



EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Eligibility Guidance

Green Infrastructure Community
Engagement Fund

Guidance for Applicants

January 2017



Disclaimer

Applicants should be aware that as the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement 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 projects 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 purpose of this document is to set out the eligibility guidance and the criteria we will use to assess your application. This guidance draws on the [National Rules, European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\) Operational Programme](#) for 2014-20 and [ERDF Regulations](#).

The Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund Eligibility Guidance sets out what we will and will not fund. In addition to it forming guidance for applicants, it will be used by the Green Infrastructure Fund Team for screening, assessment and scoring of applications during the selection of projects, and forming the basis of monitoring and evaluation. More information can be found in the [Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund Assessment and Selection Procedure](#) and the [Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#).

1.2. Background

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 are 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 Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will be delivered through 3 Challenge Funds: the Green Infrastructure Fund (Lowlands and Uplands), the Green Infrastructure Fund (Highlands and Islands) and the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund. The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention has been approved, with SNH as Lead Partner for the period up to 2018. A summary of how the Community Engagement Challenge Fund will operate is provided in the [Overview and Summary](#).

For further information, eligibility criteria for the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund, can be found on the Green Infrastructure website.

Under the 2014-20 ESIF Programme, through the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund, we intend to deliver a minimum of 10 community engagement projects, across Scotland that help urban communities engage meaningfully with their local green infrastructure.

1.3. Summary

The Green Infrastructure Fund 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 in Scotland that have a deficit of good quality greenspace and suffer from multiple-deprivation. 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. Additionally, the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund will add value by increasing people's awareness of the benefits and understanding of the value of their Green Infrastructure.

Our ambition is to raise people's satisfaction with the quality of their green infrastructure in urban areas, bringing it 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 Community Engagement Fund are:

- increased opportunities for people to experience and value nature
- greater use of greenspace by local communities
- communities understand and engage more with their green spaces
- people understand how green infrastructure benefits their community
- increased influence communities have on their local green infrastructure
- increased community ownership and empowerment, leading to full potential of green infrastructure being realised
- communities want to share their experiences of green infrastructure

The purpose of this guidance is to distinguish clearly between eligible and ineligible activity and costs, and to ensure that only eligible activity and expenditure features in applications and ultimately claims. While every effort has been made to produce clear guidance on eligibility, there remains an onus on applicant organisations to apply for a grant responsibly and reasonably and to ensure compliance. In cases of doubt, clarification should be sought from the Green Infrastructure Fund Team in the first instance. Please also refer to the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 Programmes - [National Rules on Eligibility of Expenditure](#) (The National Rules): Please check the Scottish Government website for updates.

The EC Regulations governing the overall use of European Structural Funds for the 2014-2020 programmes are available here:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/legislation/index_en.cfm

Applicants should be aware that as the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund is a new programme, the eligibility criteria will be reviewed as the programme develops and evolves and therefore may be subject to change. Any changes made by the European Union or Scottish Government to the current rules will be published on the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention website.

SNH reserves the right not to fund any applications submitted under the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention. Furthermore, the Scottish Government, as Managing Authority, will make its own assessment on the investment decision and may also decide not to fund applications, even where these have been proposed by SNH.

2. Eligibility Guidance

2.1. Who is eligible for Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund funding?

Applicant organisations need to be approved and registered by the Scottish Government as an eligible body to apply for ERDF funding. Before an application form is issued to an applicant, the Green Infrastructure team will check directly with the Scottish Government whether the organisation is already registered.

Applicants are responsible for all aspects of implementation, monitoring and reporting on projects, including:

- submission of accurate information as part of the application
- acceptance of grant, including any standard and special conditions
- implementation of the approved project including cash-flow management, submission of claims, monitoring and reporting progress, monitoring and verification visits in line with the grant offer and any associated legal contract
- the retention of project documentation for the prescribed period to 2030 - including records confirming that any procurement complied with the Regulations and maintaining a full audit trail vouching expenditure incurred and defrayed

Applicants need to be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity (skills, expertise and relevant experience) to implement and manage the project and have sufficient cash flow to support any delay in recovering Green Infrastructure income. Please note that grant payments are paid quarterly in arrears following submission of the quarterly grant claim form and supporting reporting documents.

