

GLOBAL GRANTS COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Use this form to report community assessment findings to The Rotary Foundation when you apply for a global grant.

Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, needs, and assets of the community you plan to help is an essential first step in designing an effective and sustainable global grant project. See the [Conducting Community Assessments](#) handbook for full instructions and helpful tips.

This form will help you report the results of your community assessment, and it's required when you apply for any humanitarian or vocational training team grant. Complete a separate form for each beneficiary community (e.g., school, health care system, or village), using information that is both current and specific to each community. Remember, you can't use global grant funds to cover the cost of doing an assessment, but you can use district grant funds.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Describe the characteristics (such as geographic information, main sources of income, population size, and access to education and health services) of the specific community where this project will take place.

In the Community Assessment conducted, section 2 provides a detailed description. Here, only a summary is given.

The Municipality of Värmdö has 48,000 inhabitants and consists of more than 10,000 islands, of which the island of Värmdö is the largest. The island has many small businesses, but many residents commute to Stockholm for work. The municipality has good access to schools and healthcare resources. During part of the year, many summer residents and visitors stay in Värmdö.

COLLECTING COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT DATA

When you conducted the assessment, who in the community did you speak to? At least two different community representatives and beneficiaries who are not involved in Rotary (such as teachers, doctors, or community leaders) should be included in the discussions.

Among the 15 interviews conducted, I have selected a few prominent politicians as well as some officials from the County Administrative Board and the municipality who work with environmental issues, particularly water. In addition, engaged individuals from civil society who work with environmental issues and young people have been included. A couple of affected landowners were also interviewed. No representatives from Rotary are among the interviewees.

When in the last year did the discussions occur?

All 15 interviews were conducted during June 2025.

What methods did you use to collect information from community members (such as community meetings, interviews, or focus groups)?

Interviews were chosen as the main source of information. Thanks to strong connections between the Rotary Club's project "Save the Baltic Sea" and dedicated environmental advocates in the municipality, close contact and exchange of information have long been ongoing and continue continuously.

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TARGET POPULATION

Who will benefit directly from the project? List the groups that will benefit (such as schools, hospitals, vocational training centers, cooperatives, or villages).

The project aims to contribute to a better environment and to reducing eutrophication in the Baltic Sea. This means that the entire population of the municipality will benefit from wetland projects. This is particularly true for our young people, who have a long life ahead of them and who want to live in a healthy environment. They should be particularly interested in and gain from efforts to manage and enhance the Baltic Sea and our overall environment.

Describe the process of how the beneficiaries were identified.

All residents of the municipality are affected by our environment and our surrounding waters.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS, NEEDS, PRIORITIES, AND PROJECT DESIGN

Describe what members of the community said matters to them during the assessment.

All interviewees emphasized the value of our beautiful environment, with its waters, forests, and wildlife. Many had moved to Värmdö precisely for this reason. Preserving and strengthening the environment is therefore seen as a self-evident task. The municipality's resources for nature conservation are insufficient, which is why initiatives from civil society are appreciated. The municipality owns almost no land, which means that private landowners are often involved when it comes to wetlands. Despite the strong commitment to nature among the residents, shortcomings in knowledge about the functions of wetlands can be observed. There is therefore a need for education, which should be taken into account in planning.

Describe the community's strengths and resources.

The number of inhabitants in the municipality has steadily increased, but now seems to be stagnating. The number of summer visitors is large. Nature and the sea are attractive, and there is a strong understanding of measures that benefit nature, both among the public and within the municipal leadership. However, the municipality's investments in the environment are insufficient, and efforts from civil society are necessary in order to achieve good results.

Describe any challenges and gaps in the community's behaviors, skills, and knowledge.

The municipality has a number of environmental officers with solid knowledge and good intentions. However, the municipality's lack of its own land limits possible initiatives. Funding for nature conservation has also been cut.

What issues will the project address, and how does the community currently address those issues?

The project aims to reduce the eutrophication of the island's surrounding waters and the Baltic Sea as a whole. This problem has gradually increased since the mid-20th century, largely due to excessive use of fertilizers in agriculture and the draining of farmland, which caused part of the nutrients to enter the sea. This situation has improved today, but it takes a long time to reverse the development, and public efforts are currently insufficient. The municipality has little land of its own. Therefore, restoring and creating new wetlands also needs to involve civil society.

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Provide the specific details of the project design and how it will solve these issues.

The project aims to identify and finance the establishment of wetlands in collaboration with the municipality and the County Administrative Board. On the island of Värmdö, a large number of potential wetlands have been identified, both those that can be restored and those that can be newly created. In parallel with this, information about the value of wetlands must be spread to the public. Many private landowners must be convinced of their value, since the municipality only has limited land of its own.

