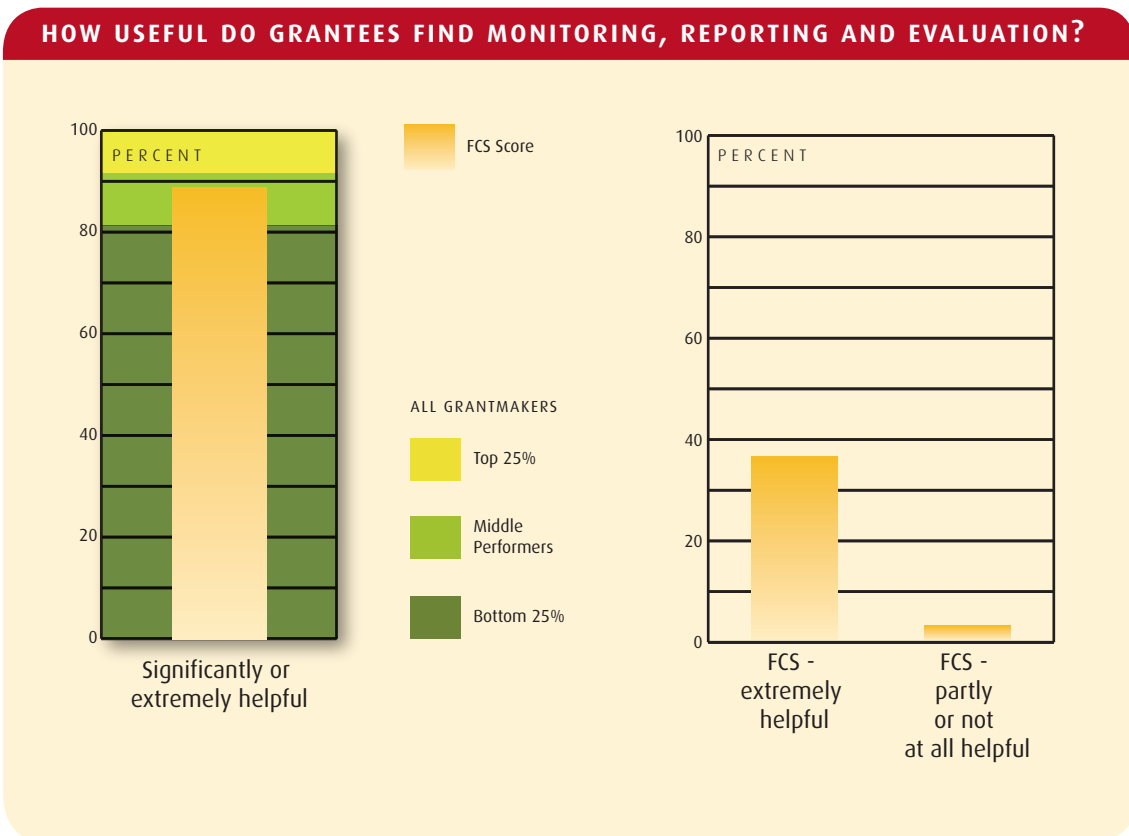
- Substantially larger proportions of FCS grantees than average were required to submit statements on the use of funds, information from stakeholders, to collect information about the impact of their projects and/or to receive site visits as part of FCS’s monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.
- FCS grantees were slightly more likely than average to have had telephone conversations; in-person conversations; and/or external evaluators than was the case with other grantees.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



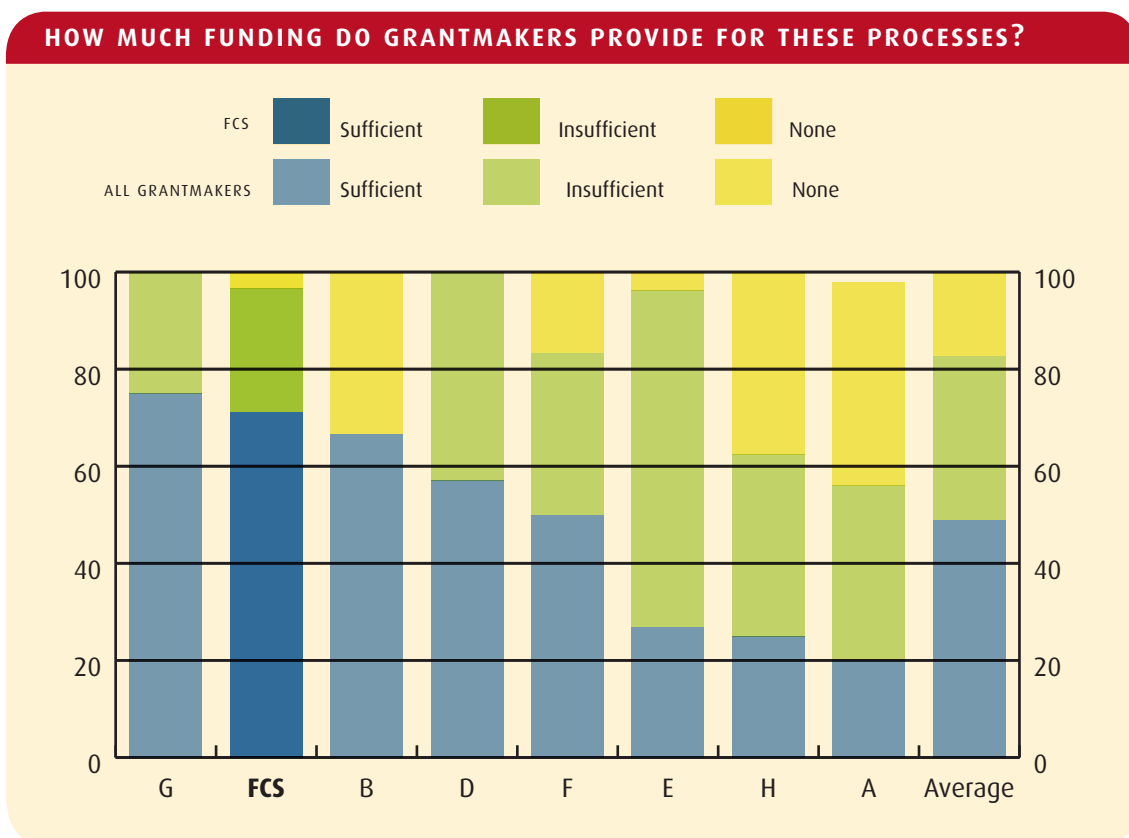
- FCS’s grantees spend an average of 9.9 days on monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities, per grant. This is the sixth of the 8 grantmakers.
- Twenty-seven percent of FCS’s grantees spend less than three days on these activities. This is also very high.
- A further 29% of grantees spend more than 15 days on them, the other 42% spend between 3 and 15 days (3% spent no time on such activities).
- Five percent made specific comments about the need for more time on these activities: “it was done randomly with limited time for us to be prepared”; “grantmaker gave us a short notice to meet with grant beneficiaries who are scattered in different corners, such short notice leads to failure of the organisation to contact all beneficiaries of the grant, sufficient time, possibly a week notice could do”; and “the grantmaker should perform monitoring and evaluation at least at the mid-term of project implementation and end-term to see impact of the project”.
- On a related measure, 74% of grantees said that FCS had discussed their reports or evaluation reports with them after submission. This was better than the mean of 63% of all grantees whose projects had been evaluated by the eight grantmakers.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



- Most (89%) of FCS’s grantees said that they found FCS’s monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes ‘significantly’ or ‘extremely’ helpful. FCS was second highest in the group of 8 grantmakers.
- Of these, 36% of FCS’s grantees found these processes ‘extremely’ helpful in deepening their own learning and improving their work.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of grantees expressed positive comments about the constructive way in which monitoring, reporting and evaluation was done; or how it had built their capacity and experience.
- On a related measure, 72% of grantees thought that the demands made by FCS on their organisations to monitor and report on their activities and performance were “just right” (average 80%). Conversely, 2% found the demands to be “a slight burden” and 19% found them “too much”. At the other extreme, seven percent felt that the demands were “too little”.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation



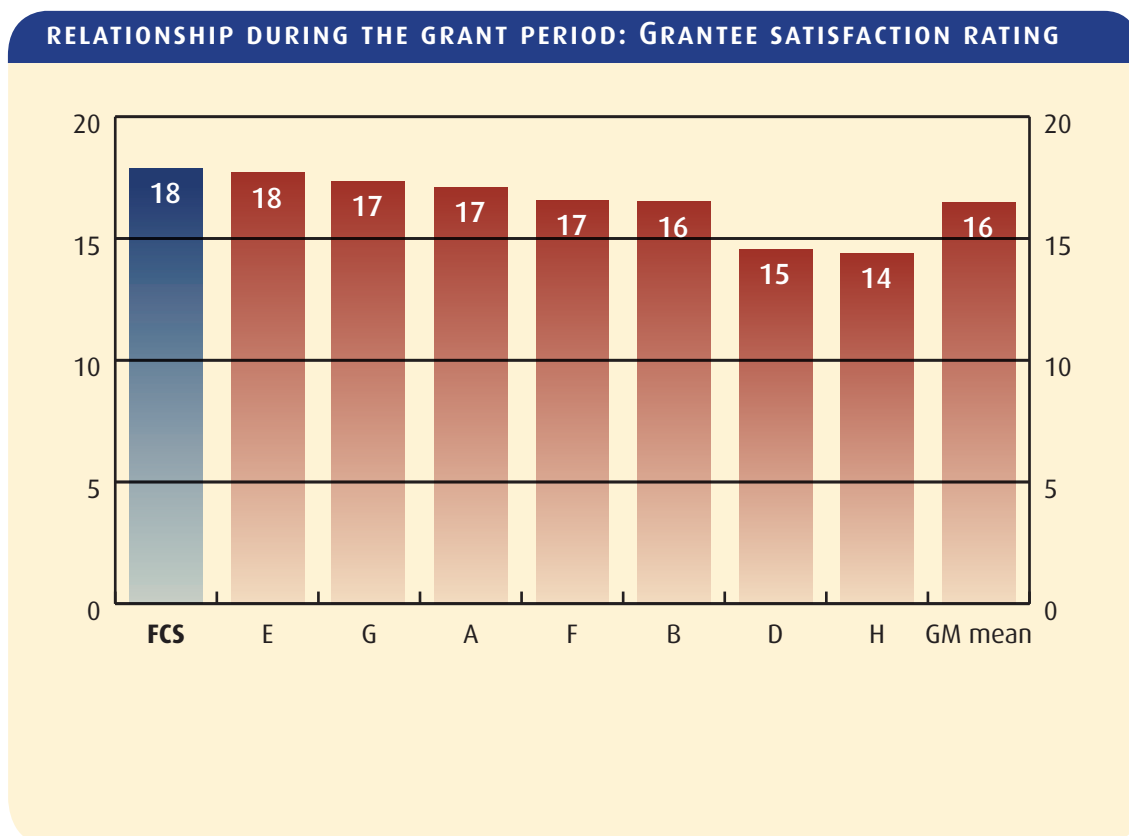
- Almost three-quarters (71%) of FCS’s grantees said that FCS provided sufficient funds for them to meet FCS’s monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes. This is the second of all eight grantmakers in the group (the average was only 49%).
- Twenty-five percent of grantees said that FCS does not provide sufficient funds for these processes and 3% said FCS provides no funds.
- When asked for general comments about the process, 11% of grantees specifically mentioned that they had not been adequately funded to be able to conduct the required monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

## Section 4

### Relationship during the grant period

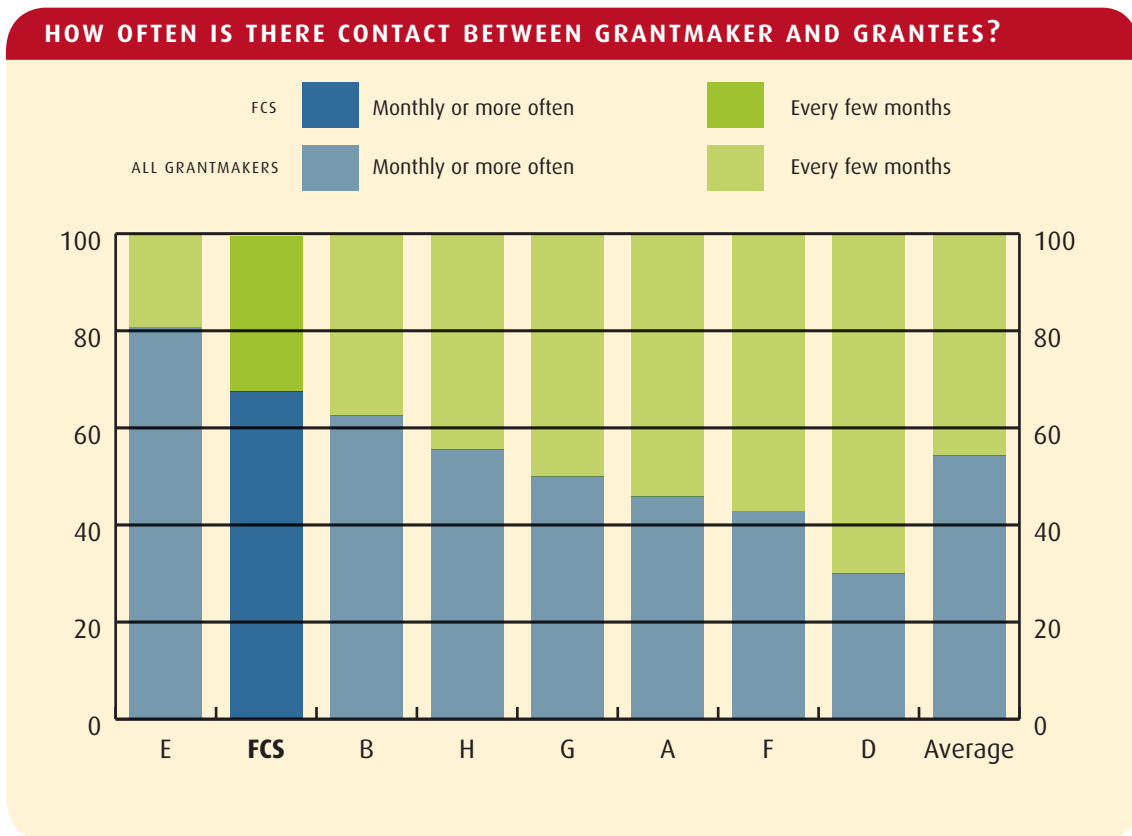
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## Relationship during the grant period



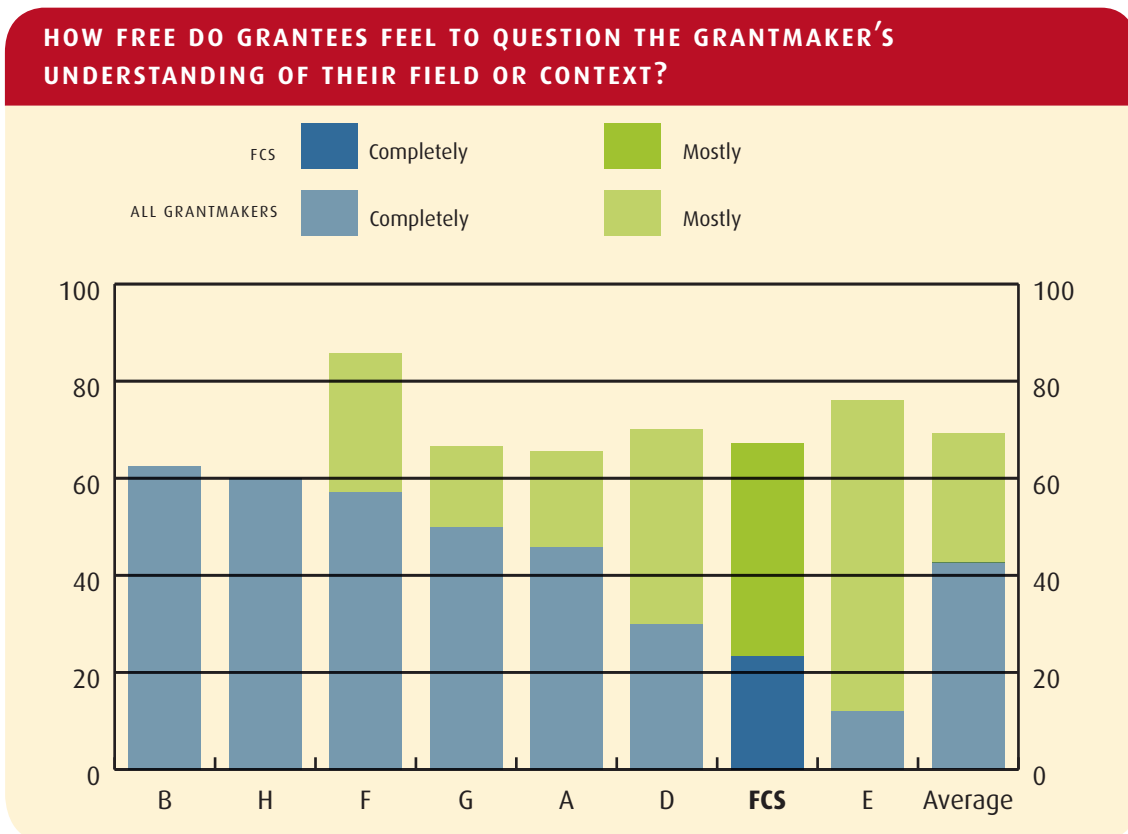
- Grantee satisfaction with their relationship with FCS is expressed as 17.9 out of 20. This rating was highest of the 8 grantmakers and well above the 16.5 mean.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from seven questions about the relationship between the grantmaker and grantees. It includes areas like communication, responsiveness and how open and honest grantees feel they are able to be. This contributes to an equitable, mutually respectful and trusting relationship in which the balance of power is addressed and learning can take place.
- Similar proportion of grantees made positive comments (34%) and negative comments (39%) about their interactions with FCS.
- On the positive side comments included: *“excellent, no problem at all”* and *“just right and appropriately handled”*.
- On the negative side, some responses were: *“response to communication should be timely”*; *“they don’t keep their promises, today you are told ‘I am working on your report’, tomorrow you are told ‘don’t contact me anymore, it’s somebody else’..”*; *“feedback on submitted reports has always been delayed”*.

# Relationship during the grant period



- 67% of FCS's grantees reported that they had contact with FCS every month, or more often, during the grant period. This places FCS second out of the group of 8 grantmakers. It is well above the average (54%) for all grantmakers.
- Most grantees were extremely or very satisfied about their experience with FCS; interestingly lower levels of satisfaction were more prevalent amongst grantees that had contact with FCS only monthly or less frequently.
- Contact with FCS was usually initiated equally by grantees and by FCS in 57% of cases (mean 79%), by grantees in 25% of cases and by FCS in 19% of cases.
- Seventy-one percent of FCS's grantees received a site visit from FCS during the course of the grant, which is higher than the average (66%). The others were either not visited (27%), or did not know whether a site visit had taken place (2%).

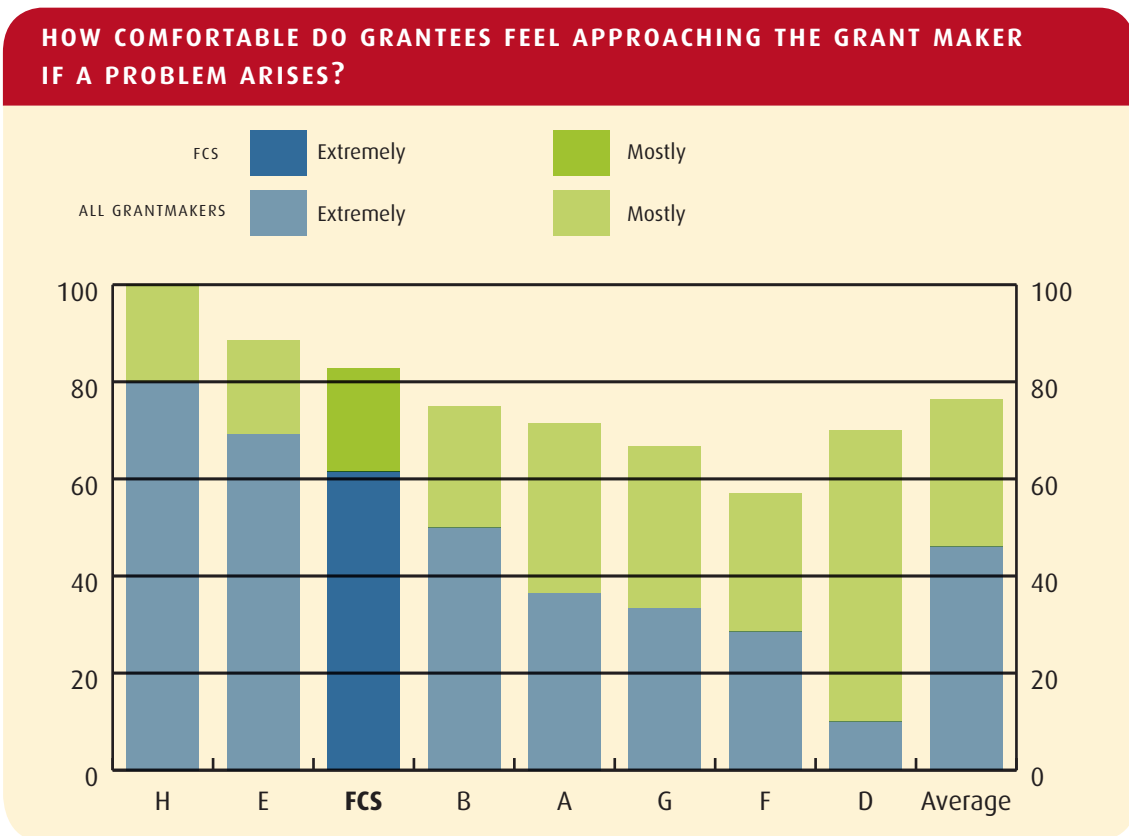
# Relationship during the grant period



- Only 23% of grantees said they felt completely open to question FCS's understanding of their field or context. This places FCS seventh out of the group of 8 grantmakers.
- This score is significantly lower than the highest performer, which was rated this highly by 63% of their grantees and well below the average for the group, which was 43%.
- A further 43% of grantees felt "mostly" able to challenge FCS's understanding, while 22% could challenge some things and 9% did not feel free to question.
- This implies that most of FCS's grantees may want to challenge some parts of FCS's understanding of their work, but feel nervous about being honest. FCS is sometimes seen as unapproachable, and may not be learning about important issues which affect field work or working relationships.

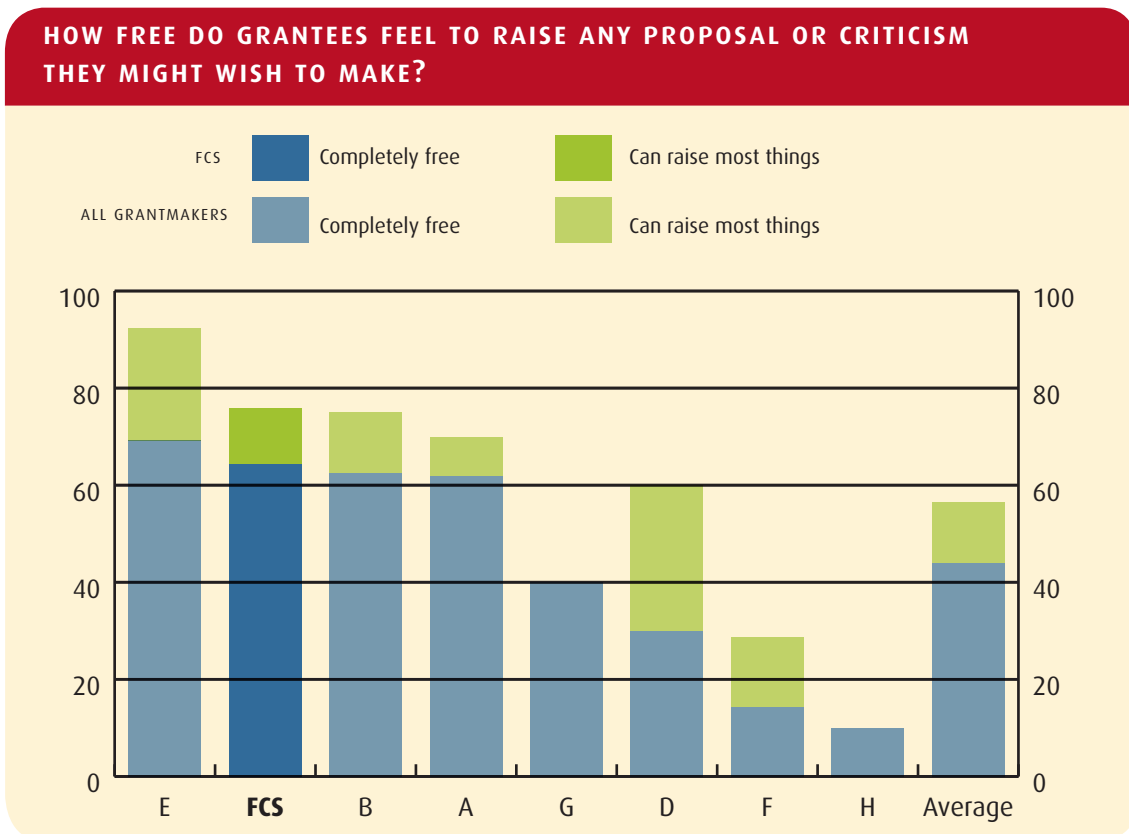


# Relationship during the grant period



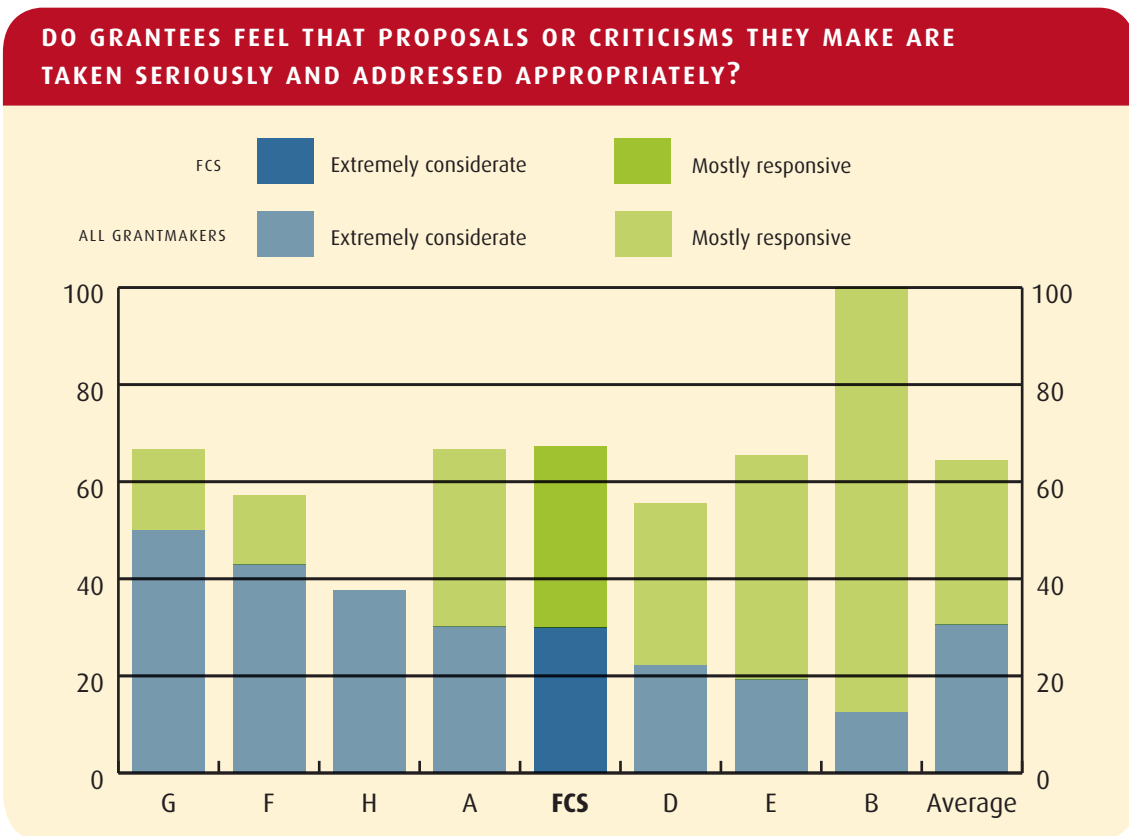
- More than three-fifth (61%) of grantees said they felt ‘extremely’ comfortable approaching FCS if a problem arises. This places FCS third out of the 8 grantmakers. The average was 46% and the top performer scored 80%.
- A further 21% of FCS’s grantees feel ‘mostly’ comfortable approaching FCS with problems.
- FCS is performing relatively well on this measure. This suggests that FCS and grantees are sometimes using the opportunities to learn from mistakes as well as successes.

