



# Rural Communities Ideas into Action Fund

## Information and Guidance Notes



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## Background

The Scottish Government has confirmed funding of £3m to test future approaches to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) in rural and island communities in Scotland over 2021-22. These pilots will help inform how we grow sustainable and thriving communities and ensure local voices shape and drive their development.

The Rural Communities Testing Change Fund (RCTC) launched with two tranches. The first tranche included funding streams to Local Action Groups (LAGs), allowing them to build on the positive legacy of LEADER while using their experience to properly innovate and test change.

This Guidance Pack relates to the second tranche of funding which is called the **Rural Communities Ideas into Action Fund** and is a £1.5 million investment from the Scottish Government to encourage and support innovative approaches to CLLD in rural communities across Scotland.

The Rural Communities Policy & Scottish Rural Network Support Unit have engaged Inspiring Scotland to manage this funding. CLLD empowers local communities to tackle their own, local challenges. By building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation, CLLD helps to create viable and resilient communities.

This funding represents a transition period due to changes in the funding landscape from European Union funding to UK funding and presents an opportunity to explore how to maximise the impact of future funding. Scottish Rural Network have [a useful website](#) which provides policy information and gives context and background information relating to this funding.

Funding is available for not-for-profit groups for capital and revenue expenditure for projects that will be delivered by end of March 2022.

Funding will enable groups to try new approaches to genuine rural community development. Successful applicants will be able to explore how to better align community-based activity to meet community priorities. Project will address whole community priorities that recognise and respond to particular and distinct local opportunities and challenges.

There are two strands of funding available:

- 1) **Small Grants** of up to £3,000 for grassroots rural groups or organisations to support community projects that fit with local needs and are locally led. The application process has been simplified to make it easy for unincorporated groups to apply and both capital and expenditure costs are eligible.
- 2) **Large Grants** of between £3,001 and £50,000 for not for profit organisations to invest in community-led initiatives that respond to local need. Again, capital and revenue costs are eligible and these can be delivered in partnership with other local organisations.

## Fund outcomes

The Rural Communities Ideas into Action Funds seek to help rural communities to thrive through funding community-led initiatives. Projects funded will contribute positively to local people and local priorities.

Scottish Government is keen to test a different, less risk averse approach to funding rural communities. Successful applicants will monitor progress in order to provide insight and learning into what does and doesn't work in rural communities and why.

The fund outcomes, listed below, apply to both the Small and Large Grants:

- 1) Rural communities will have the opportunity to try out different approaches to local community development;
- 2) Groups and organisations, not funded by Tranche 1, will build connections with the rural CLLD sector;
- 3) Rural groups and organisations will work collectively to make positive changes in their communities;
- 4) A body of evidence, insights and learning will be collated to help inform future rural CLLD policy and programmes.

## Fund criteria

To be eligible, applicants must confirm that they meet the following criteria and requirements.

### Who can apply?

The Fund will not exclude, but will prioritise, communities and groups who may not have applied for or benefitted from Tranche 1 of the Rural Communities Testing Change Fund.

**For Small Grant funding** applications are invited from small not-for-profit, grass-roots, voluntary and community organisations that are based in rural areas of Scotland. Small Grants are open to unincorporated groups as well as those organisations eligible for the Large Grant. Eligible legal forms include:

- Unincorporated groups / associations
- Constituted Community Group
- Community Interest Company
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Trust
- Community Benefit Society
- Co-operative Society

**For the Large Grant funding**, applicants should be a not-for-profit, incorporated organisation. Please note if you are a registered charity this does not automatically mean you are an incorporated organisation so please check the legal form of your organisation before submitting an application.

## Rurality

Applications must come from communities that are defined as being rural, either falling within the boundaries of a Local Action Group area or meeting the definition of a rural community as [defined by Scottish Government](#):

Rural Scotland is defined as settlements with a population of less than 3,000. You can view a map of Local Action Group areas [here](#).

A settlement is defined to be a group of high density postcodes whose combined population rounds to 500 people or more. They are separated by low density postcodes.

A postcode is high density if at least one of the following applies:

- it has more than 2.1 residential addresses per hectare;
- it has more than 0.1 non-residential addresses per hectare; or
- the estimate of the population per hectare exceeds five people.

By analysing drive times to larger settlements we can divide rural Scotland into:

**Accessible rural:** those with a less than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more; and

**Remote rural:** those with a greater than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

Applicants will be asked to select which Local Action Group area they operate in, if applicable. Information on Local Action Groups can be found on the [Scottish Rural Network website](#).

## Community-led

Projects must be community led and provide evidence to this effect. Applications should include detail on who has been involved in developing the project and which specific communities (geographical or community of interest) will benefit. Proposed projects should:

- Support whole community priorities that recognise and respond to particular and distinct local opportunities and challenges;
- Deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits to people and communities;
- Positively impact upon Covid recovery; and

- Promote equality, inclusion, diversity, and participation of local people within the community, thereby enhancing local democracy.

