

vkrf

V. KANN RASMUSSEN FOUNDATION

REPORT 2001





V. KANN RASMUSSEN FOUNDATION REPORT 2001

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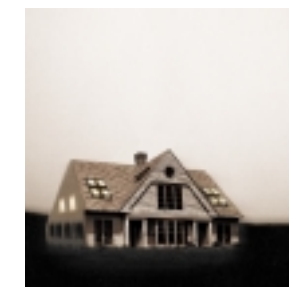
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visit our WEB SITE *at* www.vkrf.org



Villum Kann Rasmussen



In 1941, Villum Kann Rasmussen founded his own company specializing in products that bring **light and fresh air** into buildings. The best known of his inventions is the VELUX range of windows and skylights. In 1942, he stated his simple goal: “To construct a roof window which is in every aspect as good as the best vertical window.”

Following World War II, demand for inexpensive housing in Europe was very strong. The VELUX roof windows, together with new forms of insulation and central heating, made it possible to turn millions of attics into **living spaces** for people. Kann Rasmussen’s business grew steadily over the years and, in 1975, the VELUX business expanded to the United States.

Known throughout the company as “KR,” he believed that **creativity** and new ideas were best tested to prove their value. As he often stated: “One experiment is worth more than a thousand expert opinions.” Over the years, KR’s simple approach led to his receiving more than 50 patents.

KR also stated that “to do business is nothing more than interacting with people,” and his companies always emphasized that **interaction**, striving to treat employees, suppliers, customers and shareholders in an exemplary fashion.

KR was reserved about his private life and always kept it separate from the business. As for the company, he wanted the **quality of the products** to be all the public relations that was needed. Only late in life did he agree to a few interviews and public appearances, preferring, as he expressed it: “Whoever lives unnoticed, lives well!”

Villum Kann Rasmussen (1909-1993) and his wife, Bodil (1915-1996), had four children, three of whom serve as trustees of the Foundation. Lars Kann-Rasmussen, the fourth, has spent his career in the VELUX business, most recently as its chief executive.



V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and its Goals

by HANS KANN RASMUSSEN, *Trustee*



When the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation was established in 1991, the trustees decided that the **environment** should be the **principal focus** of its grantmaking. The trustees also decided to support at least one medical research project annually. Finally, the trustees decided to provide support for institutions and projects in Greenwood, South Carolina, the principal location of the VELUX companies in the United States (see page 8).

KR had a deep interest in daylight and its usefulness to people, and he supported a number of **eye research** projects in Denmark. In continuation of this, the Foundation has elected to fund a collaborative approach to eye research to benefit the many people who suffer from retinal neovascularization and macular degeneration (see page 40).

During the past 10 years, the Foundation has allocated approximately 75% of its grants to strengthen environmental research and education, and to further the involvement of an informed public in environmental decision-making. Human activity lies at the heart of most current environmental problems. Defining the “problem,” and suggesting a “solution,” involves studying the interaction between **human society and nature** at many levels and across many disciplines. And any solution requires mediation between current human needs and desires, and the requirements of future generations and of the ecosystem itself.

The interaction of people on practical, economic, intellectual and religious levels is crucial for any solution to succeed. Competition and ambition are motivating factors that make humans work to achieve the necessary skills to survive and fulfill their dreams. But it is **collaboration** that can get us to agree on the problems, and help us to achieve workable solutions for the long-term benefit of all.



Environment, Higher Education and Collaboration

by AINO KANN RASMUSSEN, *Trustee*



Recognizing that universities are highly structured by discipline, and intensely competitive with each other, the Foundation has sought to **promote environmental study** and research through collaboration within and among institutions, and across disciplines and fields of specialization.

The Foundation has provided core funding for the creation and support of three major **multi-institutional collaboratives** through multi-year grants. These three consortia were organized by Columbia University (see page 12), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (see page 20), and Wildlife Trust (see page 24). In each case, our goal has been to support the creation of **innovative partnership models**. And at Harvard University, the Foundation has provided keystone funding for the Interfaculty Initiative on the Environment, which has spawned several projects relating to China (see page 16).