# Relationship during the grant period



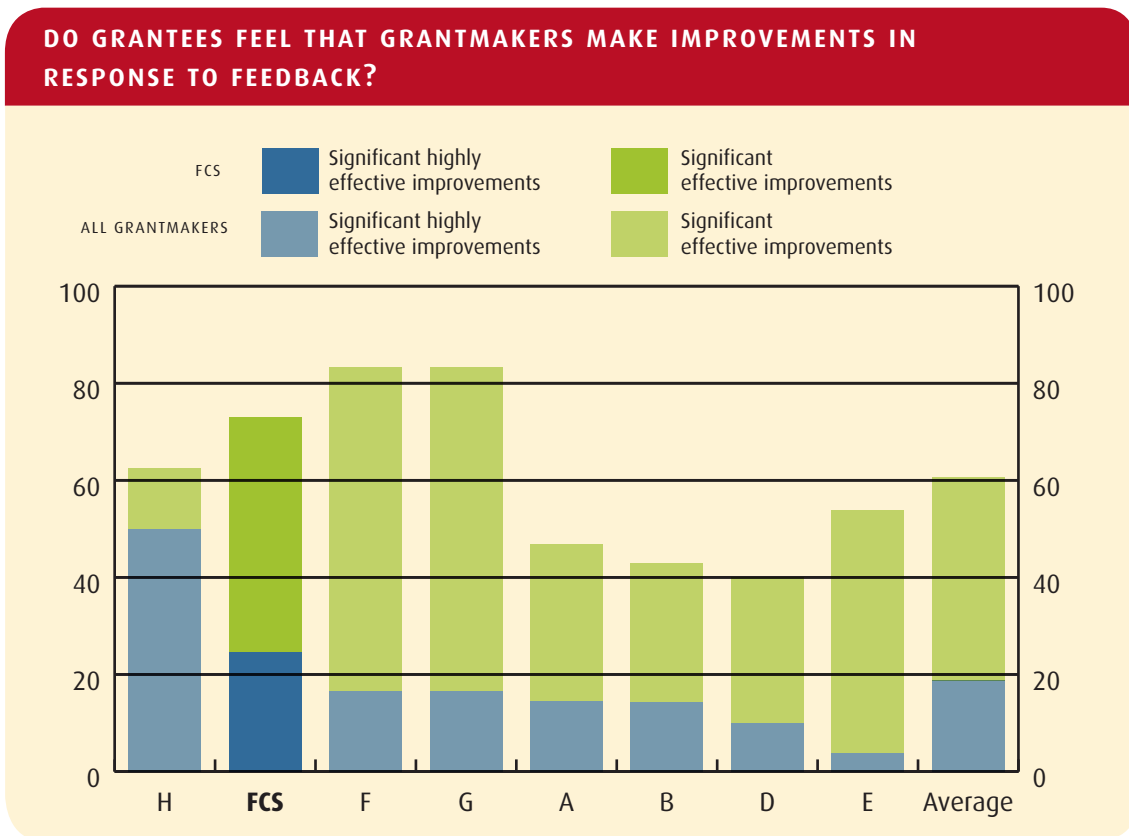
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of FCS’s grantees said they felt ‘completely free’ to raise proposals or criticisms. This places FCS second out of the group of 8 grantmakers.
- A further 11% of FCS’s grantees said they felt they could raise most things, 15% some things but taking care how it comes across; 5% could not raise most things and 3% did not feel at all free in this respect. Two percent did not know.

# Relationship during the grant period



- Only one in three (30%) of FCS's grantees felt that FCS addresses their suggestions in an extremely considerate and responsive way. This places FCS fifth out of the 8 grantmakers. It is close to the average of 31%.
- A further 37% of FCS's grantees felt that FCS 'considers and responds thoughtfully to most proposals and criticisms'.

# Relationship during the grant period



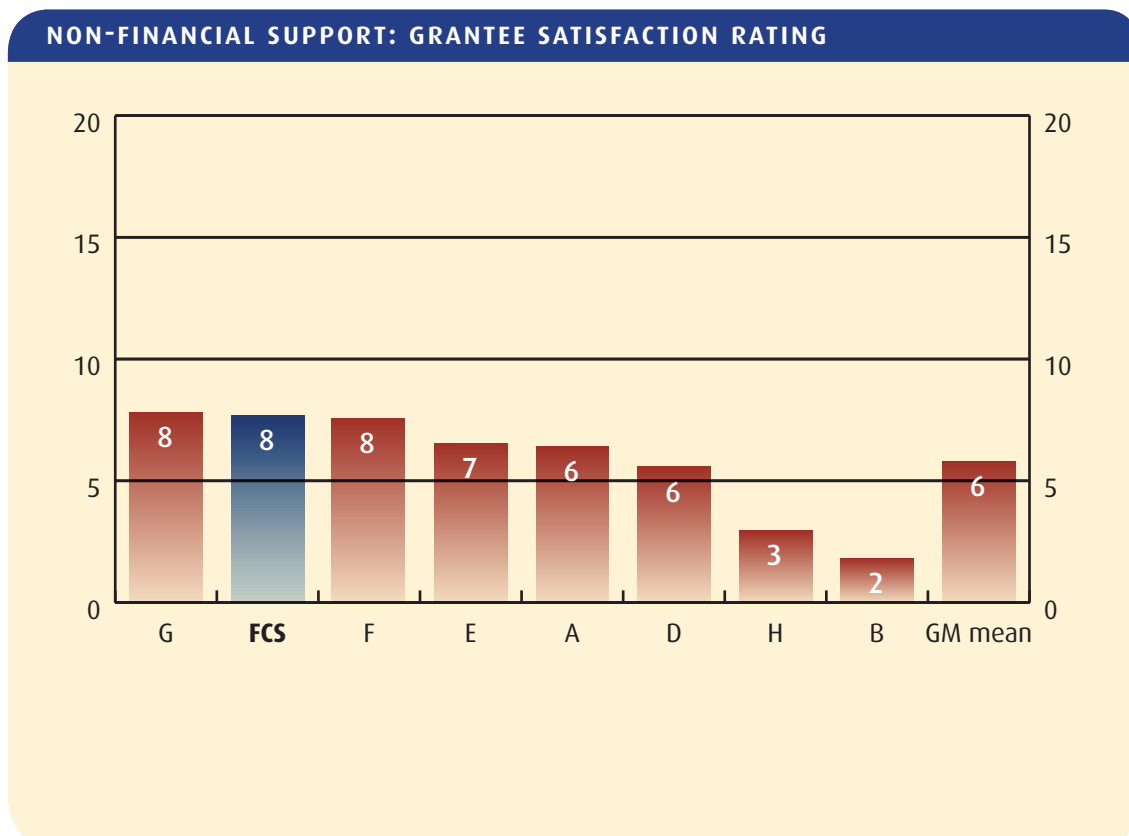
- One quarter (25%) of FCS’s grantees feel that FCS makes ‘significant highly effective improvements’ in response to their feedback. This places FCS second out of the group of 8 grantmakers, and above the 19% average.
- Nevertheless, a further 48% of grantees feel that FCS makes ‘significant effective improvements’ in response to their feedback.
- Another 16% of FCS’s grantees think that FCS makes ‘some effective improvements’ in response to their feedback.

