Increasing Participation, Community Engagement and Involvement

Green Infrastructure Fund

Guidance for Applicants

October 2016

Disclaimer

Applicants should be aware that as the Green Infrastructure Fund is a new programme, the guidance will be reviewed as the programme evolves and therefore may be subject to change. The European Union and Scottish Ministers reserve the right to amend the National Rules and SNH reserves the right to amend the published guidance during the period of the programme. Decisions to fund applications will be based on the availability of funding, how well the project matches the Green Infrastructure Fund priorities and its contribution to outcomes as part of the whole Strategic Intervention. These priorities may change during the course of the Strategic Intervention to take into account gaps in meeting priorities in previously funded projects and not to fund at all. The Scottish Government reserves the right not to award any support at all under this programme.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is an outcomes and results-driven investment programme. It is designed to ensure that investment results in defined impacts for communities. The 2014 – 2020 ERDF strategy and programmes are designed around strategic interventions, these are large scale programmes of work which will be managed by Lead Partners – organisations who have a demonstrated capacity to manage strategic interventions and comply with the audit responsibilities for the funds. SNH is the lead partner for the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention.

The purpose of this document is to set out guidance on the requirements for engaging with local communities in developing, delivering, monitoring and reporting on projects under the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention.

1.2. Background

Under the 2014-20 Programme, we intend to deliver a minimum of 15 substantial projects across Scotland that improve or create at least 140 hectares of urban green infrastructure. SNH has been approved as Lead Partner for the period up to 2018, during which time we intend to deliver a minimum of 8 projects. A mid-term review in 2018 will take place before further approvals to 2020.

The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will be delivered through a Challenge Fund – the Green Infrastructure Fund. A summary of how the Fund will operate is provided in the Overview and Summary.

1.3. Green Infrastructure Fund Summary

The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will create better places and enhance the quality of life of urban dwellers by improving the quality, accessibility and quantity of green infrastructure in our major towns and cities. The Green Infrastructure Fund is targeted at urban areas in Scotland that have a deficit of good quality greenspace, and suffer from multiple-deprivation and an excess of vacant and derelict land. Communities in these areas will benefit through the improvement and creation of green infrastructure that will help to deliver successful multi-functional places, address inequalities, provide opportunities for better health and support sustainable economic growth.

Our ambition is to raise people's satisfaction with the quality of their green infrastructure in urban areas, bringing it more into line with satisfaction levels at the national average. Green infrastructure includes the 'green' and 'blue' features of the built environment that can provide benefits and contribute to the quality of life in urban areas.

The objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention are to:

- improve the quality, accessibility and quantity of green infrastructure in major towns and cities;
- provide increased and better opportunities for people to improve their health and well-being;

- address inequalities through the creation and improvement of greenspace for communities in areas of multiple deprivation and/or for communities living in proximity to vacant and derelict land;
- provide increased opportunities for people to experience and value nature and promote greater use of greenspace by local communities; and
- contribute to economic regeneration, providing benefits to people and businesses by investing in green infrastructure.

The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will be delivered through the Green Infrastructure Fund, as an open and competitive Challenge Fund.

The rest of this document provides guidance on good practice for engaging with communities through the design, development, implementation, maintenance, monitoring and reporting of projects funded under the Green Infrastructure Fund.

2. Community participation outcomes

A set out outcomes has been defined for the Green Infrastructure Fund in the Blueprint for Green Infrastructure. All outcomes are relevant to people, but two are particularly relevant to considering how to engage and involve communities and increase participation in the outdoors.

2.1.   Involving communities and increasing participation

All sectors within communities feel empowered and confident to use their local greenspaces.

People feel confident and empowered to use their greenspace. There is a perception that crime, including 'low level crime' or anti-social behaviour is reduced. People use their greenspace more often and for a wider range of activities, both formal and informal. Schools and other organisations use greenspace for education, skills development, volunteering, recreation, and play.

Enjoying the outdoors has become more common and is part of our culture. People explore the area to experience nature, relax and stay fit. There is an increased choice of greenspace available with a range of different sizes, facilities, habitat, play equipment and experiences to visit close to home. Interpretation helps make using the sites and network easier to use and explains what wildlife, facilities and activities can be found there, and what benefits they provide. There is a broad range of experiences that do not need expertise in the outdoors. There are more community gardens, allotments and food production and more wild food can be collected.

More people use path and cycle networks/ routes because greenspaces are better linked together, including links to and between national way-marked routes.

Communities across Scotland understand and engage with their green places and its improvement. Communities want to influence green infrastructure development and feel ownership and empowerment to use it to its full potential. Communities feel positive about the GI investment and understand how it benefits them and want to engage with it and share their experience.

Communities close to or affected by green infrastructure are engaged and involved in the planning, management, improvement and use of their places and greenspaces. They see green infrastructure as a positive factor in the way their place functions and feel that the green elements of their environment add to their quality of life. Communities affected by green infrastructure improvements want to celebrate the improvements, and other communities are aware of and feel welcome to enjoy and experience the green places.