The following types of organisations are eligible for Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund funding:

Public Sector - This group includes Central Government and Non-Departmental Public Bodies; local authorities and related agencies (e.g., local initiatives); Scottish Enterprise; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; visitScotland; Further and Higher Education Institutions; Forest Enterprise.

Voluntary or Charitable Organisations¹ - This group includes: registered/recognised charities, trusts, co-operatives and "not for profit" organisations; organisations that directly or indirectly receive over 50% of core funding (excluding European Funds) from the public sector, or from levies raised by Industrial Training Organisations for training purposes.

Private sector organisations are not eligible to apply. This may be taken to be organisations established and operating for profit where these profits accrue to shareholders, partners or

¹ Please note that in certain circumstances, voluntary or charitable organisations may require a 'sponsor' to vouch for the applicant, accept contingent liability for the projects and, crucially, the grant and to ensure proper implementation, reporting and accounting.

sole traders. This includes companies acting in the public interest (eg. privatised former public utilities, private companies such as Abellio and Network Rail).

Partnerships, in the more traditional sense, are not eligible to apply. We cannot accept an application from a group of organisations with one acting as a 'lead partner'. However, if a partnership is legally constituted and the application would be coming from that partnership, then it may be considered an organisation and therefore eligible. In case of doubt, please contact the Green Infrastructure team, at as early a stage as possible, to discuss eligibility of partnerships directly.

2.2. Where can we fund projects?

Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund projects must provide benefits and contribute to the quality of life in urban settlements in Scotland with a population of 10,000 or more.

For more information on urban/ rural classification please refer to:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>²

For a map of urban/rural areas in Scotland (2013-14, 6 fold classification) please see:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00464803.pdf>

Applications outwith the urban boundary will be considered for funding but will have to clearly demonstrate a significant impact and benefits for the urban community cited in the application.

Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund projects should benefit areas of multiple deprivation – with priority given to the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland, as defined by the Scottish Government's Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD> and/or benefit communities living in close proximity to vacant and derelict land.

Projects can relate to any type of publicly accessible greenspace. Projects that relate to private spaces such as residential gardens, privately managed housing estates or schools where access by the general public is restricted are not eligible for inclusion.

Please note that applications for work in and around sites which have received funding from the Green Infrastructure Fund already are unlikely to receive funding.

2.3. What is eligible for Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund funding?

² This is the official 'published' Scottish Government dataset and hence appropriate that we use it to base our decisions on.

Projects eligible for funding must be locally led and be connected to local Green Infrastructure and demonstrate how they meet the requirements set out in in the National Rules guidance regarding eligibility: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00487277.pdf>.

Green Infrastructure includes the "green" and "blue" (water environment) features of the natural and built environments that can provide benefits and contribute to the quality of life in urban areas.

Green Infrastructure community engagement projects must involve local and locally relevant groups and increase participation in local greenspace.

ERDF is outcomes orientated, and therefore it is not possible to be specific about which activities will be eligible or deliver the agreed outcomes for any specific project. All projects will be context-specific.

Appendix 1 sets out examples of eligible and ineligible activities.

2.4. Timescales for projects delivery

You must not start your project before written Approval to Start from SNH has been received. Only works incurred and defrayed within the approved lifetime of the project are eligible.³

The following sets out some key dates for the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund:

- 31 December 2018 is the date by which the grantee must have achieved the Approved Purposes for your project as set out in your Delivery Contract
- All grants must be claimed and paid by 30 June 2019
- Annual reporting on outcomes and results will be required to 2023
- The reporting period is until 2029 and grantees must be able to keep detailed records, suitable for local, national and EU audits up to 2030

2.5. How will applications with ineligible items be assessed?

If the overall project contains ineligible elements, the applicant can choose to distinguish eligible and ineligible works and fund the ineligible projects from elsewhere.

If the application contains minor elements which are not eligible (less than 10%) – and these have not been identified as such within the application - and the project can be delivered without these elements and still achieve the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund outcomes, then we will consider removing the costs for these elements from the application in consultation with the applicant, should their application be allocated funding.

2.6. Scale of eligible projects

³ National Rules, Section 4.1.2

Individual projects should be of a scale and level of ambition to have a significant impact and achieve change. We will look at projects over a longer timeframe to ensure that they leave a positive legacy in the community.

SNH has determined the following financial amounts:

- the total project eligible costs must be a minimum of £50,000
- the total project eligible costs must be a maximum of £120,000
- seeking an ERDF grant of up to 40% in LUPS and 50% in H&I (therefore, the maximum grant award will be £48,000 in LUPS and £60,000 in H&I)
- the minimum % threshold for grant awards will be 10%.

We may consider community engagement project applications which are made up of multiple locations across communities, provided there is a clear rationale and delivery of outcomes.

2.7. Match funding

ERDF funding is funding of last resort. Therefore, applicants need to ensure that the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund is the most appropriate funding source.

The Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund contribution should be the minimum amount required to allow the projects to proceed. To this end, additionality must be clearly evidenced for each project.

The Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund is a 'gap' fund. This means that if you reduce the size of your project, you may not be able to draw down the full amount awarded. It should be noted that additional funding committed for the activities supported by ERDF after approval will reduce the ERDF contribution, so we would recommend that any additional funding applied for post-ERDF approval should be associated with an increase in total budget or for activities not supported by ERDF. Note that if your costs reduce, the ERDF contribution will reduce accordingly.

The intervention rate for the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund funding is up to maximum 40% for the Lowlands and Uplands (LUPS) area and up to maximum 50% for the Highlands and Islands (H&I) area.

Amongst others, lottery funding and funding through Landfill Communities Tax is acceptable as match funding. Alternatively, public bodies, such as local authorities, can raise funds through schemes such as a Tax Incremental Financing following approval from The Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Finance/18232/TIF>. The following sources of match funding are NOT eligible:

- European Funding of any kind
- Corporate and private sector match funding (i.e. contributions from companies that have shareholders who are paid out dividends etc. on profits or receive direct personal benefits)
- In-kind contributions

At the stage of submitting an application, match funding must be identified but does not need to be confirmed. It would be preferable however for it to be confirmed and applications with confirmed match funding will score more highly during assessment. It should be noted that overly complex match funding packages will be treated with caution. Match funding for successful applications must be confirmed before Approval to Start is given.

If the funding package is not complete at application stage, it is not acceptable for the applicant to say that they will continue to seek funding for the gap but underwrite it if they are unable to plug the gap, the rationale being that if your organisation can underwrite the gap, your organisation can afford to pay for it.

Any revenue funding generated by the project will be deducted from the projects eligible costs and the grant reduced accordingly.

Advice regarding other potential funding sources can be found on the SNH website:
<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A340448.pdf>

2.8. Procurement Principles

Please note that only two cost models should be considered – Procurement and Direct Staff Cost + 15%.

Information regarding procurement can be found in the National Rules, Section 1.8.
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00487277.pdf>

Grantees must ensure they comply with the requirements of ERDF funding, meeting the European Union Directives, Scottish public sector legislation and the regulatory framework and any internal procedures and policy regarding procurement in force at the time of tender and as such are required to follow procurement principles (Open or Restricted tender or suitable Framework Agreement) for all elements of the work including the provision of works, materials and/or services. Procured contracts below the EU thresholds must adhere to the principles of the Treaty of Rome, ensuring that they are advertised and are fairly and equally treated.