# Section 5

## Non-financial support

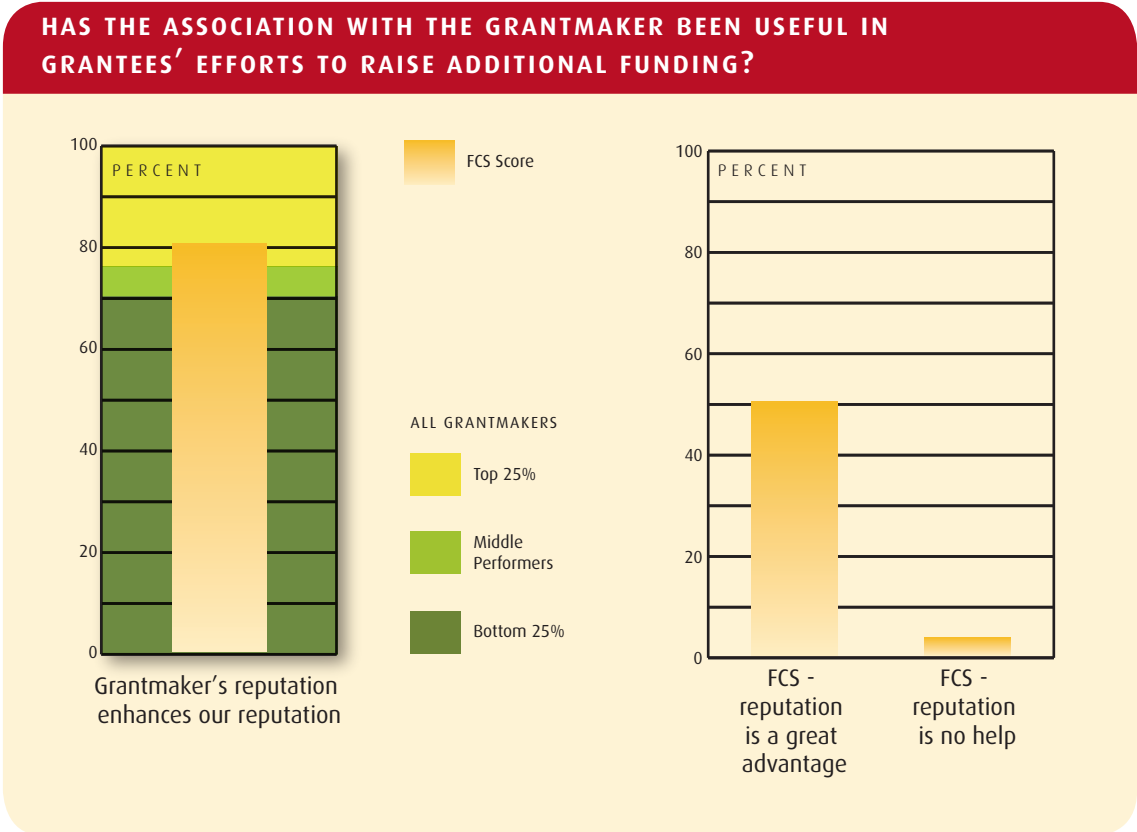
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# Non-financial support



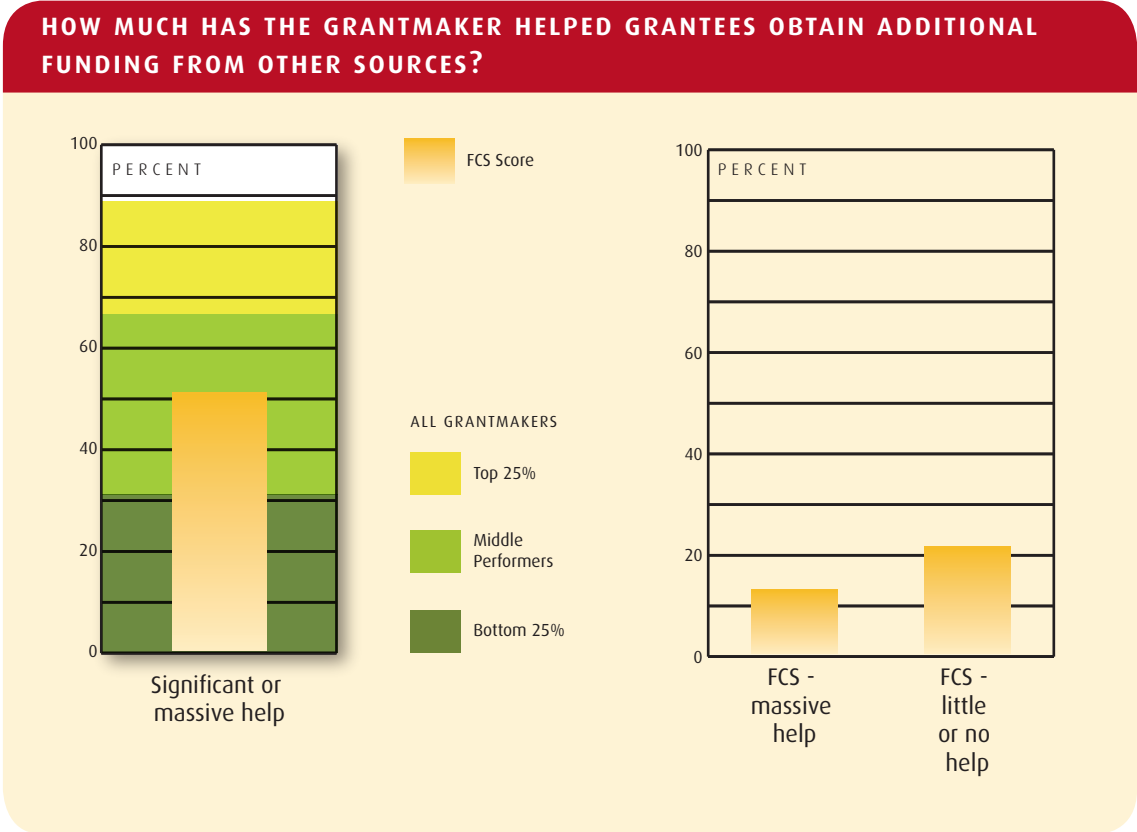
- Grantee satisfaction with FCS’s non-financial support is 7.7 out of 20 (average 5.8). This is the second highest rating. All grantmakers scored low ratings for this measure.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from questions about sixteen forms of assistance and how useful grantees found these forms of support.
- The generally low ratings suggest that grantees generally do not find grantmakers’ non-financial support very useful.
- More than a quarter (27%) expressed the need for things like more management assistance, capacity building, logistical help, technical support and training or Board capacity building.
- Some comments were: “the grantmaker did not involve us in training on financial management although the evaluators had recommended we get training” and “grantmaker should think of short trainings to key project personnels”.
- A similar proportion (26%) expressed satisfaction about aspects such as their capacity having been built, their credibility raised, the benefits of the training received, or the positive spin-offs of the networking to which they had been exposed.
- These were expressed in such comments as: “through this project we have been more felt at grassroots level throughout the country” and “FCS is not only a grantmaker but also a capacity builder and networking organisation”.

# Non-financial support



- Most (80%) of FCS's grantees felt that FCS's reputation had been an advantage to them, in their efforts to obtain additional funding. This places FCS second of the 8 grantmakers in the group.
- Within this, 50% of FCS's grantees felt that FCS's reputation had been a *great* advantage.
- Three percent of FCS's grantees felt that FCS's reputation had not helped them at all in this respect.

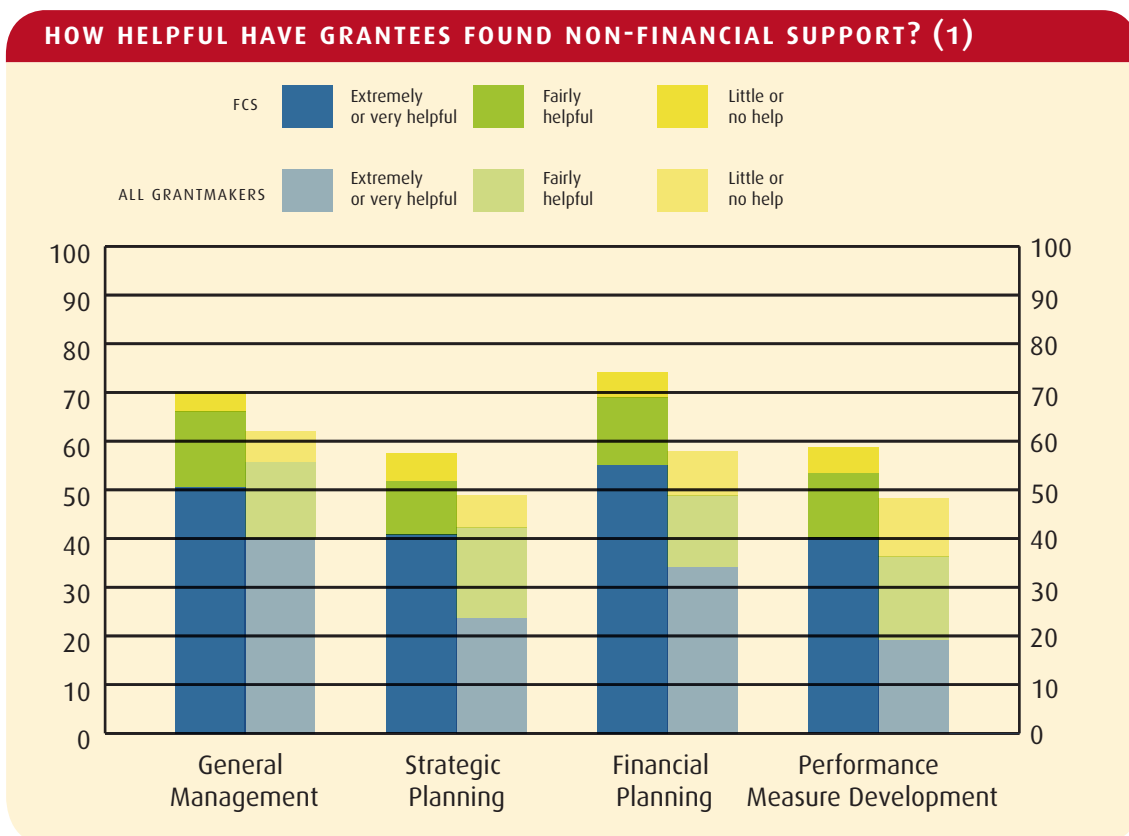
# Non-financial support



- In response to another question, 43% of FCS’s grantees said that FCS actively attempted to help them obtain additional funding from other sources. This is a higher than the average for the group, of 40%.
- The chart above shows that 50% (of that 43%) found FCS’s assistance ‘significantly’ or ‘massively’ helpful. This places FCS fourth in the group of 8 grantmakers.
- Thirteen percent (of the 43%) said that FCS provided ‘massive’ help.
- Just over one-fifth (21%) said that FCS’s efforts provided little or no help to their ability to obtain more funds.
- Could FCS look at ways of offering support to more of its grantees to raise additional funds?

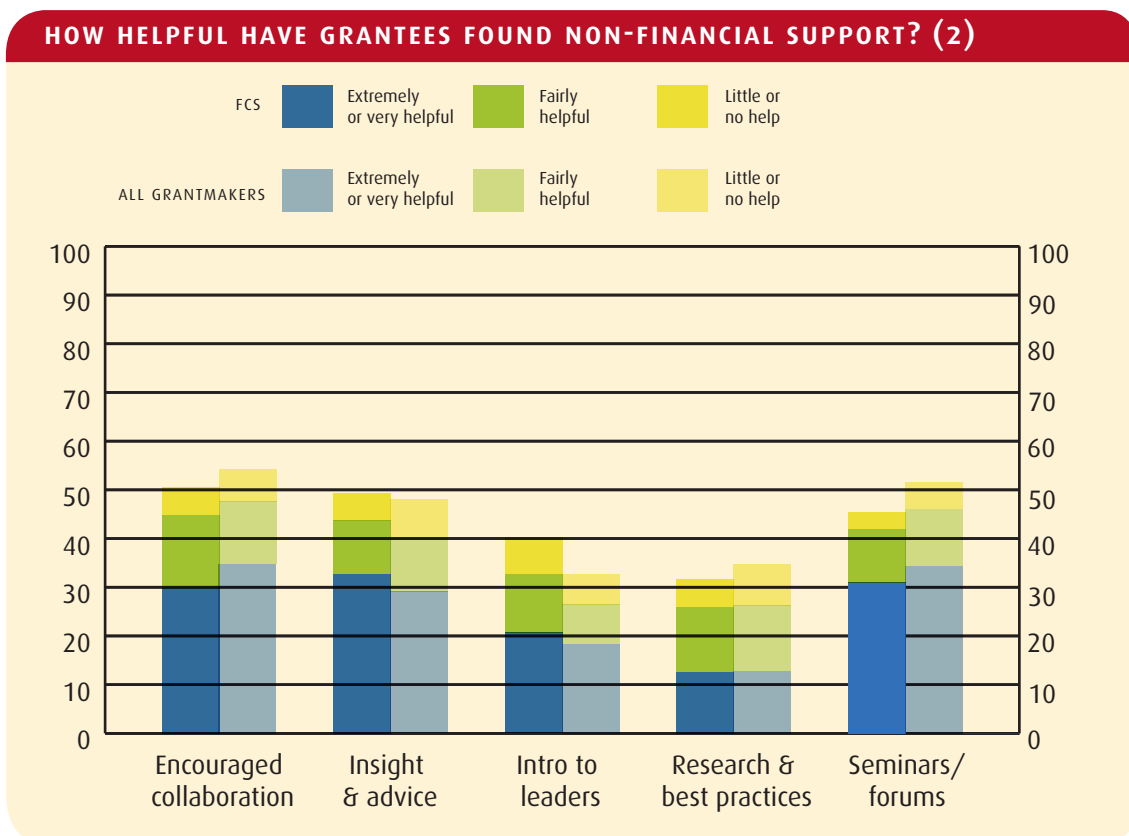


# Non-financial support



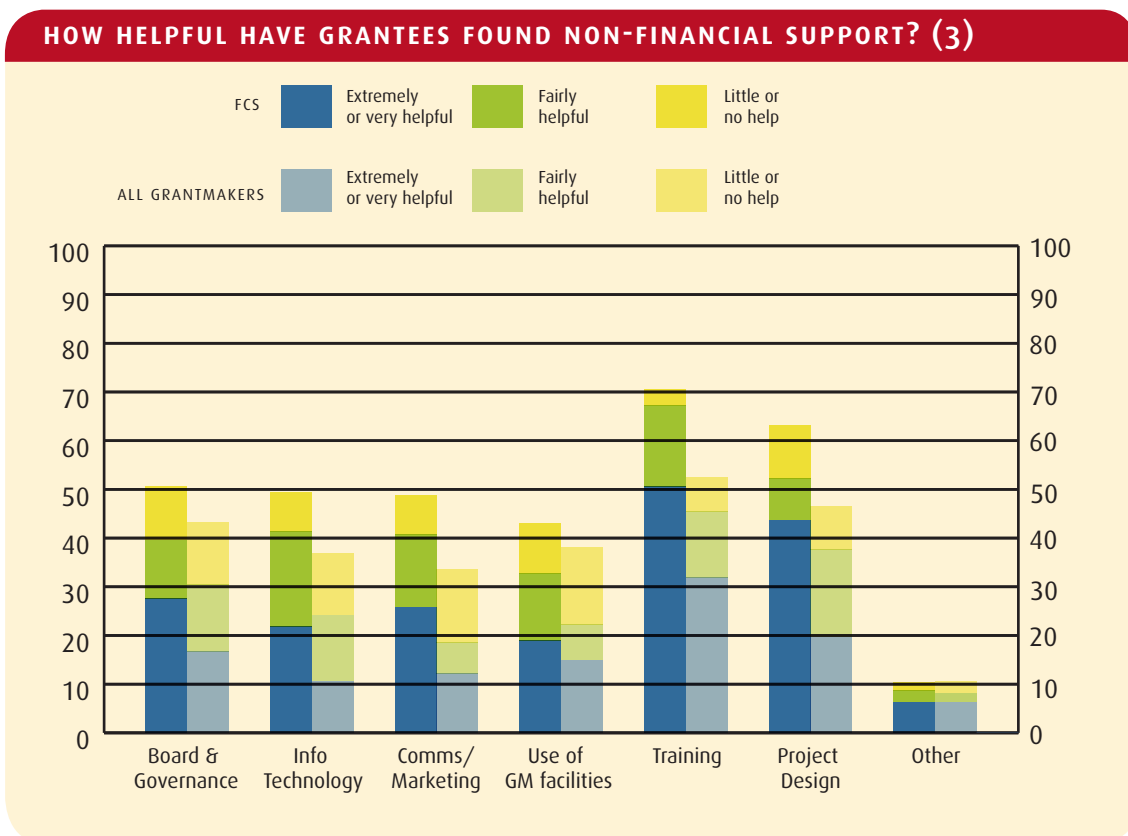
- Half or more of FCS’s grantees received ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful assistance from FCS in general or financial management.
- Two-fifths received ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ helpful assistance from FCS in strategic planning or the development of performance measures.
- In all instances, the assistance was more substantially valued than the average across grantmakers.
- Between a quarter and two-fifths of FCS’s grantees were not offered these forms of assistance by FCS, lower proportions than the average across the 8 grantmakers.
- Asked for comments about non-monetary assistance, more than a quarter (27%) said they still required more management assistance, capacity building, logistical help, technical support and training or Board capacity building.
- Conversely, 26% said that their capacity had been built, and/or their credibility raised, and/or their networks expanded.

# Non-financial support



- Half or more of FCS’s grantees did not receive field-related assistance from FCS.
- Where it was received it was rated extremely or very helpful by average proportions of FCS grantees in comparison with other grantees.
- The most common forms of field support given by FCS were encouragement or facilitation of collaboration with other parties; insight and advice; and the provision of seminars, forums or convenings.

# Non-financial support



- For the 60 to 70% of FCS grantees that received other forms of assistance from FCS, the most common and most helpful were staff training and capacity building, and the assistance with design of the project or programme.
- About half of FCS grantees received any other assistance (e.g. assistance with Board development and governance; with information technology; with communications, marketing or publicity) and about half of those found it to be extremely or very helpful.