2.2. Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

People feel confident and empowered to use their greenspace and to be involved in, or influence, its management.

The environment in which people live and the prosperity that they enjoy have significant impacts on their health and well-being. The way greenspace and places are planned, managed and used ensures that they provide a wide range of environmental benefits to local communities and helps them feel more secure and resilient. Barriers to advancement economically, socially and in outdoor workplaces are reduced for disadvantaged groups.

All sectors within communities feel empowered and confident to use their local greenspaces. Greenspaces and places are designed and managed so that everyone feels welcome and that there is something for them. All sections of local communities have opportunities to get involved with and use their local greenspace in ways that suit them. The whole community feels more in control of their local environment, more influential and better connected.

Enjoying the outdoors has become more common and is part of our culture. Communities are involved in management of their local greenspace, contributing to developing an outdoors culture.

3. Community participation objectives

We want to ensure that all communities in and around green infrastructure, which are in receipt of funding under the Green Infrastructure Challenge Fund, understand and engage with green infrastructure and its improvement. Communities should be able to influence green infrastructure development and feel ownership and empowerment to use it to its full potential. Green infrastructure investment should help communities feel positive about their place, and how it benefits them, and want to engage with it and share their experience. Other communities should be able to learn from the green infrastructure experience and be stimulated to develop their own green infrastructure projects.

Recent literature suggests that having a voice in the community and feeling a sense of empowerment gives citizens a stronger commitment to their local area. As a consequence they will be more likely to be a part of local activities. According to Understanding Participation[1] "*when an active interest is shown in their opinion...and [they] feel their*

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[1] http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Pathways-literature-review-final-version.pdf

engagement was influential and acted upon" – a citizen will be more motivated to be involved and stay involved politically.

The United Nations[2] found that "*A close look at the political economy and public governance in most countries (including some of the advanced democracies) reveals that the poor and the disadvantaged face increasing marginalization.*"… "*When people feel they can influence what happens in their community and can contribute to delivering change, there can be many benefits. Communities can often achieve significant improvements by doing things for themselves, because they know what will work for them. They become more confident and resilient; there are often opportunities for people to gain new skills and for increased employment as well as improved access to services and support.*"

At present, there is a risk that only the more affluent communities will be able to take advantage of the new powers brought about by changes to community empowerment legislation, as they tend to have easier access to the skills, experience, facilities and funding needed to take advantage of them. Research by the Carnegie Trust[3] shows that to date 90% of community owned assets are located in the 80% least deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland and just 3% in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The Policy Memorandum for the Community Empowerment Bill 2014 touches on the importance of building capacity within these disadvantaged communities.

The table below shows the full range of community engagement. The intention of The Scottish Government and new legislation such as the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015*,* is to shift from the lower rungs to the upper rungs of this ladder. The top two steps represent a more fundamental change in power relations, enabling people to have more control and responsibility over the services they use.

	Empower	Place decision-making in the hands of the community through participatory decision-making and budgeting, co-production, transfer of power and assets.
	Collaborate	Work together to deliver outcomes through partnerships, board representation, joint policy statements.
	Involve	Help people to identify issues and possible solutions through workshops, Charettes, two-way communication.
	Consult	Asking people what they think through surveys, focus groups, customer feedback.
	Inform	Provide information on issues, options and decisions through newsletters, websites, exhibitions.

Community empowerment and co-production can be an outcome in itself as well as a means to an end. It can lead to increased confidence and skills among local people, and more satisfaction with quality of life in local neighbourhoods. It should also lead to the delivery of better, more responsive services and better outcomes for communities. It should lead to higher numbers of people volunteering in their communities, a stronger interest in what

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[2] People Matter Civic Engagement in Public Governance, World Public sector Report, United Nations, 2008
[3] Response of the Carnegie Trust to the consultation on the draft Community Empowerment Bill.

happens to nature and landscapes close to where people live, and a higher political and social value for nature.

There is a link between health and cultural aspects of ecosystem services. Greenspace can affect our spiritual, aesthetic, educational and recreational response to our local environment and can lead in turn to better social stability, mutual respect and willingness to help others.[4] Improving community engagement, ownership and participation with green infrastructure can bring multiple benefits, for example:

- improving opportunities for access to and participation in greenspace will support and encourage all sectors of the community to make more of their local greenspaces;
- removing barriers, including fear of crime, and changing the perception of places will encourage women and women's groups to make better use of the outdoors; and
- increasing access to greenspace and nature increases cultural ecosystem services by improving people's connection to their local biodiversity, increasing recreational access and enabling cultural experiences.

Each Green Infrastructure Fund project will have to engage with their local communities and encourage participation in their green infrastructure planning, design, development, management and use. Community engagement will be essential to ensuring that communities derive the full benefit from the improvement or increase in their green infrastructure.