Please refer to the Scottish Government websites for further guidance:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/support/17404/EuropeanStructuralFunds/ProgrammeDocumentation/Publicprocurementguidance>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement>,

<https://www.procurementjourney.scot/>

2.9. Staffing – Flat Rates

Funding for the project may include the cost of a 100% dedicated staff resource, i.e. any staff supported by the ERDF funding must be 100% dedicated to the ERDF project. Part-time posts are acceptable as long as they are 100% dedicated. Staff costs attract an additional 15% Flat Rate to cover associated costs. The 15% Flat Rate represents an

allowance for indirect costs that are attributable to the project and which the intervention rate is applied to. In other words, staff may be funded at the rate of:

Eligible staff costs = 40% (LUPS) or 50% (H&I) (staff cost +15%)

In determining what may qualify as an indirect cost for the purposes of the Flat Rate Model, direct overhead costs may be considered. As an example, Travel & Subsistence that specifically relates to the direct staff employed or other overhead costs which may directly be attributable to the project such as sundry promotional materials or room hire for conferences.

Expenditure that can be determined more specifically to the delivery of the project should not be considered to be covered by the Flat Rate Model and could be claimed as eligible expenditure separately as per the normal claim process.

Although no claim evidence is required for the Flat Rate Model and is based upon 15% of the Direct Staff Costs, the grantee may need to monitor the Flat Rate against the expenditure incurred to ensure it is justified, if not for audit purposes then for internal financial management.

3. Eligibility Assessment

3.1. Assessing Eligibility

The process for assessing eligibility is covered under our [Assessment and Selection Procedure](#). The checklists we will use for recording our eligibility assessment are contained in our [Assessment Forms](#) and listed below:

1	Has the applicant demonstrated that they have the necessary skills and sufficient administrative and financial capacity to carry out the proposed project?
2	Are the total eligible costs between £50k and £120k?
3	Is the grant requested £48,000 or less for LUPS or £60,000 or less for H&I?
4	Is the intervention rate requested greater than 10% and no more than 40% of eligible costs for LUPS and 50% for H&I?
5	Is the match funding for the project either confirmed or identified and expected to be confirmed before Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund funding is awarded?
6	Are the match funding sources eligible? (i.e. does not include other EU or in-kind contributions or private/commercial funding)
7	Has the applicant confirmed that the project is new and will not have started prior to offer of funding?
8	Has the applicant demonstrated that all other funding options have been explored and convinced us that the project cannot and will not proceed without the funding requested?
9	Has the applicant demonstrated that activities will be complete by December 2018?
10	Does the application benefit an urban settlement in Scotland with a population of more than 10,000?
11	Does the project benefit areas within the most deprived 15% of SIMD?
12	Are all the activities and costs for which the applicant is requesting funding eligible?
13	Has the applicant provided evidence that there is a local demand for the project?
14	Has the applicant demonstrated that branding/publicity will be complied with?
15	Has the applicant evidenced that State Aid Rules have been fully considered and that State aid tests will be met?
16	Has the applicant demonstrated that monitoring and evaluation requirements will be complied with?
17	Has the applicant demonstrated that the project is additional (i.e. non-statutory, not a condition of planning consent)?

For an application to be successful it must score positively for each of these eligibility questions, in addition to scoring adequately in the quality assessment.

3.2. Changes to Eligibility Guidance

Please note that the European Union and The Scottish Government reserve the right to amend the National Rules and SNH reserves the right to amend the published eligibility guidance during the period of the programme.

Furthermore, Scottish Ministers reserve the right to not award any support at all under this programme.

Decisions to fund projects will be based on the availability of funding, how well the project matches the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund priorities and its contribution to outcomes as part of the overall Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention. Further information can be found in the [Summary and Overview](#) and the [Blueprint for Green Infrastructure](#).

Appendix 1 Potentially Eligible Activities

The following outlines what types of projects and activities are considered potentially eligible and ineligible for funding under the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund. Note that eligibility will be context specific and based on contribution to outcomes and therefore it is only possible to provide indicative guidance. These lists should be seen as indicative rather than exhaustive.