The Associated Colleges of the South has developed and the Foundation has funded an Environmental Citizenship Program for the 21st Century, which involves the cooperation of all 15 schools in this consortium of independent liberal arts colleges in the southeastern United States. The Foundation has also helped to organize the Sustainable Universities Initiative in South Carolina (see page 8).

We fund several nonprofit organizations which use collaborative models to advise and provide services to colleges and universities seeking to **operate more sustainably**, and to expand their environmental education and research programs. Second Nature has developed significant curriculum and other educational resources through its web site, secondnature.org.

University Leaders for Sustainable Future, a division of the Center for Respect of Life and the Environment, has created a sustainability **assessment and evaluation system** for colleges and universities. And Management Institute for Environment and Business, now a division of World Resources Institute, has worked with business and management schools to enhance the inclusion of environmental issues in all courses.

visit our WEB SITE www.vkrf.org



Greenwood and South Carolina

by ANNE-MARGRETE OGSTRUP-PEDERSEN, *Trustee*



When KR decided to produce VELUX roof windows in the U.S., he listened to the advice of a North Carolina friend who recommended places to do business in the South. KR chose Greenwood, South Carolina where he found **important elements for success**: skilled labor, space, and just as important, friendliness and southern hospitality.

Therefore, it felt quite natural for the trustees to fund not only environmental and educational goals in Greenwood, but also **civic, health and arts organizations** in the community. Among the larger programs funded are the Partnership for a Greater Greenwood County, Lander University, Piedmont Technical College, the Greenwood Community Children's Center and the Greenwood YMCA.

Statewide, the Foundation has funded First Steps, an **early childhood** education program supported by the State of South Carolina and by numerous corporations, foundations and individuals. The Foundation also provided multi-year funding to Linking Intergenerational Networks in Community, a collaborative program of the United Way, Clemson University and two state agencies, to provide services and opportunities for teens and senior adults in 10 South Carolina communities.

The Foundation's higher education environmental grant program has also included the three **South Carolina research universities** through the multi-year Sustainable Universities Initiative, a partnership of Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina and the University of South Carolina, with support from the government of South Carolina. This collaborative has expanded to include 12 other colleges in the state, all of which **cooperate to achieve** more sustainability in their operations, include environmental issues in their academic courses and encourage research on environmental issues that affect the people of South Carolina.

For more information about the S.C. Sustainable Universities Initiative, visit the web site www.sc.edu/sustainableu.

Sustainable Universities Initiative leaders with Charles Schulze (see page 44).
seated left to right: Michael Schmidt, Patricia Jerman, Alan Elzerman.
standing: Charles Schulze, Bruce Coull.



Environmental Citizenship and an Informed Public

by MARTIN S. KAPLAN, *Trustee*



We believe that the public deserves to be as well-informed as possible on environmental issues. The Foundation has supported a number of organizations that bring environmental issues to public attention, both directly and through a better informed media. National Environmental Trust, Environmental Media Services, Greenpeace USA, Earth Day Network and Union of Concerned Scientists all seek to **enhance public knowledge** about the environment.

The Foundation has also funded organizations that seek to **empower** all people to participate in environmental decision-making. These include the Center for Environmental Citizenship, the Environmental Leadership Program and the Environmental Support Center. The Sonoran Institute's **grassroots** empowerment program is described on page 36.

The Trustees recognize the decision-making **responsibility of corporate** leaders, and we support organizations that work directly with major corporations and institutions which seek to address environmental issues. The Natural Step, Redefining Progress and Health Care Without Harm advise corporations and institutions on environmental issues and sustainability. The Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies has developed the Global Reporting Initiative described on page 32.

The Foundation also funds the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, which promotes a wider understanding of the **human health** consequences of global environmental change.

We also believe in the importance of clarifying and making more people aware of the **ecological values** based in the major world religions. The Foundation played a significant role in supporting the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School and the Forum on Religion and Ecology, and those programs are described on page 28.



Columbia and the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation

DON MELNICK, *Director*, CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH and CONSERVATION;
Professor, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



The earth’s **biological diversity is in serious jeopardy**. Many species are in decline and ecosystems have been compromised. Civil strife has broken out over the dwindling natural resources these degraded habitats contain, and many people, “environmental refugees,” have been forced to leave their towns and villages, enduring personal hardships and burdening already overcrowded cities. Clearly, we need a new generation of scientists, practitioners and policy-makers equipped to deal with these complex environmental problems.

The Center for Environmental Research and Conservation (CERC) was formed specifically for this purpose. A consortium of Columbia University, the American Museum of Natural History, The New York Botanical Garden, Wildlife Conservation Society and Wildlife Trust, CERC was established in 1995 to **prepare biodiversity scientists** and policy specialists through multi-disciplinary education and research programs.

In its first five years, CERC has grown from a handful of people to more than 70 scientists serving some 300 students and trainees annually from the U.S. and around the world. CERC has **established degree programs** for bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral students, and non-degree training programs for mid-career professionals, secondary school science teachers, high school students, undergraduate students and international environmental leaders. Multi-disciplinary teams of natural and social scientists from CERC institutions have **launched research** on such pressing issues as ecological fragmentation and species extinction.

Through its collaborative efforts, CERC is training a growing number of people with a unique and diverse curriculum. We believe this will **reap benefits** for our global environment in the years to come.

for MORE information VISIT: www.columbia.edu/cu/cerc

“Through its collaborative efforts, the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation is training a growing number of people with a unique and diverse curriculum. We believe this will reap benefits for our global environment in the years to come.” —Don *Melnick*

Environmental RESEARCH *and* Conservation



Harvard and the China Project

MICHAEL B. MCELROY, *Director*, HARVARD UNIVERSITY CENTER *for the* ENVIRONMENT;
Gilbert Butler Professor of Environmental Studies, HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Anyone who has ever visited Beijing knows that **air pollution** is one of the city's biggest problems. Exhaust from vehicles combines with emissions of coal-fired heating and industrial production, and many people suffer from respiratory illnesses as a result. The problem is repeated throughout China's industrial areas and large cities.

As in most developing nations, many of China's leaders have feared that aggressive environmental policies might stifle industrial and economic growth in the country. But what if it could be shown that the **economic costs of the air pollution** itself surpass those of its potential control? If Chinese officials knew how much they were paying for pollution in terms of days lost from work, hospitalization and even premature deaths, would clean air become a higher priority?

This is one perspective of American and Chinese scholars involved in the Harvard University Center for the Environment's China Project, a **multi-disciplinary** research program on China's energy use and environmental policies, and the role of these issues in Sino-American relations. The preliminary results of a comprehensive review of these factors show that the economic impact of air pollution is roughly 5% of gross domestic product, and that controlling this pollution is clearly a good investment. The top-ranking Chinese policy makers on the environment are supportive of this ongoing study, giving us hope that the China Project will be a catalyst for **positive change**.

Harvard itself has established the new Center for the Environment, developed an undergraduate concentration in Environmental Science and Public Policy, and created programs to **green the campus** and enhance environmental studies and research.

for MORE information VISIT: www.environment.harvard.edu/uce/china

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“The China Project shows the economic impact of air pollution in China, and that controlling this pollution is clearly a good investment. Chinese policy-makers are supportive of the study, giving us hope that it will be a catalyst for positive change.” — Michael B. *McElroy*

Higher EDUCATION and the Environment



MIT and Global Sustainability

DAVID H. MARKS, *Coordinator*, ALLIANCE *for* GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY;
Goulder Family Professor of Engineering Systems, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE *of* TECHNOLOGY



The issues around global sustainability—energy efficiency, clean water, fresh air and food supply for an **expanding population**—are among the most critical problems on earth today. Addressing these problems effectively requires research, education and collaboration—the founding principles of the Alliance for Global Sustainability (AGS).

Established in 1993, the AGS is an **international partnership** formed by three leading technical research universities—the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology and the University of Tokyo—to address the complex issues at the intersection of **environment and economic goals**. AGS aims to effectively inform the decision-making process at all levels of global society; to translate cutting-edge knowledge into effective action; and to help prepare a new generation of leaders.