The National Standards for Community Engagement were published on 29 September 2016. First developed in 2005, the Standards are key principles for effective practice which support community engagement and user involvement in Scotland. The National Standards for Community Engagement have been simplified to seven Standards, reflecting the main elements of good community engagement - Inclusion, Support, Planning, Working Together, Methods, Communication and Impact. The National Standards are available to download from the Voice website.

4. Delivering Community Engagement

4.1.   Community Involvement in Design

Ideally communities will be involved in the design and development of the applications. There are many mechanisms for this, ranging from strategic local authority-led activities to very local community led development. Activities such as Charettes can be helpful in drawing out community aspirations for their local area and provide excellent evidence of need for local improvements. Your application should highlight how communities have been involved in the development and design of the application.

Consideration should be given to identifying and working with target groups, and in particular excluded, vulnerable or harder to reach communities. Groups that are already suffering from some form of exclusion or who have recognised reduced equality of opportunity should be explicitly identified and encouraged to engage with green infrastructure planning and design. For example, in order to make green infrastructure elements culturally responsive and for the

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[4] Ecosystem Services – A Guide for Decision Makers - World Resources Institute

resident population to feel a sense of ownership, it may be necessary to work with intermediary groups who can help facilitate access to specific target groups within communities, such as disabilities groups, ethnic or language communities, young parents, people identifying as LGBT and so forth. Conscious avoidance of creating barriers or discrimination may not be sufficient to overcome actual or perceptual physical or psycho-social barriers.

4.2. On-going Community Engagement

Applications should include deliverable methods for on-going engagement with their communities. We welcome innovation and trialling new, creative and unusual approaches. Some approaches for focusing community engagement are explored below. These are illustrative, and by no means exhaustive. A strong application may include a combination of two or more of these, or other approaches.

Art-based approach

An artist could work with communities to understand, develop, and document their story and their journey with GI. This work would involve identifying communities, including communities of interest, within a locality, and working with key intermediary bodies to access those who are harder to reach. It could include a programme of activity in each community, which brings that community together to create something collaborative. SNH has some good experience of this after the Year of Natural Scotland art residencies.

Art could include: physical works on site; images (drawings, paintings, photographs): cartoons and storybooks; written word – stories, poetry, plays; film/ multi-media etc. Examples of where these have been really effective include the dolphins in Aberdeen, decorated by schoolchildren, or the wildcats in Newtonmore painted by local people. Forestry Commission Scotland's development of Cuningar Loop also provides some recent examples of green infrastructure artist-led community engagement.

Citizen-science approach

Communities could be supported by a scientist to explore and document the changes in their local environment as a result of green infrastructure investment. This could include mapping the current state, recording key variables, such as flooding, soil loss, temperature, numbers of trees, people cycling or using greenspace etc. The communities could be supported to track these changes over time using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Participation and Activity approach

Communities could be supported to develop activities and enterprises associated with their green infrastructure. This could include a range of voluntary activities, including active management of sites, walking or jogging groups, out-door play groups, festivals, clean-ups/ bio-blitz, pop-up café or shop, new businesses such as dog-walking etc. New friends groups could be supported and encouraged and communities would be supported to seek funding to deliver new activities. Natural play and movement should be encouraged and considered for all elements of the community. Building in opportunities and support for play and exploration can help ensure children and adults benefit from greenspace improvements.

Volunteering and skills development

Applications should consider how to make use of and develop local skills through volunteering or skills development programmes. The following could all form part of applications: development of local skills; working with skills development programmes; developing and supporting volunteers and voluntary groups; and supporting and encouraging activity by local and national NGOs in support of volunteering.

Care should be taken where other European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund activities are taking place in the same geographic area – there may be potential for joint activity, but this should be discussed with the Lead Partner.

Nature-based approach

Focusing on developing people's understanding and appreciation of urban nature, communities in areas of GI funding would be supported to explore and engage with their local biodiversity through surveys, nature walks, mini-beast adventures, wetland activities (clean-ups, pond-dipping etc), increasing habitat for biodiversity through active community management and celebrating nature through events.

Ecosystem Approach

Communities could be supported to explore the ecosystem services provided by their green infrastructure and to consider how they can benefit from its improvement. Using a tested methodology, communities could work through a number of steps that explore how their local environment works, the ecosystem services it provides and the benefits they derive from it. They could be supported to explore how they can derive more benefit from their environment, how they can influence its management and performance, and how they use it.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Please see the Green Infrastructure Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Guidance for advice on how to plan for monitoring and reporting against the Horizontal Themes. This should be integrated into your project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. However, two key points should be borne in mind when considering developing monitoring in relation to communities:

- where possible, get the target audience involved in planning the reporting and get them involved in gathering evidence;
- get creative and make it fun – think about what will be compelling when we tell the story of green infrastructure.

Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba
All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad