



Rural and Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund

Information and Guidance Notes



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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About this fund

The Rural & Island Communities: Ideas into Action fund enables community groups to design and deliver solutions to local challenges.

This Guidance Pack relates to the Rural & Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund and is a £3m investment from the Scottish Government to encourage and support community-led local development in rural and island communities across Scotland. The Rural Economy and Communities Division have appointed Inspiring Scotland to manage this funding.

Community-led local development empowers local communities to tackle their own, local challenges. By building knowledge and skills, supporting new ideas and encouraging cooperation, we can help to create viable and resilient communities.

Scottish Rural Network have [a useful website](#) which provides policy information and gives context and background information relating to this funding. This includes an overview of the Local Action Group (LAG) network, which also supports community-led local development in rural Scotland.

There are two strands of funding available:

- 1) **Small Grants** of up to £5,000 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 revenue costs are eligible.
- 2) **Large Grants** of between £5,001 and £100,000 for incorporated not-for-profit organisations to invest in community-led initiatives that respond to local need. Capital and revenue costs are eligible and projects can be delivered in partnership with other local organisations.

Projects must be led by their community. Successful applicants will be able to explore how their project will address community priorities that recognise and respond to particular and distinct local opportunities and challenges.

Projects must relate to at least one of the three top Scottish Government priorities: rural poverty; net zero and climate emergency; or Covid-19 recovery.

Projects must be delivered between December 2022 and 31 March 2023. It is possible to apply for funding to undertake a phase of a larger project that is being completed outside of these dates.

The deadline for application is noon on Monday 10th October 2022. There is an online application form for each strand of funding. This document provides guidance to support applicants.

Who can apply

To apply for this funding, you must be a not-for-profit organisation within a rurally-based community.

You must be a not-for-profit organisation

For Small Grant funding applications are invited from 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 incorporated organisations eligible for the Large Grant. We expect the majority of these grants to be awarded to small, new or less experienced community groups. 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 with a [‘legal personality’](#). 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. Eligible legal forms include:

- Community Interest Company
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Community Benefit Society
- Co-operative Society

You must be based in a rural or island location in Scotland

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. A settlement is defined to be a group of high density postcodes whose combined population rounds to 500 people or more. 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 (but less than 60 minutes) to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

- **Very remote rural:** those with a greater than 60 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

You will be asked to select which Local Action Group (LAG) area your organisation operates in, if applicable. These are groups which bring together people from local public, private and civil societies to tackle important local priorities in a locally specific and participative way.

They continue to provide an effective way to reflect local priorities and deliver Community Led Local Development (CLLD) in rural areas across Scotland. The £3m Rural & Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund is in addition to the £7.6m Scottish Government funds being distributed directly through LAGs this financial year.

- You can view a map of Local Action Group areas [here](#).
- Information on Local Action Groups can be found on the [Scottish Rural Network website](#).

Local Action Groups were originally to support the delivery of European Union LEADER funding. Some Local Action Groups are in the process of re-establishing their membership and activities following the UK's exit from the European Union. The status of your Local Action Group does not impact on your application, and you should select the LAG in which your project operates.

You can be funded by other Scottish Government funds

Previous applicants to the 2021 Rural Communities Ideas into Action fund, and those who have received funding through their LAG in 2022/23 are eligible to apply to this fund.

Depending on the volume of applications, this Fund may prioritise, communities and groups who may not have applied for or benefitted from Community Led Local Development funding in the past 3 years.

You can be part of a partnership project

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

The type of projects we fund

To be successful, applicants must explain how they meet the following criteria and requirements.

They contribute positively to local people and priorities

The Rural & Island Communities Ideas into Action Fund seeks to help rural communities to thrive through funding community-led initiatives. Projects funded will contribute positively to local people and local priorities. The four fund outcomes, listed below, apply to both the Small and Large Grants. Your project must lead to at least one of these outcomes.

1. Our rural community will have tried a new approach to local community development **to respond to our local needs.**

This will be unique to each community, but could mean expanding an existing community activity or asset in a new or different way; developing a new community asset or new service which benefits your community; introducing a new initiative that hasn't been tried in your community before; extending a successful pilot project. You should explain what you want to do, how it meets local needs, and why this is different from what the community has tried before..
2. Our rural community will have built connections with the community-led local development sector **to work with the Local Action Group network or other support organisations.**

This could take the form of connecting with the LAG network and others working in CLLD (e.g. environmental organisations, covid response groups, development trusts, health and wellbeing initiatives) to participate in shared activities, to create strategic change in your community, or engage with other local development processes that your organisation has not participated in before. You should explain how you plan to work with others in the CLLD sector and what you will achieve.
3. Our rural community will have worked collectively and collaboratively **to create new local partnerships.**

This could mean exploring new partnerships with other organisations or institutions, initiating new ways of working together, or co-ordinating collaborative projects between various groups in your community. You should explain how you will create these new partnerships and for what purpose.
4. Our rural community will have contributed to local knowledge and learning **to inform future rural policy and programmes.**

This will typically have a strong focus on learning something about your community, and could take the form of undertaking and evaluating a pilot project, carrying out research or feasibility studies, or other communication and engagement activities. You should explain what you will learn, and why this is important for future rural policy and programmes.

