

Investing in Communities Fund: climate action factsheet

Taking action on climate change at all levels of society is essential for Scotland to meet its targets for reducing greenhouse gas emission. The Investing in Communities Fund (ICF) recognises the important role communities play in tackling climate change, and has therefore reflected this in the priorities of the fund. All projects must demonstrate how they meet the objective of ensuring a just transition to net zero.

What this means

Net Zero – this basically means a situation where the greenhouse gas emissions that we release into the atmosphere as a society (by burning fossil fuels for example), is balanced out by the emissions that are taken out of the atmosphere. At the moment, we are producing more greenhouse gas emissions than are being naturally taken out of the atmosphere (by plants and algae for example).

The Scottish Government has [more information about Net Zero](#) as part of its Let's do Net Zero campaign.

Just Transition – this term refers to the journey to get to 'Net Zero' (and beyond). Society is going to have to change quite radically to ensure we reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly enough, and at a large enough scale. These changes will impact different areas of society in different ways, and the Scottish Government has committed to ensuring that the impact is spread fairly across the whole of society. This will ensure that those that are most vulnerable will receive support to make the necessary transition and nobody will get 'left behind'.

Demonstrating this in your application

To demonstrate how your project will help ensure a just transition to net zero, you should focus on:

- how you will engage your community in how they can take action on climate change, as part of a just transition.
- how you will deliver your project in an environmentally friendly way

Community climate action project examples

You might already be helping your community tackle climate change with your proposed project, and it's important to highlight this in your application. You may also be planning some elements of your project to tackle another issue, but not realise that this may also be helping tackle climate change as well.

Tackling climate change can be grouped into different themes. Below are some examples of projects that tackle these different themes. Your project may focus on one of these areas, but will often touch on multiple.

Climate change education



Educating people on the causes and issues around climate change can help people understand some of the necessary changes and lead to longer lasting individual behaviour changes. This education is often referred to as [Carbon Literacy](#).

You may want to hold 'Climate Conversations' as part of your project, where you offer a safe place to educate and discuss issues related to climate change.

A good example of this is the recent work of Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) and the [Climate Conversations information](#) they have on their website.

[Sustainable Kirriemuir](#) also provide useful information on their website for their community.

Promoting active travel



[Greener Kirkcaldy – Transport Projects](#)

To inspire and support people to reduce car use for short journeys. They run a range of activities and events to help people increase their skills and confidence to change the way they travel. This includes: cycle training, led rides, bike repairs and maintenance workshops, and bike borrowing/sales ([Lang Toun Cycles](#) is their community bike shop). This helps reduce emissions from cars, whilst providing less costly alternatives for doing daily journeys, and can increase health and wellbeing.

Re-use and repair



[LEAP's R:evolve Recycle - Swap Shops](#)

Support to help people to prolong the life of their clothing, shoes and accessories and reduce textile consumption and waste. This is done through 'boutique' swap shops and other reusing of textiles.

Textiles create a lot of greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing the need to buy new clothes can help lessen these. The project also helps remove the stigma from second-hand clothes and save people money buying new.

Energy advice



[Edinburgh and Lothian's Regional Equality Council \(ELREC\) – Energy](#)

The project helps people worried about high energy costs. They offer advice to help people save energy at home and use energy more efficiently. They offer support accessing grants to help insulate or improve people's homes.

This advice can help reduce emissions, but also reduce levels of fuel poverty and help people stay warm in their homes.

Growing food locally



[Belville Community Garden – Food Growing](#)

The project is about promoting a safer, stronger community around improving lifestyles, and health through horticulture and healthy eating. Locally grown food can also have a lower carbon impact than food from supermarkets as it hasn't travelled as far to get to you.

The project also improves community relationships, a sense of pride in the environment, and improved mental and physical wellbeing.

Reducing food waste



[Dundee West End Community Fridge - Food Waste](#)

This project helps to reduce food waste by making short-dated, surplus food, from local food businesses, available to the members of the community. Food waste has a significant impact on carbon emissions.

Community fridges help remove the stigma associated with using food banks, whilst still providing relief to those who need it.

Information on healthy eating, and delivering cooking workshops, also helps tackle wider issues.

Information and support available for community climate action

Climate Action Hubs

We are building a network of community climate action hubs to provide a more strategic regional approach to action on climate change. The hubs will provide support in their local areas, helping community groups to take advantage of funding opportunities, facilitate better networking, and ensuring a joined-up approach is being taken to tackling climate change at a regional level.

Two hubs are currently up and running - North East of Scotland and North Highlands. More information on the hubs, and other Scottish Government support for community-led climate action can be found on the [gov.scot website](#).

Networking

[Scottish Communities Climate Action Network](#) (SCCAN) is a volunteer-led network open to any community group across Scotland that is taking action on the climate crisis.

Climate change engagement

[Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) is an environmental charity that offers a wide range of support, including climate emergency training to upskill your staff.

[Climate Cafés](#) are informal spaces for people to get together, share ideas, information and get involved in climate action. Cafés bring people together from across communities to focus on solutions.

Adaptation

The [Adaptation Scotland](#) programme provides advice and support to help organisations, businesses and communities prepare for, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation Scotland is a programme funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by the sustainability charity Sniffer.

Energy advice

[Home Energy Scotland](#) partners with community groups to develop and implement projects that help people create warmer homes, reduce bills and tackle climate change. It's local advice centres offer free training and resources and access to a secure referral portal. They are funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Energy Saving Trust. Get in touch: HES_Partnerships@est.org.uk.

[Local Energy Scotland](#) manages the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES). They offer advice, funding and support to groups developing renewable energy projects.

Active travel and sustainable transport

[Energy Savings Trust](#) also provides funding, support and bespoke advice on behalf of Scottish Government to help community groups transition to active and sustainable transport modes. Get in touch [here](#).

[Sustrans Scotland](#) provides advice, support and funding that makes it easier for people to walk and cycle for everyday journeys.

[Cycling Scotland](#) offers a programme of expert support, including funding from Transport Scotland, to support organisations across Scotland to take a leading role in increasing the number of people who cycle. For more information you can email them at cyclingfriendly@cycling.scot

[Paths for All](#) offers technical advice and support to community organisations to help them to create, promote and maintain safe, welcoming community paths and active routes for everyone.

Reducing waste

[Zero Waste Scotland](#) provide advice and support to community groups, as well as talks and workshops, useful resources, and campaigns on waste related topics. Contact: communities@zerowastescotland.org.uk

[Circular Communities Scotland](#) represents a network of charities and social enterprises that supports Scotland's circular economy. This involves reducing waste and reusing materials and products more.

Food growing

[GetGrowing Scotland](#) is delivered by the Community Growing Forum Scotland, a group of grassroots projects and support organisations sharing information, inspiration, and expertise from across Scotland. Contact hello@getgrowingscotland.org for support to grow with nature and for climate action.

Delivering your project in a more environmentally friendly way

Below are some ideas on how you can make sure your project is delivered in an environmentally friendly way and has a lower impact on climate change.

A few key questions to keep in mind

- do you need to make this purchase to successfully deliver the project?
- are you making purchases from sustainable suppliers/sources?
- what environmental impact does the purchase have and do the overall benefits of the project outweigh this?

Energy - Use energy efficiently

Points to consider

- when using either your own or an external venue, are you making best use of the energy to heat/light the space? Can you influence those responsible to investigate options to increase the energy efficiency of the space?
- if you have an office space or community building, are you able to influence a switch to an energy supplier that gets their energy from more renewable sources?

Useful links

- the Energy Saving Trust's [Business Energy Scotland](#) programme helps organisations to save energy through advice and support

Food - Use local, seasonal and low carbon produce

Points to consider

- when catering for events during the project, can you use seasonal, locally-sourced, and generally lower carbon food through your suppliers or yourself (or a local community garden)?
- ask participants at events to confirm dietary requirements and attendance early to limit food waste.
- what happens to any leftover food/food waste at events?

Useful links

- when choosing a venue for events consider using one supported by the [Green Tourism Board](#)
- to avoid food waste (especially after events) try using [Good to Go](#) boxes

Travel - Encourage active travel, public transport, and car-sharing

Points to consider

- are you encouraging staff and volunteers to limit carbon intensive travel options, especially for short journeys? You could change the order of how you provide directions to your office (car travel at the end), or how your employees plan their journeys
- have you got measures in place to promote Active Travel in your organisation? For example, you could work towards obtaining [Cycle Friendly Employer](#) status

Useful links

- promote the use of the [Traveline Scotland](#) website to help people plan their journeys.
- promote the use of car-sharing websites (for example [liftshare.com/uk](#))

Waste - Think about reducing and reusing as much as you can:

Points to consider

- when buying office furniture, equipment, marketing materials or other items is there a viable second-hand option available?
- avoid single use items like plastic cups or bottled water for events. Encourage the use of re-usable alternatives
- for marketing materials, do you need physical copies or are electronic versions appropriate? If you need physical versions check Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) options
- if you are using incentives as a way to increase engagement, have you thought about whether these incentives send out the right environmental message?

Useful links

- [Zero Waste Scotland](#) could help with ways to reduce your waste
- [Circular Communities Scotland](#) represents the community reuse and recycling sector