We are addressing such issues of sustainability as energy, mobility, urban systems, **cleaner technologies** and industrial processes, global climate change, and natural resources and ecosystems. To date, some 50 multi-disciplinary, multi-geographic projects have been funded. Currently, more than 200 faculty members and 400 students collaborate with developing world scholars and partners from industry and governments on such sustainability issues as clean coal combustion in China, transportation systems in mega cities and efficient water usage in agriculture.

We believe we are playing a constructive role in developing new technologies and identifying policy directions that will encourage economic development while preserving our natural resources. We envision a future in which a **higher standard of living** is possible for all, and prosperity for one nation does not rest on the environmental degradation of another.

for MORE information VISIT: www.globalsustainability.org

“We believe we are playing a constructive role in developing new technologies and identifying policy directions that will encourage economic development while preserving our natural resources.” —David H. Marks

Higher EDUCATION and the Environment



Consortium for Conservation Medicine

MARY C. PEARL, Co-Founder CONSORTIUM for CONSERVATION MEDICINE; Executive Director, Wildlife Trust



Habitat disruptions and loss are increasing stress on living things, making them more susceptible to disease. As people consume wildlife, or move into areas adjacent to wildlife habitat, diseases are transmitted rapidly and explosively among wildlife, livestock and humans. The life of the oceans is at risk as pathogen pollution spreads throughout the marine environment, resulting in **deadly new diseases** such as fibropapilloma viruses in sea turtles and “blue eye” blindness in Hawaiian monk seals. We need urgently to identify diseases as they emerge among the wildlife and livestock that share our ecosystems, both to save species and to prevent pathogens from threatening human populations.

Wildlife Trust, with its **partners** in the Consortium for Conservation Medicine, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine and the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School, are developing a set of **model programs** that uncover disease transmission patterns related to ecosystem changes on the ground and at sea, around the world.

Working with **local scientists**, we are researching disease in relation to the population health of manatees in Florida and the Caribbean, swift foxes in the Canadian and American West, huemules and guanacos in Chile, trout in Wyoming, right whales off the coast of New England and black lion tamarins in Brazil. As we continue to uncover disease transmission patterns, the Consortium is also training local conservation medicine practitioners and creating management **strategies to help prevent diseases** from wiping out rare species and becoming human and economic catastrophes.

for MORE information VISIT: www.conservationmedicine.org

“We need urgently to identify diseases as they emerge among the wildlife and livestock that share our ecosystem, both to save species and to prevent pathogens from threatening human populations.” —Mary C. Pearl

Environmental RESEARCH *and* Conservation



Forum on Religion and Ecology

MARY EVELYN TUCKER and JOHN GRIM, *Coordinators, FORUM on RELIGION and ECOLOGY;*
Professors, Department of Religion, BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY



Global environmental change threatens the survival of numerous species, as well as the quality and even the survival of human life. While science and technology may lead to many potential solutions, society must embrace values which can provide the will to implement the changes necessary to protect all life and our biosphere.

The world's religions have a critical role to play in shaping environmental ethics for a sustainable future for the planet. It was in this spirit that a series of 10 conferences on **“Religions of the World and Ecology”** was held at Harvard University. The primary goal was to link scholars in the academic study of religion with the people, projects and institutions that are bringing about ethical change with regard to the environmental crisis. (For more information on the conferences visit the web site: www.hds.harvard.edu/cswr/ecology.) Ten volumes on the world's religions and ecology are being published from this series and are available from Harvard University Press.

Three culminating conferences, held in 1998, extended the **dialogue** into four other disciplines concerned with the environment: science, economics, education and public policy. At a United Nations press conference, followed by a symposium at the American Museum of Natural History, the Forum on Religion and Ecology (FORE) was launched.

FORE believes that the **moral force** of the world's religions **is needed** to help shape environmental policies and to mobilize people to preserve the environment. Toward that end, FORE is focusing on three strategic objectives: research, education and outreach. The Forum is grounding a field of study in religion and ecology within the academic context. It is publishing curricular materials for classroom use and making available information that will be useful to religious communities.

