# European Social Fund
# Aspiring Communities Fund

# Application for Stage 2 Funding

# Guidance
# and
# Application Help Notes

**Disclaimer**

Applicants should be aware that the Aspiring Communities Fund continues to be reviewed as the programme evolves and may be subject to change. The European Union and Scottish Ministers reserve the right to amend the National Rules and Scottish Government reserves the right to amend the published guidance during the period of the programme.

Guidance

| Date | Issue | Status |
|---|---|---|
| 03/12/18 | V3 | Draft |

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1.    PURPOSE

The **Aspiring Communities Fund** helps enable community bodies and third sector organisations in our most deprived and fragile communities to develop and deliver long-term local solutions that address local priorities and needs, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to reduce poverty and to enable inclusive growth.  Successful projects will put communities first by involving local people in the process and support the aims of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan to change deep seated, multi-generational deprivation, poverty and inequalities.

This funding round will support eligible projects that previously received Stage 1 funding for activity in of the Rest of Scotland (LUPS), as defined by the European Commission for the purpose of European Social Funds, to enable delivery of European Social Fund (ESF) targets in the these areas.

Community empowerment, capacity building and enhanced capability at a local level must be at the heart of your proposal to tackle poverty and reduce inequalities.  Empowering communities can be achieved by:

- delivering on community-led solutions that tackle priorities that matter most to communities,  or
- for more vulnerable and harder to reach groups, through local interventions that act as a catalyst for engagement and offer opportunities and pathways for social and community integration.

We recognise that both approaches can tackle multiple outcomes associated with poverty and inequalities at both individual and community level.  Applications are expected to demonstrate this type of focus.

This Challenge Fund is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Scottish Government.  It is being delivered by Social Justice and Regeneration Division, Scottish Government as Lead Partner for the 2014-2020 ESF Programme.

The aim of this funding is to strengthen and empower communities, increase levels of economic activity, stimulate inclusive growth, local service provision and inclusion by:

- Enabling communities to design and establish new or enhanced services addressing poverty and inequalities;
- Supporting staff posts within community organisations to increase levels of economic activity, local service provision and inclusion, and enhance community resilience;
- Accelerating the implementation of projects and services delivering longer lasting solutions that empower individuals and communities to shape their futures by involving local people in the process.

This funding round will contribute to the achievement of the following Scottish ESF Operational Programme targets for:

- Community based or community services supported
- New childcare places available
- Deprived or fragile communities supported

and Aspiring Communities Fund targets for:

- People benefitting from new services/support;
- New or improved community owned assets (noting that capital for acquisition must be obtained from other non ESF sources).

Applicants will be required to clearly demonstrate the need for positive impact of their proposed investment, building on Stage 1 activity and evidenced by:

- Stating why you know the demand exists.  This must include evidence of shaping of services by local people;
- Setting out critical partnerships and relationships with other service providers – including statutory agencies such as local authorities or health boards as well as community bodies and third sector organisations as appropriate.  As part of this we want you to set out your approach towards linking activity and making best use of local resources; and,
- Identifying, where appropriate, steps taken to enable, enhance and/or complement delivery of national and local priorities as set out in relevant local policy and delivery plans.   The local activity that is seeking funding will reflect the Scottish Government's national priorities.

This funding round is targeted at the **most deprived and fragile communities** in the the Rest of Scotland **(LUPS)**, and interventions will reflect local circumstances and needs, aimed at target groups identified by the ESF Programme and local priorities. At least one of the three ESF groups of **workless, low  income or lone parent households** must be targeted. However, we recognise that funding supports multiple outcomes for wider impact within a locality and across various groups.  Therefore, the fund will support people experiencing disadvantage and/or inequality in its many forms including disabled people, those with alcohol/drug dependence, ex-offenders, homeless people, looked after children, BME communities and other communities of interest, providing this includes support for at least one of the ESF target groups referred to above.

**This fund supports new or enhanced activity only, identified through Stage 1 outcomes and cannot be used for activities previously or currently funded under any other ESF funding programmes.**

2.     WHO CAN APPLY?
This funding round is open only to organisations or partners who were previously successful for Stage 1 project funding and have completed Stage 1 project activity.