They are led by their community

Projects must be community led and provide evidence to this effect. You should include detail on who has been involved in developing the project and which specific communities (geographical or community of interest) will benefit. You should also explain how your project aligns with local needs, wants and priorities.

They respond to Scottish Government priorities

You will be asked to indicate which of several Scottish Government priority areas your project contributes to most. Your project needs to align to at least one of these three main priority areas:

- Rural poverty – especially child and fuel poverty
- Net Zero and the climate emergency
- Covid recovery

You will also be able to select additional priority areas that most closely align with your project:

- Collaboration within and between communities, and between communities and decision makers
- Community empowerment and improving local democracy
- Community-led tourism and destination management
- Engaging with, or providing employment for young people
- Inclusive, diverse and equal local economies, including rural entrepreneurship
- Solutions to island issues and opportunities
- Wellbeing and social justice

They measure progress to understand the difference the project is making

You will need to clearly explain how you will evaluate your project: how you will measure the changes that the funded work makes for local people in your community.

You should explain the methods you will use to involve people in this evaluation, what information you will gather and how often you will gather it.

Funded projects will be asked to share their learning to help inform future funding programmes for community-led local development.

They are inclusive of all the people in their community

Your project should be inclusive, which means that it should not exclude anyone in your community. To do this, you should consider the physical, social or economic challenges people might have in participating in the activities you are planning, and if

there are ways you can overcome these challenges to ensure the widest range of people can participate.

They can be completed by 31 March 2023

All activity, including the evaluation, must be concluded by the end of March 2023. 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 the grant funding can be spent by the end of March 2023.

If your project is very large or cannot be completed by 31st March 2023, consider making an application for one or more initial stages.

As part of your application, we may ask if planning permission is required for your activity to take place, and whether this has been granted. Although having planning permission in place is encouraged given the timeline of this funding, it is not a requirement.

Project examples

Although we do not want to be too prescriptive, we have provided examples of eligible proposals based on projects funded in 2021 which responded to community needs:

- Valleyfield Community Club worked with their local Home-Start support service to transform their toilet facilities to accommodate a baby changing unit and create more inclusive opportunities for family-based events.
- Colinsburgh Community Trust launched their Community Café & Fridge initiative: diverting food waste from supermarkets to local families struggling with food poverty, whilst creating a social meeting point without stigma.
- The Southern Uplands Partnership piloted 'Recharge in Nature': researching the existing local EV car & bike recharging network, raising awareness of the Elektrek Explorer App, and exploring businesses interested in being part of the programme.
- North Queensferry Community Trust formed a Harbour Management Trust with the local Rowing Club, Boat Club and Sea Kayaking Club to source resources, undertake collaborative volunteer work and develop income generation opportunities for their community.
- Islay Energy Trust enabled local contractors to undertake the necessary training and gain the qualifications required to register as accredited installers of Air Source Heat Pumps, Ground Source Heat Pumps and Solar Panel renewables: creating new employment opportunities and reducing installation costs for local people.

You can see a [list of the projects funded by the Rural Communities Ideas into Action Fund](#) in 2021 on the Inspiring Scotland website.

What you can spend the money on

How much you can apply 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 £5,000 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 £100,000 for revenue and capital costs can be applied for to fund a project in its entirety. You will need to complete a budget template to go alongside your application. Your completed budget template can be uploaded into the application form.

Capital and revenue expenditure

Funding is available for both capital and revenue expenditure. The Scottish Government is open to requests for capital expenditure for items that could stimulate community connections and growth, and make a community more resilient.

We recognise that delivering this project might require more core resource (e.g. you may have to bring on more staff and/or increase your internal operations). We support full cost recovery.

Evaluation costs

Because capturing the learning on what worked is so important, applicants can include costs for resources to help you evaluate your activity. Applicants may include costs that will help to review progress and monitor or map the journey of the project. 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.