Successful applicants will provide a clear rationale for why the work is needed, demonstrate evidence of local ownership and involvement, and align with local needs, wants and priorities.

Applicants will be asked to provide reference(s) to confirm the community-led nature of the project.

### **Fit with Scottish Government Policy**

Applicants will be asked to indicate which of several Scottish Government policies the project most contributes to. Applicants should select from the list below the three policy areas that most closely align with their proposal:

- Community collaboration – within and among communities, and between communities and decision makers
- Wellbeing & mental health
- Community capacity building/enabling communities to take action
- Community led tourism and destination management
- Community empowerment & improving local democracy
- Inclusive, diverse and equal economic growth
- Solutions to local planning issues and opportunities
- Climate action & reducing carbon emissions
- Engaging with or providing employment for young people

### **Try New Approaches**

Key to the funding is the requirement to plan and carry out new and / or innovative approaches and monitor the results to inform any future CLLD funding.

This will be unique to each community, but could mean:

- Introducing a new initiative that hasn't been tried in your community before.
- Delivering an existing community development activity a new and different way.
- Developing new collaborations with different community organisations or stakeholders.
- Establishing a new community asset that benefits multiple families or households.

- Training local volunteers to deliver a new service to address the impact of COVID-19.

Applicants will be asked to explain what they want to do and why this is different from what the community has tried previously.

## **Partnership Working**

Project work that is being delivered in partnership is welcomed, however only one organisation should apply to the Fund as the lead partner responsible for any grants made.

Applicants can partner with Local Authorities and other organisations but the application must come from the community-based organisation.

For Large Grant applications that involve multiple partners, a Memorandum of Understanding may be helpful to show roles and responsibilities of each member of the partnership.

## **Eligible Expenditure**

Funding is available for both capital and revenue expenditure. Scottish Government is open to requests for capital expenditure for items that could stimulate community connections and growth, and make a community more resilient. Applicants may also include costs that will help to review progress and monitor or map the journey of the project.

Although we do not want to be too prescriptive, we have provided examples of eligible proposals below:

- Activities or community managed assets that make communities more resilient.
- Activities that empower local people to make change in their communities.
- Initiatives that inspire activism and pride and enable people to use their skills and talents.
- Projects that make communities more inclusive and embrace diversity.
- Projects that address barriers and build skills and confidence which may lead to further volunteerism.
- Activities that drive community action on climate change.
- Projects that enhance rural services and facilities, including transport initiatives.
- Projects that enhance natural/cultural heritage, tourism and leisure.
- Projects that support food and drink initiatives (for example short supply chains, community food).
- Activities to build co-operation with similar groups in Scotland.

- Activities which encourage communities to exchange learning and knowledge with each other, realise their potential, build opportunities for all.

Successful applicants will demonstrate how their proposals build local capacity, increase community engagement, and will support the recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding will support activity that fosters connections and promotes community development and learning.

Applicants can also include funding requests and resource to allow you to observe and measure the results to inform any future CLLD funding. This could be a contribution towards salary costs for a member of staff to monitor and evaluate the project or it could be reasonable costs towards taking on an external evaluator to support you to gather evidence of the project's impact.

### **Measuring Progress**

Applicants will need to clearly articulate how they will measure the difference that funded work makes for local people.

Applicants will be asked to detail which members of the community will benefit, and how they will benefit, in the context of the fund outcomes.

Successful projects will be asked to commit to sharing learning and contribute to project evaluation and monitoring, which will inform future funding programmes.

Inspiring Scotland will be working alongside Scottish Rural College to undertake an evaluation of the fund.

### **Meeting the funding delivery timescale**

We are aware that the timescales for this fund are very tight. Applicants will need to confirm that the proposals and projects are sufficiently developed in order to ensure expenditure of a grant by the end of March 2022.

Because capturing the learning on what worked is so important, applicants can include costs for resources to help you evaluate your activity.

All activity, including the evaluation, must be concluded by the end of March 2022.

### **Multiple Applications**

Given the expected demand on funding, we would recommend 1 application per applicant. However if a community has multiple ideas, we will accept up to 3 applications per applicant if they meet the funding criteria.

Applicants can apply for both the Small and Large Grant.

## How much can be applied for

There are two strands of funding, each with its own application form:

### 1. Small Grant

We have ring-fenced part of the fund for smaller investment of up to £3,000 for grassroots groups. This application process is simple, straightforward and open to unincorporated groups as well as those eligible for the larger grants. You will be asked a set of questions relating to your intended activity and the expenditure related to that.

### 2. Large Grant

A maximum of up to £50,000 for revenue and capital costs can be applied for to fund a project in its entirety. You will need to provide a budget to go alongside your application. Your budget can be uploaded into the application form.

All applications will be submitted via an online application form:

- [Rural Community Ideas into Action Application form A – Small Grant](#)
- [Rural Community Ideas into Action Application form B – Large Grant](#)

Please use the correct application form. For the Large Grant you will need to submit a clear and detailed budget.