The first wetland that the project intends to undertake is located on land owned by Värmdö Parish. On September 9, 2025, the Parish Council decided to establish the proposed wetland. A prerequisite for this decision was that Rotary finances the construction of the wetland. The project will be carried out in collaboration between Rotary and Värmdö Parish. The parish has committed to maintaining the wetland.

To establish the wetland, both an exemption from shoreline protection and a permit for water operations are required. These are granted by the municipality, which was contacted already in June and has responded positively.

The plan for the parish wetland has been developed by a wetlands expert, Sören Eriksson, who will follow the project “from start to finish.” A local contractor will carry out all excavation work and clearing of forest and brush.

To present the wetland to the public, a walking path through the wetland is planned, with signs describing the wetland and its positive impact on both the Baltic Sea and biodiversity.

Describe the long-term plan for the project (such as oversight, financial responsibilities, and expected behavior change) after Rotary’s involvement ends.

The project aims to raise awareness about the value of wetlands and contribute to the establishment or restoration of several such areas across Värmdö. This will have positive effects both on the island (increased biodiversity and water purification) and on the surrounding waters (reduced eutrophication with positive impacts both in the archipelago and out at sea in the Baltic Sea). This application concerns the first wetland described above, which is fully funded by Rotary. Plans for two additional wetlands have been developed in consultation with the County Administrative Board. The landowners have not yet made a final decision on these plans. Hopefully, once the landowners have decided, these wetlands can also be realized as a continuation of this project.

Wetlands must be maintained in order to preserve their positive impact. For our initial project at Värmdö Church, the parish has committed to maintaining the wetland. This will primarily be done by grazing livestock throughout the area. However, regular monitoring of the water flows through the wetland will also be necessary.

To increase public knowledge about the positive qualities of wetlands, our club communicates this information. The club participates actively in “Wetlands Day,” held annually in April at one of the municipality’s larger wetlands (Hemmesta Sjöäng). At other local events, the club is present to provide information about the Baltic Sea, including the value of wetlands. At the wetland to be established, information boards are planned to present the wetland.

Together with the parish, future discussions will take place to, through various events, attract visitors to the wetland and provide information there about its functions and its positive impact on nature and the sea.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (FOR ALL ENVIRONMENT AND WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE PROJECTS)

What are currently the greatest environmental threats to local land, air, water resources, and the ecosystem?

The Baltic Sea, which surrounds all of Värmdö, suffers from eutrophication and a lack of predatory fish. The three-spined stickleback, a small spiny fish, has increased enormously in number. They eat both the roe of other fish and small crustaceans, which in turn feed on the vegetation in the water. As a result, beautiful bays become overgrown, turning into poor swimming areas and are less suitable for fish reproduction.

Overfishing in the Baltic Sea is a major problem, as the entire ecological balance is at risk. However, this issue must primarily be solved through cooperation between the countries of the European Union (EU) and by introducing restrictions or bans on large-scale industrial bottom trawling.

Eutrophication causes increased growth in the sea, which, among other things, leads to algal blooms. These create unpleasant and sometimes toxic water, making swimming impossible. When the plants die and sink to the bottom, they must decompose, which requires oxygen. Due to the large amount of plant matter, the oxygen at the seabed is depleted, resulting in oxygen-free "dead" bottoms. There, only cyanobacteria remain, with no plant or animal life. These "dead" bottoms have spread across a large part of the Baltic Sea.

On land, several challenges exist with deficient and outdated sewage systems, landfill sites, and chemical emissions. Only a small portion of the municipality's waters achieve good chemical and ecological status.

List any cultural practices that are relevant to the project (such as agricultural techniques or traditions).

For a long time (more than 50 years ago), the surrounding waters were considered able to absorb waste and discarded household items, such as refrigerators. Today, awareness is much greater, but it takes time to repair old "sins." The use of fertilizers in agriculture was initially far too extensive, resulting in large amounts of nutrients flowing into the Baltic Sea. The draining of farmland and the resulting loss of wetlands worsened the situation. Today, fertilization is carried out in a more targeted way, with only as much fertilizer as is needed locally. In addition, many previously drained wetlands are being restored.

What positive and negative environmental changes do you expect to result from the project?

The project aims to help improve water quality (reduce eutrophication), strengthen biodiversity, and contribute to climate adaptation. The project also creates local ecosystem services. If wetlands are selected with care and do not conflict with agricultural interests (which is entirely possible), the project will have no negative consequences.