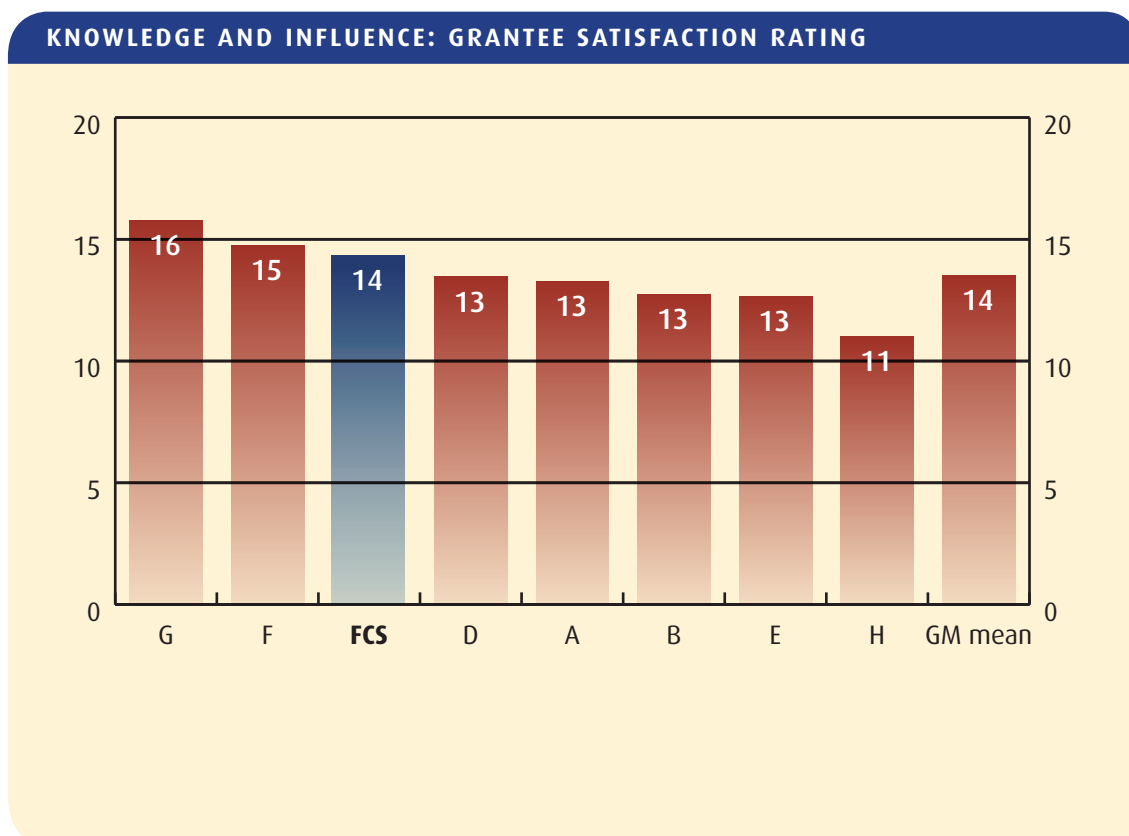


## Section 6

### Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field

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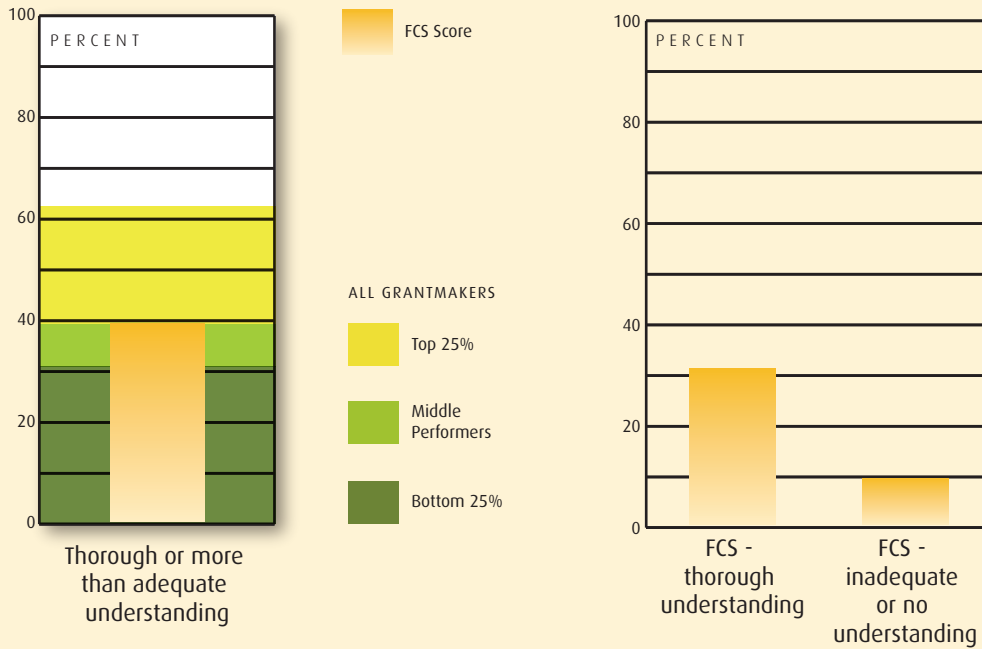
## Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field



- Grantee satisfaction with FCS's knowledge and influence sits at 14.3 out of 20. This rating places FCS 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 8 grantmakers.
- This satisfaction rating combines responses from six questions about two areas: (a) how well FCS understands grantees' goals, contexts and the people they serve, and (b) how much FCS has influenced wider learning and practice in the field. It suggests that FCS improve its understanding of grantees' work and its wider influence.
- On a related measure, only 48% of FCS's grantees see FCS as a 'team player' that is open to collaborative ventures with others. This is second lowest of all grantmakers.
- Most comments about FCS's impact on their field and/or their community were positive: "very significant"; "behaviour change, poverty eradication for the betterment of good living"; "more people start to become aware of their legal rights"; "grantmaker is a pivotal player in our field such that we got so encouraged and boosted, otherwise we could lose hope on the way"; and "the grantmaker is doing well in putting the CSO's it's supporting at the frontline of changing practice and policy in the field".

# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field

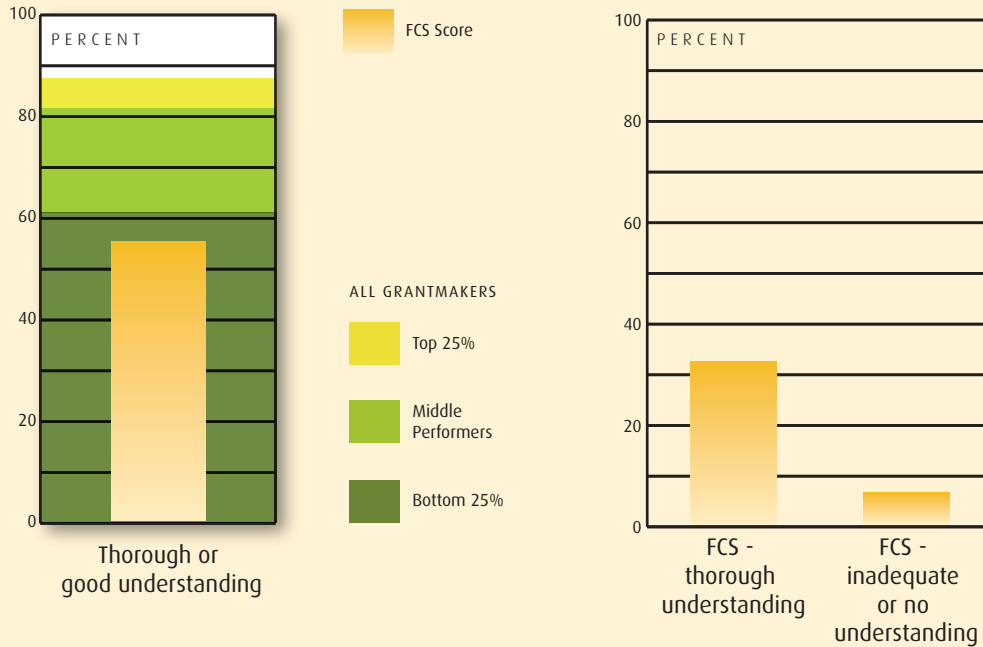
## HOW WELL DOES THE GRANTMAKER UNDERSTAND GRANTEE'S STRATEGIES AND GOALS?



- Thirty-nine percent of FCS's grantees said that FCS has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of their strategies and goals. This rating places FCS fourth of all 8 grantmakers.
- Within this, all 31% said that FCS has a 'thorough' understanding.
- A further 49% said FCS's understanding was 'adequate' and 9% felt it was inadequate or totally absent.
- Three percent did not know.

# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field

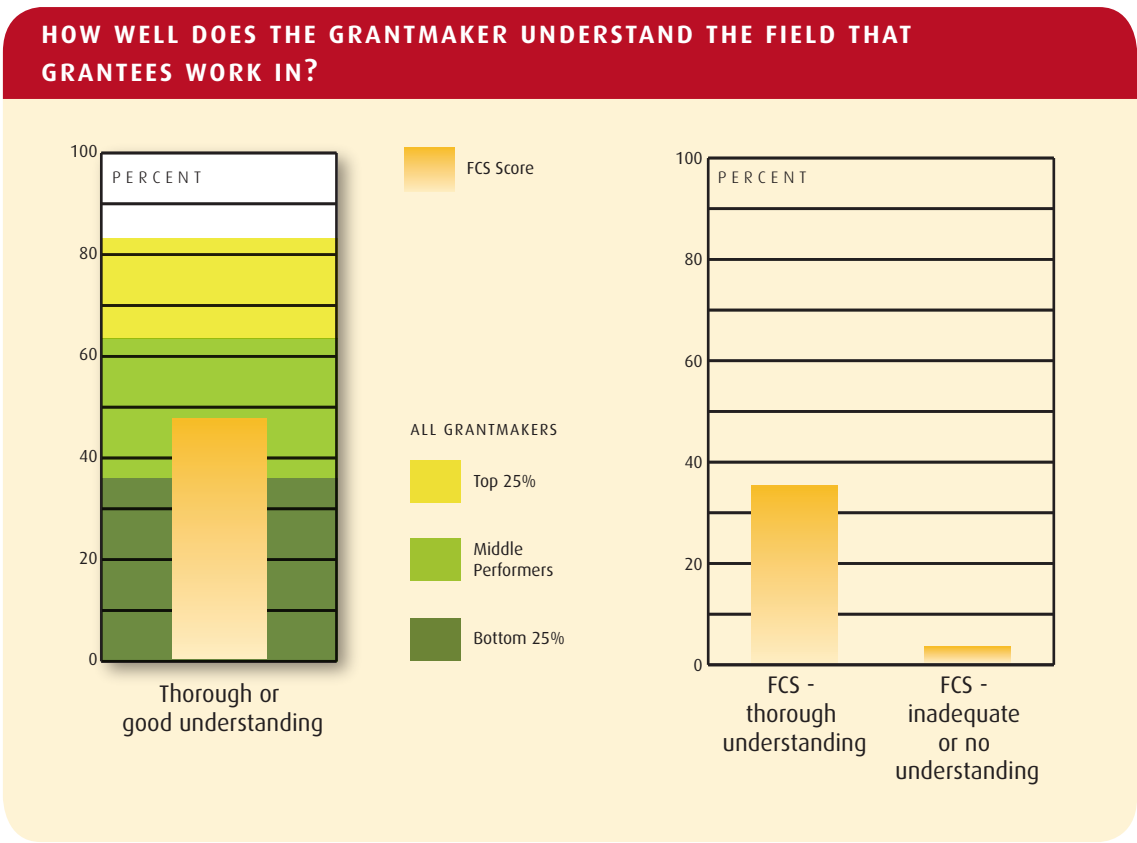
## HOW WELL DOES THE GRANTMAKER UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITIES OR GROUPS SERVED BY GRANTEES?



- More than half (55%) of FCS's grantees said that FCS has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of the communities or groups that grantees serve. This rating places FCS seventh amongst the whole group of 8 grantmakers.
- Of these, 32% said that FCS has a 'thorough' understanding.
- Six percent of the grantees said that FCS has an 'inadequate' or 'no' understanding.



# Grantmaker's knowledge and influence in your field



- Almost half (47%) of FCS's grantees said that FCS has a 'thorough' or 'more than adequate' understanding of their field. This places FCS fifth of the 8 grantmakers.
- Of these, 35% of FCS's grantees said that FCS has a 'thorough' understanding.
- The remaining grantees were of the view that either FCS has an 'adequate' understanding of the field in which they operate (48%), an inadequate or no understanding (3%) or did not know about their understanding (1%).

# Conclusion and follow up

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There are many ways in which a grantmaker can support and enhance the effectiveness of their grantees beyond just providing money.

The feedback from this survey provides a number of opportunities for FCS to engage with grantees about how it can improve the way it works. But this need not be a one-way process. If for, example, FCS is willing to consider longer-term less restrictive funding agreements, then it is reasonable to demand a higher level of transparency from grantees, and more responsiveness to their beneficiaries.

In other words, engaging in dialogue for improvement can and should be a two-way process that can lead to better relationships and greater effectiveness for both participants. Grantees will appreciate FCS's willingness to listen and make improvements in response to feedback, and they will be motivated to raise their game as well.

## **NATURE OF FUNDING**

FCS appears to favour short-term relationships with grantees. This might create problems of sustainability for grantees. Also, the vast bulk of FCS funding covers direct project costs only, and there are few resources for organisational and institutional strengthening.

Could FCS:

- Explore whether grantees feel that all their needs are covered within the project grant structure.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

FCS's grantees were reasonably satisfied with FCS's application processes, rating it 13.3 out of 20. Nevertheless, grantees clearly feel that some improvements could be made.

Although over 80% of FCS's grantees said they were kept well informed of progress there were still 17% who felt only 'partly' or 'not' informed. Funding guidelines and web site were rated extremely clear and useful, but grantees were more critical of the annual report and other forms of communication.

FCS performs stricter due diligence research than average before they approve grants. Yet most grantees appear to appreciate this degree of rigour.

However, grantees express a fairly high level of dissatisfaction on the time taken to approve and disburse funds. FCS takes significantly longer to approve grants and to disburse funds than other grantmakers.

Could FCS:

- Explore ways of improving its application and approval process in consultation with grantees?
- Review its communications and explore ways of making information more easily accessible to grantees.
- Explore ways of improving the time it takes to approve grant proposals and disburse funds.

# Conclusion and follow up

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## MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

The feedback for this aspect of grantmaker performance is not always consistent. Keystone will re-examine the way questions are framed in order to help solve this problem, but FCS might consider exploring some of the issues with grantees.

Grantees rate FCS's monitoring system above the average for the group, but this is an area in which all grantmakers are rated badly by their grantees.

89% of FCS's grantees said that they found FCS's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes 'significantly' or 'extremely' helpful.

74% of grantees said that FCS had discussed their reports or evaluation reports with them after submission and almost three-quarters (71%) of FCS's grantees said that FCS provided sufficient funds for them to meet FCS's monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes.

Could FCS:

- Explore what forms of monitoring and reporting would be most useful, and seek to strengthen these.
- Consider asking grantees to report independent feedback about how satisfied their beneficiaries are with their services?

## RELATIONSHIP DURING THE GRANT PERIOD

Grantees rated FCS at 17.9 out of 20 for relationships. This is the highest of the eight grant makers in the group, suggesting a high level of confidence and trust, and that FCS is communicating well with its grantees.

FCS staff have more contact with grantees, including site visits, than average, and most grantees are extremely or very satisfied about their experience with FCS.

However, only 23% of grantees said they felt completely open to question FCS's understanding of their field or context. This suggests that many grantees may want to challenge some parts of FCS's understanding of their work, but feel nervous about being honest. FCS is sometimes seen as unapproachable, and may not be learning about important issues which affect field work or working relationships.

FCS rates better on the other similar measures. 64% said they felt 'completely free' to raise proposals or criticisms. Most said FCS responds 'thoughtfully to most proposals and criticisms'. And 73% feel that FCS makes 'significant or highly effective improvements' in response to their feedback. This contributes to an equitable, mutually respectful and trusting relationship in which the balance of power is addressed and learning can take place.

Could FCS:

- Think about improving the way that it listens and responds to feedback from grantees (discussing the feedback from this survey together with them could be a good start).
- Create more opportunities for grantees to question its understanding, policies and practices and offer solutions.
- Create incentives and conditions for grantees to feel safe enough to be completely honest in reporting if they have a problem or if things are not going well.

## Conclusion and follow up

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### **NON-FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

All grantmakers scored low ratings for this measure. This suggests that grantees do not find grantmakers' non-financial activities very useful. Continuing low levels of support for organisation strengthening could limit the effectiveness of grantees – especially community-based organisations. There is much potential for learning and improvement in this area of grantmaking.

The questionnaire did not ask whether grantees felt the need for non-financial assistance which might make it difficult to interpret this feedback fully.

More than a quarter commented on the need for more things like management assistance, capacity building, logistical help, technical support and training or Board capacity building. Yet most of those that received assistance report that they found it very valuable.

Could FCS:

- Discuss with grantees the quality and quantity of non-financial support that it offers – and what their needs and preferences are in the future?
- Look at ways of improving the fundraising support it offers, if this is requested by grantees? Options to consider could include making their organisational assessments and monitoring reports available to other potential grantmakers, recommending effective grantees and introducing them to other funders, capacity-building in proposal writing and fundraising, facilitating more collaboration with other NGOs.
- Improve or increase the management advice and training it offers, if this is requested by grantees?
- Facilitate more collaborative meetings and projects?

### **GRANTMAKER'S KNOWLEDGE AND INFLUENCE**

FCS grantees are reasonably satisfied with FCS's knowledge of the contexts and fields in which they work. But a rating of 14.3 out of 20 still suggests that FCS can improve its understanding of grantees' work and its wider influence.

Interestingly, only 48% of FCS's grantees see FCS as a 'team player' that is open to collaborative ventures with other grantmakers and grantees. This is second lowest of all grantmakers.

Could FCS:

- Develop its staff's understanding of developmental issues and create opportunities for learning from grantees and their beneficiaries?
- Invest more time in learning from grantees and helping them share these experiences to increase the knowledge of the field as a whole?

# Glossary

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**Average** The average score is the score for a typical, mid-level member of the group. In this report, it is calculated by adding together the scores for all ten grantmakers in the group, and dividing the total by ten.

**Context** The environment in which an organisation works. This normally includes factors like: physical conditions, peoples' skills, politics and relationships between people, the attitudes and values of people, other organisations' work and many other things.

**Field** An area of work that an organisation is working in e.g. the field of early childhood development, or the field of agricultural development, or the field of grantmaking.

**Grantmaker** An institution that gives money and other support to civil society organisations, government agencies or individuals that work for the public benefit.

**Grantee** An organisation that receives funding from a grantmaker.

**Performance** How well somebody does a job. Usually used when making a judgement – has someone performed well or badly?

**Quartile** When you divide a set of statistical information into four equal parts, each of these parts is called a quartile.