Guidance for each of the application forms is available on the Inspiring Scotland website:

- [Small Grants Application Guidance](#)
- [Large Grants Application Guidance](#)

We strongly recommended that you read the application guidance for the application you intend to submit, in advance, to plan your answers.

## Fund timeline

<b>Fund launch</b>	<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b>
<b>Respond to Fund enquiries</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> Sept – 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>Close for applications</b>	12 noon, Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2021
<b>Assessment period</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> October - 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
<b>Ministerial announcement</b>	November 2021
<b>Feedback to applicants</b>	November 2021
<b>Partnership Agreements signed and Fund dispersed</b>	November/December 2021
<b>End of project delivery and final Evaluation Report</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022

## Submitting an application

The following information is important to help you complete the Rural Communities Ideas Into Action application. It lists the documents you need to submit for each type of application. Application-specific guidance providing additional information on the questions in each of the application forms can be found on the Inspiring Scotland website:

- [Small Grants application guidance](#)
- [Large Grants application guidance](#)

Please refer to the correct application guidance for the level of funding you are applying for when you prepare your answers.

**Full applications must be submitted by midday 8 October 2021.** Applications after this time will not be accepted.

Application is via questions in an online form and upload of the required documents.

There are two application forms, so select the application that is relevant to your funding request. This is either:

1. [Small Grant application form](#)
2. [Large Grant application form](#)

To complete and submit your application you will need to answer the questions via the online form and upload the following documents:

1. Small Grant
  - Constitution of set of rules, if applicable
2. Large Grant
  - Project Budget ([use this template](#))
  - Constitution or set of rules
  - Most recent, signed Statutory Accounts

Applications that do not include the documents above will be incomplete and will not be considered.

The application also requires the name, designation and contact details of independent referees who we may contact if required. The name of one reference is required for the Small Grant and two for the Large Grant. Applications should be [e]signed by an authorised signatory confirming all information provided is true and accurate.

If you have any questions about what is required to submit an application, please contact Inspiring Scotland ([ruralcommunities@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:ruralcommunities@inspiringscotland.org.uk)) as soon as possible and well in advance of the deadline date.

## Additional application notes and guidance

- Applicants will receive the full grant award in advance, following notification that the proposal has been successful, and after signing and returning a grant offer / partnership agreement.
- Applications will be strengthened where there is evidence of demand and where a project has been co-produced and is clearly fully supported by the local community.

Please note:

- All funded activity must be delivered in line with current or emerging Scottish Government Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines and ideally, where appropriate, have delivery models which can adjust in line with the different levels.
- While dependent on the volume, quality and geographical location of applications – consideration will be applied to support a proportional spread of investment across Local Action Groups.
- We expect a high level of interest in the Fund. Please consider this when completing your funding request and provide as much detail and clarity as possible.
- The Grantee shall not, without prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers, dispose of any asset funded, in part or in whole, with Grant funds during the lifetime of the asset. During that period the Scottish Ministers shall be entitled to the proceeds of the disposal – or the relevant proportion of the proceeds based on the percentage of grant funding used in connection with the acquisition or improvement of the asset against the whole proceeds. The Scottish Ministers shall also be entitled to the relevant proportion of any proceeds resulting from any provision included as a condition of sale.
- In terms of repurposing the asset, if this is undertaken before or does not allow for the aims / objectives of the funding to be achieved then the intended purposes for which the funding was issued will not have been achieved and the funding will be clawed back unless it is agreed that the repurposing can be undertaken.
- Approval is needed from Scottish Government to change the original intention of the funding if the objectives have not yet been achieved.

**Supplementary questions in the application form:** At certain points you will be asked Yes/No questions. If you select 'Yes' you may be asked supplementary questions. When completing the form online you will only see the supplementary questions if you select 'Yes', so please bear this in mind when preparing your application. All the questions are available in the Application guidance notes.

**Maximum word limits:** Please note there are word limits to some questions. These are a guide only and the maximum limit **does not need to be met**. You will be unable to enter more than the maximum word limit. Remember that we have asked you to limit your words, so writing excessively long answers to these questions will not be viewed favourably.

**What information to include:** Be specific, ensure your application is clear and answers the question we are asking. Look at the application guidance notes for further detail of what we are looking for from your answer. We strongly recommend you draft and prepare your answers prior to actually completing the form online, to make sure it reads well.

**Read over the entire application form before answering questions:** To save you repeating information, we recommend you read the application form guidance, which identifies all the questions and details we would hope to see in your answers. Please prepare carefully before starting the form and gather the additional information and documents you may need to upload prior to starting the online form.

**Contact Inspiring Scotland:** If you have any questions about the application form, contact Inspiring Scotland via [ruralcommunities@inspiringscotland.org.uk](mailto:ruralcommunities@inspiringscotland.org.uk) well in advance of the deadline for submissions (8 October 2021). You can also find further information on the Fund and technical guidance for completing the online form on the [Inspiring Scotland website](#).

We want the Fund information and application to be as accessible to as many people as possible. If there are barriers to you accessing Fund information and the application form please [contact us](#).

[AbilityNet](#) has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.