Eligible applicants can be community organisations, including community anchor organisations and third sector organisations that promote or improve the interests of communities in the Rest of Scotland (LUPS) that experience inequalities of outcome as a result of social or economic disadvantage.

Applications from a consortium of organisations will also be accepted, providing the consortium is governed by a memorandum of understanding (or similar) as confirmation of respective roles and responsibilities.   The application must be

submitted by a single eligible lead applicant on behalf of the consortium.  The Lead Applicant does not require to be the same as that of the Stage 1 project, although the reasons for the change should be explained in the application form. We will only support organisations that are solvent and are in a position to continue to successfully deliver services in the longer term, and with reference to robust governance arrangements.   Key responsibilities of a lead applicant include monitoring and reporting on the progress and performance of operations; ensuring that appropriate documentation is retained to evidence expenditure and all outcomes and to fulfil ESF compliance obligations; and complying with all appropriate rules and regulations.

For this funding round, all activity must take place in the Rest of Scotland (LUPS) only.

We cannot accept applications from:

- Individuals and sole traders
- Statutory bodies (as a lead applicant, but they are eligible to be part of a consortium or partnership)
- Profit distributing organisations
- Organisations based outside the UK
- Non-departmental public bodies

Applicants are responsible for accepting and complying with all legal and funding conditions, including financial and progress monitoring and reporting, as well as all ESF requirements.

All lead applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- be a formally constituted community or third sector organisation
- have legal personality
- have robust governance arrangements
- operate on a non-profit-distributing basis, or have a governance structure which primarily does not allow for profit distribution
- have strong social and business objectives stated in their governing documents
- have a base in Scotland, and with all project beneficiaries living in the Rest of Scotland (LUPS)
- have a UK bank account in the name of the organisation and requiring at least two unrelated and authorised signatories
- not be insolvent, facing insolvency or be unable to trade or operate

In addition, ESF Operational Programme and ESF National Rules require applicants to:

- demonstrate that the proposed project or activity is additional and complementary to the core/statutory services provided by the organisation
- ensure all costs applied for are eligible.  For example, staff who work between 40% and  100% of their contracted hours on the delivery of Structural Funds activity will be eligible. This can either be on a full-time or part-time basis. Staff do not need to be in place for the full duration of an operation but must be in place for a minimum of one month.  Their role must be justified and they must work between 40% and

100% on this operation for the period they are required. For successful applications **staff who work less than 100% must complete the timesheet provided (see point 5).**

- complete all project activities by 30 June 2020

3.      FUNDING AVAILABLE

For this funding round approximately £6m is available through the Aspiring Communities Fund to stimulate activity at a local level within the Rest of Scotland (LUPS) area's most deprived and fragile communities.  Funding will be available for activity that is completed by the end of June 2020.

This funding is being made available following the commitment to support eligible Stage 1 projects to Stage 2, however, funding is not guaranteed.

Invitation to Stage 2 funding is informed by successful evaluation of an end of Stage 1 project report which details the work undertaken, the partners involved and how progress towards the delivery stage will fit with ESF and ACF targets.  All applications must clearly demonstrate the progression of their Stage 1 activity and that the Stage 2 project is directly linked to Stage 1 outcomes. Funding will only be awarded to projects meeting eligibility criteria, that are of a high quality, and are assessed as being able to implement and deliver long term solutions to tackle poverty and inequality.

Funding of up to £125,000 is available for **delivery and implementation proposals** of local community-led solutions that tackle the priorities that matter most to communities; or local interventions that act as a catalyst for engagement of more vulnerable and harder to reach groups and provide opportunities and pathways for social and community integration.

**Please note that projects with an employability focus are not eligible for ACF funding.**

4.      PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Through this fund we will explore collaborative approaches that deliver community activity to tackle poverty and inequality.  We are keen to encourage collaboration between statutory bodies and local communities that have an interest in exploring new and sustainable ways of working to improve local outcomes.  Partnership working and the approach taken will vary depending on the local context and the structures that are already in place.  Applications must clearly explain the collaborative approach that is being explored and how the funding will be used as a catalyst to deliver local priorities. Applicants should note that partnership working contributes to 25% of the scoring criteria for applications (see Annex A).  Partnerships must demonstrate the following qualities:

- Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each relevant partner;
- Recognise the opportunities to deliver new or enhanced local activity through the approach being proposed;
- Ensure that, through an integrated partnership or collaborative approach, new or enhanced ideas and solutions are developed to tackle local problems and priorities.

Partnerships must be evidenced and explained within the application, with a focus on:

- Explaining the community-led nature of the partnership or evidence that the service or activity required will act as a catalyst for engagement, involving local people, whilst also providing opportunities and pathways for social and community integration;
- Demonstrating the added value of the collaborative approach i.e. greater impact, sharing responsibilities or better and new ways of working;
- A joint agreement by relevant partners of the approach and activity requiring funding, with clear links to the  operational and strategic approach  with other related service providers;
- New or enhanced services are introduced that put communities first and tackle issues associated with poverty and inequality and make best use of local resources;
- Acknowledging barriers and how the proposed approach will attempt to overcome these.

5.    COST MODELS
The ESF National Rules on eligible expenditure stipulate the specific Cost Options that apply to all projects and programmes supported by the ESF 2014–2020 Programme.

The Aspiring Communities Fund will follow a **Flat Rate Cost Model**.  Staff who work between 40% and 100% of their contracted hours on the delivery of Structural Funds activity will be eligible. This can either be on a full-time or part-time basis. Staff do not need to be in place for the full duration of the operation but must be in post for a minimum of one month.  Their role must be justified and they must work between 40% and 100% of their time on the operation for the period they are required. **Staff who work less than 100% must complete the timesheet provided here [European Structural and Investment Funds: eligibility of expenditure - gov.scot](** )**. (Single Operation Timesheet).  Salary payments will be proportionate to the % of time spent on delivering ACF activity.

Staff costs incurred through contracts for services such as consultancy services are not eligible under these flat rate options – instead, these would be covered under the procurement option and paid as actual costs. Unpaid voluntary work is also not eligible under direct staff costs. Staff travel is not a direct staff cost, however, it can be considered as an indirect cost (see below).

**Indirect costs** are usually costs which are not or cannot be connected directly and exclusively to an individual activity of the entity in question. Indirect costs include administrative expenses relating to a project, where it is difficult to determine the exact amount attributable to a specific activity or item - for example the rental cost of premises, management time, recruitment expenses, telephone, water or electricity charges.

Please carefully check the ESF rules on staff costs and apply the appropriate +15% or +40% model to your project.  You will need to provide justification if you decide to apply the +40% model for your project's indirect costs. **Please note that procured costs do not attract the 15% or 40% uplift**.

| Direct staff costs +15% | This means that we can pay the direct costs of staff who are employed between 40% and 100% of their contracted hours on the project, plus an additional 15% of this time towards the project's indirect costs. **A Staff Cost is salary + employer's NI + Pension contributions.** |
|---|---|
| Direct staff costs +40% | This means that we can pay the direct costs of staff who are employed between 40% and 100% of their contracted hours on the project, plus an additional 40% of this time towards the project's indirect costs. **A Staff Cost is salary + employer's NI + Pension contributions.** |

Prior to completing the application form you must read and understand the ESF Programme Guidance. Detailed explanations of ESF cost headings are provided in the National Rules.

## 6.     APPLICATION PROCESS

Signed  and dated completed applications, the pre-application eligibility checklist, the lead applicant's most recent annual accounts and governing documents, and the memorandum of understanding (or similar) for a consortium application, must be submitted by 5.00 pm on the 11 January 2019 to AspiringCommunities@gov.scot. You will immediately receive an automated email message acknowledging receipt of your application.  If you do not receive this, please check that you have sent the application to the correct email address and that the acknowledgment is not in your spam/junk folders.

Signing your application

A signed and dated copy of the application form must be submitted electronically.  If signing your document by hand, a scanned copy of the whole application document submitted by email will be accepted.  Electronic signatures are acceptable, however, this must be an electronic copy of your hand signature. If using an electronic signature, the application form must be submitted from the same email account, or be included as a copy recipient from the person signing the application.