Communications costs

Applicants may include costs that will help to communicate about the project, engage with new people and monitor or map the journey of the project. 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 physical or digital resources to increase the quality or reach of your communications about the project.

How to apply

Guidance notes and fund information

Please use these guidance notes to inform your application. In particular, you should ensure that your organisation is [eligible to apply](#) and that your [project meets the fund criteria](#).

Expression of interest & application form

Application is via questions in an online form and upload of the required documents. There are two application forms (one for small grants and one for large grants), so select the application that is relevant to your funding request.

Please submit an expression of interest to receive a link to both application forms and supporting guidance.

- [Submit an expression of interest to receive your application form](#)

Applications should be [e]signed by an authorised signatory confirming all information provided is true and accurate.

When you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Check your spam folder, and please get in touch with us if you have not received this email after submitting an application.

Full applications must be submitted by midday 10 October 2022. Applications after this time will not be accepted.

Documents you will need

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

- A. Small Grant
 - Constitution or set of rules, if applicable
- B. 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.

Additional application notes and guidance

Preparing your application

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.

Match funding: This grant does not require match funding. However, if your total project cost exceeds the size of the grant you are applying for, you will be asked to explain how you have raised the additional funds.

Planning your written application

Microsoft Word formats of each application form, including additional information on the questions can be found on the Inspiring Scotland website. You may find these useful to plan your answers:

- [Small Grants word template](#)
- [Large Grants word template](#)

Please note that we can only accept applications submitted through our online application form. If you wish to use the Microsoft Word template to draft your application, you should copy & paste your answers into the online form to submit your application.

Submitting your online application

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.

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. Keep your answers short and to the

point. A clear and concise response that answers the question fully is much better than a long one.

Formatting: Please note that formatting (including bold text and bullet points) is not captured by our online form.

What information to include: 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. 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.

Scottish Government guidance

Covid-19 guidance: 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.

Disposal of assets: 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.

Repurposing of assets: 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.

Project changes: Approval is needed from Scottish Government to change the original intention of the funding if the objectives have not yet been achieved.

What happens after you apply

How we will make decisions

We will take the following questions into account when assessing applications:

- Is it community led?
- It is meeting a need that has been identified by the community?
- Does it build community resilience and support community development?
- Is it deliverable by March 2023?
- Does it increase equity, diversity and inclusion in the community?

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 and/or priority areas.

Successful applicants

1. If your application is successful, you will be notified by email. We will let you know when you can publicise the good news.
2. Your organisation will be asked to sign a grant agreement and provide us with bank account details and a recent bank statement. We will also ask for details of a finance contact for your organisation who can receive payment remittances and be able to account for how the funding has been spent.
3. Once this information has been received we will pay your grant in one or two payments, based on the size of your project. You will receive at least 50% of your grant upfront, and (if applicable) the remainder following a progress report.
4. You will be asked at the end of the funding how you've spent the money and what difference the funding has made.

Indicative timelines

Please note that these are indicative at this stage. We will always seek to keep applicants informed about the status of their application and any changes to this timeline.

Close for applications	12 noon, Monday 10th October 2022
Fund open for applications	8 th September – 10 th October 2022
Assessment period	October - November 2022
Feedback to applicants	By beginning December 2022
Partnership Agreements signed and Fund dispersed	December 2022
End of project delivery and final Evaluation Report	31 st March 2023

How to get more help and advice

If you have any questions when completing your application, please fill out this very [short enquiries form](#) and a member of our team will get back to you. Alternatively, you can email ruralcommunities@inspiringscotland.org.uk.

We expect there to be a lot of interest in this fund, so if you have a very detailed question, please ensure you contact us well in advance of the deadline for submissions (10 October 2022).

You can also find further information on the Fund and technical guidance for completing the online form on the [Inspiring Scotland website](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Please check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website for more information you may find helpful. We will continue to add to the FAQs relevant questions and answers as they arise

Free resources for grassroots community groups

Visit www.ruralcommunityresources.scot for free resources to support Scotland's rural communities, produced by Inspiring Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government. This digital resource bank features a series of short, skills-based films with added templates, resources and guides to support small community-led organisations.

Accessibility

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.

About Inspiring Scotland

Inspiring Scotland strives for a Scotland without poverty or disadvantage. Inspiring Scotland was formed in 2008 to identify and solve the entrenched social problems faced by Scotland's people and communities.

We partner with entrepreneurs, businesspeople, philanthropists, charitable trusts, Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies to design and implement bold, long-term solutions – drawing on expertise and experience from across disciplines and sectors.

We identify third sector organisations tackling deep social issues and invest time, money and expertise in them, establishing close working relationships and cooperative networks.

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