With the United Nations Environment Program FORE has published and distributed 37,000 copies of the booklet, ***Earth and Faith***. It is publishing a major issue of *Daedalus* (Fall 2001) on religion and ecology with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and under the Harvard University Center for the Environment it has launched the only web site of its kind on world religions and ecology.

for MORE information VISIT: www.environment.harvard.edu/religion

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“FORE believes that the moral force of the world’s religions is needed to help shape environmental policies. We are helping to channel this force through research, education and outreach.” —Mary Evelyn *Tucker and John Grim*

RELIGION *and* Ecology



Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies

ROBERT KINLOCH MASSIE, *Executive Director*, Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies



In 1989, the **Exxon Valdez disaster** greatly affected the public’s feelings about corporate responsibility for the environment. The public began to believe that businesses, especially large corporations, should be **held accountable** for their environmental and social practices. They also began to expect corporations to commit themselves publicly to environmental principles.

That same year, the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) was founded. CERES is a coalition of more than 70 environmental, investor, and public interest and community groups joined together in a common purpose—to work with companies worldwide toward the goal of corporate **environmental responsibility**. Our programs are guided by the CERES Principles, a 10-point code of environmental conduct that has been endorsed by numerous companies.

CERES pursues its strategy for change through several activities. We continually seek to build our network, encouraging new companies to endorse the CERES principles and recruiting new coalition members. We promote dialogue through conferences and other forums. We also **promote environmental reporting** by companies, and many are now national leaders in this area.

CERES’ most far-reaching effort to date is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)—a partnership with the United Nations Environment Program and several other organizations around the world—which established the first global framework for corporate sustainability reporting. The most recent version, released in June 2000, is helping to **strengthen corporate accountability** by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to standardized, consistent information on sustainability performance. CERES also encourages outside stakeholders to review these reports and engage companies directly on environmental issues.

for MORE information VISIT: www.ceres.org

“CERES’ Global Reporting Initiative is helping to strengthen corporate accountability by ensuring that all stakeholders have access to standardized information on sustainability performance.” —Robert Kinloch *Massie*

PUBLIC Outreach *and* the ENVIRONMENT



The Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative

RAY RASKER, *Senior Economist and Director, Northwest Office*, SONORAN INSTITUTE



The vast area from Yellowstone National Park to the Yukon Territory includes many of the last tracts of large wilderness and **endangered wildlife** areas in North America. However, the parks and wilderness of the Yellowstone to Yukon region are islands, surrounded by a **growing sea of human development**. The purpose of the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Conservation Initiative is to use science and community-based approaches to conservation to maintain the connectivity among protected areas, thereby ensuring the survival of such species as the grizzly bear, lynx and wolf.

To ensure that the efforts of Y2Y have support from communities in the region, the Sonoran Institute started the Y2Y Community Stewardship program. The program has two primary objectives: to help citizens design and implement locally-driven conservation plans; and to develop resources and training programs with the goal of teaching community leaders and other conservationists how to apply a community **stewardship approach to conservation**.

The community work, which extends from Western Montana and Idaho to British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon Territory, includes helping communities create a forum on development and the environment; encouraging a series of protected greenways; assisting planners redo their growth management plan with extensive **community involvement**; aiding ranchers in their efforts to protect private lands from development through a zoning initiative; and helping county residents pass a \$10 million bond measure to protect open space and wildlife habitat.

The community “how-to” resources include workbooks for determining the status and relationship of ecological and economic conditions, and guidebooks for ranchers seeking to **diversify economically**, thereby preventing the fragmentation of ranch land into residential development.

for MORE information VISIT: www.sonoran.org

“We help citizens design and implement locally-driven conservation plans and support community leaders in their goal to apply a community stewardship approach to conservation.” —Ray *Rasker*

The Eye Research Collaborative

DR. LOIS E.H. SMITH, *Director, Eye Research Collaborative; Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL and CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL, Boston*



Retinopathy, or new blood vessel formation in the eye, is a leading cause of blindness. The current treatment for this disease process helps preserve vision but at the cost of **destroying the eye’s retina**. The goal of our research team was to study the molecular pathways of retinopathy and find ways to block it. To accomplish this, we established a collaborative, believing that researchers from diverse disciplines working in tandem with pharmaceutical companies might be able to coordinate efforts to find the cause and then the treatment for this disease.

In the first phase of this effort, **five laboratories coordinated** efforts to find the molecular pathways of the disease and, using a “mouse model” of retinopathy, were able to test the effectiveness of blocking these pathways. Several blocking drugs have proven to be effective in the model and, subsequently, in the clinic. Based on our work, two drugs are in **clinical trials** to evaluate their effect in the treatment of retinopathy, and pilot studies have shown efficacy.

In a new phase of our collaboration, we are studying all eye diseases that progress to abnormal blood vessel growth. Our research team stays in constant communication, and emphasizes **cooperation** across discipline and institutional boundaries. We have found a simple blood test, which appears to predict which infants will progress to retinopathy of prematurity, and are now testing a way to prevent the disease.

The collaboration is also focused on the study of age-related macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness in the elderly. There is no treatment for this disease, and little is known about its cause. We are looking into the basic biochemical pathways that cause it, with the short-term goal of understanding its progression and the long-term goal of **treating or preventing the disease**.



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“Several drugs have proven effective in blocking the pathways of retinopathy. Based on the work of our collaborative, two drugs are in clinical trials, and pilot studies have shown their efficacy.” —Lois E.H. *Smith*

Collaborative Eye RESEARCH





Thanks from the Trustees

The Foundation can provide the funds, but it is our grantees who provide the ideas and inspiration, and in particular the effort and hard work necessary to make progress toward solving problems. Working together with the grantees, we hope to achieve, in the best of our projects, results that benefit society, and that reflect the integrity, seriousness and innovative spirit that were distinctive marks of KR.

We wish to express our special appreciation to two people. Mr. H. N. Brandt, a long-time colleague of KR, and chief executive of the U.S. business from its inception, served as a trustee from 1991 to 1998. He helped shape the way the Foundation works in many more ways and to a larger extent than the degree to which he will accept credit. Finally, to Charles W. Schulze, a Greenwood and South Carolina resident and civic leader who serves as our trusted advisor in connection with our funding in that state.

Total Grants Made 1991-2001 \$48,300,000

• Environment and Higher Education	28,450,000
• Environmental Outreach and Public Engagement	5,650,000
• Environment Citizenship and Policy Research	3,475,000
• Greenwood and South Carolina	5,475,000
• Medical Research and Miscellaneous	5,250,000

V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation Grant Application Procedures

New Requests

Requests for support from the Foundation should be made by a letter of inquiry that describes, in three pages or less, the organization and its goals, the project, and its purpose and likely impact. The letter should also indicate the expected number of years of the project, the budget, other sources of funds, and the amount requested.

A trustee of the Foundation will review the letter and determine whether to invite a full proposal. Applicants may also contact trustee Martin S. Kaplan at Hale and Dorr LLP, 60 State Street, Boston, MA 02109, telephone (617) 526-6610, fax (617) 526-5000, or e-mail martin.kaplan@haledorr.com.

Proposal Format

- A proposal should be direct and concise, and set forth the following information:
- A description of the organization, its mission and goals;
 - A clear statement of the need or problem being addressed;
 - The project’s goals, and a clear plan to achieve them;
 - The project’s timeline;
 - The expected results and a description of how the results will be measured.

The above information should be provided in no more than five single-spaced pages. Please also provide a one-page budget of the current fiscal year of the organization, a one-page budget of the project for which funding is sought, and a one-page list of principal funding sources, including names and amounts. This information may be provided by e-mail

Applicants should also provide a copy of the IRS letter certifying tax-exempt status, most recent financial statement, annual report if one is published, list of directors and officers, and key personnel involved in the project.

Please contact Martin Kaplan for the schedule for submitting proposals.



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