Assessment Process

We will assess applications to ensure they are fully completed and meet the Fund criteria and eligibility requirements. Incomplete applications or those that do not meet the Fund's criteria and eligibility will be automatically rejected.
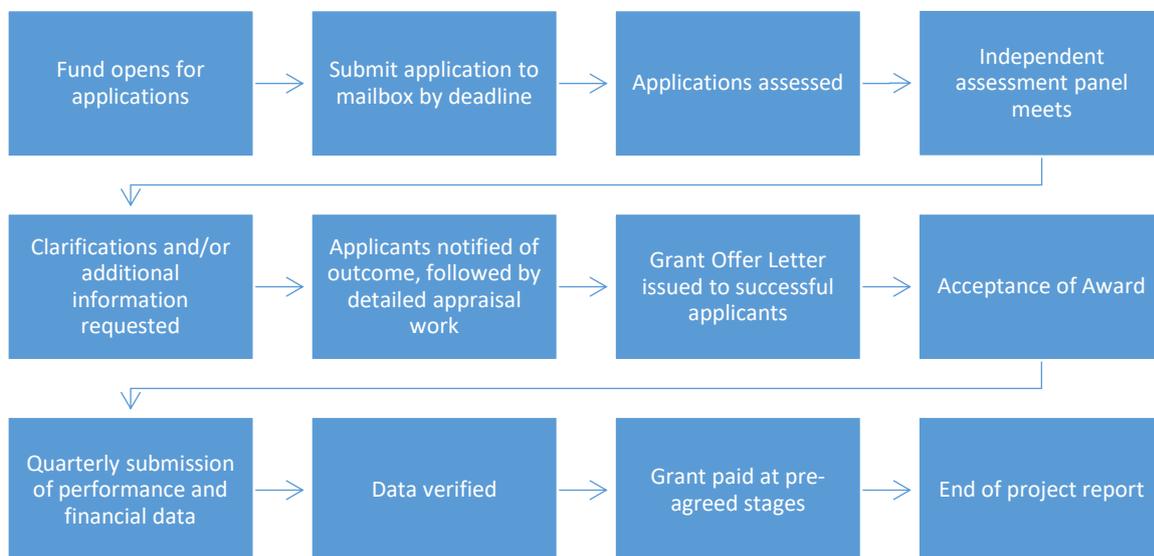
Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria as outlined in **Annex A** of this guidance and from the evidence provided in the accompanying application form. An independent assessment panel will make final recommendations on projects to be funded.  The independent panel may request additional information from applicants prior to making a final decision. Applicants will be notified by email of any additional checks being undertaken.   All panel decisions are final. The panel will include representatives from stakeholder organisations, including third sector organisations, local authorities, Scottish Government and government agencies.

Following approval from the Independent Panel your proposal will pass to the final stage of the assessment process. This process may require further clarification on information contained within the application form, and/or technical and financial checks.

We will accept applications that cover either one or more communities of place. If the proposal covers more than one community of place you must ensure that the application considers this in answer to each of the questions.

All applications must be for **delivery and implementation.** Funding of up to £125,000 is available, for which all project activity must be completed by 30 June 2020.

This diagram sets out the application process:-

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fund opens for applications | Submit application to mailbox by deadline | Applications assessed | Independent assessment panel meets |
| Clarifications and/or additional information requested | Applicants notified of outcome, followed by detailed appraisal work | Grant Offer Letter issued to successful applicants | Acceptance of Award |
| Quarterly submission of performance and financial data | Data verified | Grant paid at pre-agreed stages | End of project report |

7.    APPLICATION SUBMISSION
There will be no extensions to the undernoted closing date. Applications received after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

Please save the application form in the following format: **Aspiring Communities Fund - Name of Lead Applicant - Project Title** and e-mail to AspiringCommunities@gov.scot by 5.00 pm on the 11 January 2019.

If you don't receive an auto reply message immediately acknowledging receipt of your application, please check that you have sent the application to the correct email address and that the acknowledgment is not in your spam/junk folders.

8.    PAYMENTS AND REPORTING
We will include detailed information about how and when to make a claim in the grant offer letters to successful applicants. Grant payments will be subject to satisfactory performance, progress and financial checks. We will agree payment milestones and will require you to report progress towards these milestones. Incomplete, incorrect or

late claims and evidence will result in delays in processing payments. Claims must be submitted timeously to enable us to collate data from all lead applicants so that we can report overall programme progress and budget spend as scheduled with the Managing Authority.

All grant payments will be subject to 100% compliance checks against what has been approved in your funding offer. We may undertake additional project monitoring before we make the final payment. If we have concerns about project performance or progress, we may suggest performance improvement measures. If performance continues to be a concern, we may have to withdraw grant support, and/or require the applicant to repay grant that has already been received.