General Costs

The following costs may be eligible as part of the delivery costs for the project:

- Procured services and consultancy fees – which are essential to the project (including community engagement specialists). These should be selected competitively. However, we are keen to see applications that work in tandem with the third sector and / or encourage volunteering or skills development;
- Staff costs of people who are 100% dedicated to delivering eligible activity funded by the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund. Full or part time is acceptable but to be eligible, staff must be openly recruited. Staff costs include:
 - gross pay;
 - employer's National Insurance;
 - superannuation contributions;
 - staff travel costs associated with the effective delivery of the project.
- Non-recoverable VAT;
- Signage and interpretation – relevant sign and interpretation including those acknowledging the contribution of the Structural Funds;
- Marketing.

The following projects and activities are **not eligible** for funding under the Green Infrastructure Fund:

- Projects in rural areas or smaller settlements;
- Project costs which are eligible for EU funding from other programmes;
- Anything previously funded by the EU;
- Although the employment of staff who are 100% dedicated to the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund programme is eligible, the following elements are not:
 - Statutory sick leave
 - Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave
 - Staff training
 - Redundancy payments
 - Unfunded pensions
 - First aid or key holder allowances
 - Bonus or commission payments
 - Subscriptions or memberships of trade or professional organisations

- Any expenditure defrayed out with the eligible programme period⁴
- Recoverable VAT
- In-kind costs
- Gifts
- Accounting costs and year-end auditing
- Commercial activities
- Works that are a condition of planning consent, planning gain or Section 75 Agreement
- Legal or statutory responsibilities
- Legal expenses, financial and other charges
- Project feasibility studies
- Purchase of vehicles (cars, boats and other moveable equipment (e.g. forklift)), equipment or furniture (NB As a grantee you can't buy and own anything afterwards)
- CCTV

Delivery of Outcomes

This section outlines the kinds of activities which might be eligible and suitable for delivering outcomes. The suggestions are indicative only and by no means exhaustive as we do not wish to limit innovation.

Activities we might fund:

- Art based approach – artist working with a community to understand, develop and document their story of engagement and relationship with their Green Infrastructure to date and how they would like that to be improved:
 - Website, interpretation, communications
 - Events and local festivals that provide opportunities to learn about and celebrate the natural heritage
- Citizen science approach – communities supported by a scientist to explore and document the changes in their local environment as a result of their engagement with Green Infrastructure, or to document changes in thinking and future planning:
 - Surveys
 - Data and information on the state of nature
- Participation and Activity approach – communities supported to develop activities and enterprises associated with their Green Infrastructure:
 - Encourage a greater number and diversity of people to use their local greenspace
 - Information / activities that promote the greenspace as a local destination
 - Run events or local festivals which provide opportunities to learn about the environment

⁴ If the overall project contains ineligible work, the applicant can choose to phase projects to distinguish eligible and ineligible works.

- Capacity building of local non-environmental organisations to use their green space
- Provide a community walking programme or health walks
- Provide community growing areas (Community gardens, Edible borders, Allotments)
- Volunteering and skills development – development of local skills through volunteering, capacity building and/or skills development programmes which involve:
 - Direct engagement with local Green Infrastructure
 - Maintaining wildlife gardens
 - Identification skills
 - Wildlife monitoring
 - Practical management
 - Learning elsewhere and transferring that learning to their local area
 - Community champions to develop and mentor activities, e.g. local food growing
 - Planning, place-making, maintenance, monitoring and reporting, interpretation, events etc
- Ecosystem approach – communities could be supported to explore the ecosystem services provided by their Green Infrastructure and consider improvements that they could benefit from:
 - Regulation of floods
 - Soil erosion
 - Food provision
 - Air / noise pollution
- Nature based approach – focusing on developing people’s understanding and appreciation of urban nature. Communities could be supported to explore and engage with their local biodiversity through:
 - Nature walks
 - Mini-beast adventures
 - Wetland activities (clean-ups, pond-dipping, etc)
 - Active community management to increase habitat for biodiversity
 - Events that celebrate nature
 - Outdoor learning

Activities we will not fund

- Community engagement activities that are not directly associated with green infrastructure
- Signage designed to limit access, such as “no ball games”
- Staff posts that are less than 100% dedicated to ERDF programmes

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