Only **Direct Costs** are subject to audit and the lead applicant will be required to provide a full paperwork trail with supporting evidence, including:

- Payroll/salary slips
- Documentation evidencing all staff who are working on the project e.g. job descriptions and contracts of employment
- Timesheets for staff spending less than 100% of their contracted hours on the project. Only official ACF Timesheets will be accepted and can be found here (please select Single Operation only) European Structural and Investment Funds: eligibility of expenditure - gov.scot
- BACS reports confirming individual salary payments
- Bank statements
- Evidence of progressing towards achieving agreed milestones

We will not ask for evidence to support the **indirect costs** associated with your project. However, the Lead Applicant will be required to retain this. Full details about Direct and Indirect Costs are available in the ESF National Rules.

We will require regular monitoring reports for the project to ensure progress towards your stated outcomes and outputs. A monitoring template will form part of your grant offer letter if successful.

On project completion, we will ask you to provide additional information in your final claim. This will include a short report on:

- the difference and impact your project has made
- the ways in which the project has enabled transformational change
- lessons learned, what worked well and what could have been done differently
- what you are going to do as a result of the project – for example, will the project be mainstreamed as a local service.

We may contact you for further details on achievements after payment of the final claim. This may include requesting information for case studies or inclusion in promotional/publicity events.

9.    PUBLICITY REQUIREMENTS

As Lead Partner, the Scottish Government has a Communications Plan to ensure the information about our programmes reaches our target audiences, including applicant organisations. All publicity materials must comply with current Publicity Guidance to acknowledge ESF support and we will retain a portfolio for audit purposes.

If your application is successful, you must ensure that any marketing or publicity about your project follows this guidance. You must use the correct logos on all promotional, marketing and other materials associated with the project. Evidence of publicity will be required as part of project monitoring. The list is not exhaustive, but examples of activities include:

• press releases on websites, newspapers and social media
• newsletters and reports
• events and presentations

You must also acknowledge the Scottish Government and any other match funders in all associated project materials.

We will provide successful applicants with the appropriate logos if your project is approved for funding.

## 10.    DOCUMENT RETENTION

The European Commission requires successful Lead Applicants to retain all evidence associated with their project securely. Evidence must be checked for completeness and be accessible for audit as per Document Retention Guidance.

You will be required to retain all of your documentation beyond the 3 years from **final Programme payment**.

## 11.    STATE AID

State Aid is a European Commission term that refers to forms of assistance from a public body, or publicly-funded body, given to undertakings on a discretionary basis, with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union.

The 'State Aid rules' are set out by the European Commission and comprise various articles of the EC Treaty, regulations, frameworks and guidelines, which set out what aid can be given. The European Commission governs member states' compliance with these rules and must be notified of all schemes involving State Aid.  State Aid granted without Commission approval is viewed as unlawful and may be subject to repayment **by the aid recipient**.  Where State Aid is involved, it must be provided under the cover of an exemption; approved scheme, or the de minimis regulation.

The Scottish Government, and all other public bodies (including bodies administering public funds) are required to ensure that they provide funding in adherence with the State Aid rules and must consider applications in order to establish whether a measure constitutes State Aid.

**If your project is involved in economic activity *i.e.* your project is involved in the provision of goods or services, you must consider whether your project proposal may attract State Aid by applying the** 4 test questions.

We will ask you to declare de minimis aid received in the last three fiscal years prior to the application. If you have received de minimis aid before, it will be highlighted in the grant offer letters from funders.

We will look for the most suitable route to support approved projects to ensure State Aid requirements are met. More information is available on State Aid for Inclusive Growth.

## 12. DATA PROTECTION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS

Applicants to the Aspiring Communities Fund should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. Please refer to Section 5 of this Guidance.

Therefore, please note that information provided, including personal information, will be held, published and disclosed in accordance with this legislation. When submitting an application, please let us know if there are any parts of it that would prejudice your commercial or other interests if they were made public. However, given our obligations, please note we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

## 13. EQUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

All organisations submitting an application to the Aspiring Communities Fund must satisfy themselves that they are compliant with relevant equalities and environmental legislation, including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Further information on equalities legislation can be obtained from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and guidance on relevant environmental legislation from the Scottish Government. We may require proof from you that you have considered your obligations as required under legislation.

## 14. APPLICATION FORM – HELP NOTES

Please complete the application form accurately and in accordance with the guidance. Any errors or missing information may result in immediate rejection of your application or lead to delays in processing your application and submission to the assessment panel. Points to note when completing the form:

- Do not alter the application form, text boxes are a guide to the level of information required
- Answers should initially be drafted in a Word document to ensure it does not exceed the maximum word count for each question
- Use Arial minimum font size 11 to answer questions
- Yes/No boxes to be double clicked; in the pop up box under Default Value select "checked" then OK.

On page 1 insert the **lead applicant** organisation name, confirm whether or not it is a **consortium application**, insert the **title** of your project and the original Stage 1 project title.

## Section 1:  Applicant Details

Please tell us about the organisations that are involved in your project.   The lead applicant must provide letters of support from each of the partner organisations on their headed paper.

## *Lead Applicant Details*
The Lead applicant must ensure that they fully complete this section.

### *Name of Organisation*
Please enter the name of the lead organisation.

### *Registered Office Address*
Please confirm your registered office address.

### *Applicant's Legal Status*
Provide details about your legal status to ensure that you meet eligibility criteria for the Fund.

### *Organisation Type*
Please complete with details e.g. Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Private Company Limited by Guarantee, etc.

### *Registered Company Number*
Please confirm your number if applicable.

### *Registered SCIO Number*
Please confirm your number if applicable.

### *Any Other Registration Numbers*
Please confirm your numbers and the membership body, if applicable.

### *If your organisation is a subsidiary of, or affiliated to, a parent company please provide details*
Please provide information of the parent company or insert *not applicable* in this section.

### *When was your organisation established?*
Please confirm the month and year the organisation was established.

### *VAT registration number*
Please provide your organisation's VAT registration number or insert *not applicable* in this section.

## *Contact details for correspondence*
Please confirm the details of the main contact – this information is required in the event of a query regarding the application.

## *Partner Organisation(s)*

Please provide details of the partner organisations that are involved in the proposal. Please indicate whether or not the named partner organisations are members of a consortium for the project.

## Section 2: About Your Organisation – Lead Applicant

**Q.1   If the lead applicant is not the same as the Stage 1 project please explain why.**
Stage 2 projects are not required to have the same lead applicant as Stage 1, however, please provide information which explains the reason for the change.

**Q.2   Please describe your track record, as well as the current activities delivered by your organisation and how these are supported.  (max 500 words)**
Please provide information about your organisation and the activities that you currently provide. Include:
- aims and objectives of your organisation highlighting achievements, purpose and mission
- track record
- services/projects you currently deliver and the location of the services and/or geographical coverage of support available
- how the activities are currently supported/funded
- the people/beneficiaries/target groups you work with
- examples of working with other community bodies and local strategic partners
- any Scottish Government awards/grants you have received in the last 3 years
- any other European Funding your organisation receives or has previously received – for example from another ESF programme, ERDF or Leader

**Q.3  Please describe how you will ensure there are robust systems and suitably experienced staff in place to manage the project and comply with ESF requirements.  *(max 500 words)***
We must ensure that the lead organisation is able to manage the project and has capacity to comply with all the requirements of the grant award. Please provide information relating to:
- experience of delivering services, support and/or products to beneficiaries/target groups
- the systems/staff/processes you have in place to ensure robust performance and financial monitoring to report accurately and on time
- any previous experience of delivering/managing an ESF project

**Q.4   How many staff do you employ?**
Please insert the number of staff currently employed in your organisation. Split this into those full-time, part-time and volunteers.

**Q.5  Does your organisation have an equality and diversity policy?**
Please tick the appropriate box.

**Q.6  Does your organisation have an environmental policy?**
Please tick the appropriate box.

**Section 3:  Your Proposal**

**Q.7  Please state the proposed start and end dates of your project.**
Insert the anticipated start date of the project. Please note that any expenditure incurred prior to the <u>approved</u> start date of the project is **ineligible** and cannot be claimed from ESF. Due to the funding process we expect projects to begin in April 2019 and last around 15 months. We anticipate an end date of June 2020.

**Q. 8  In which local authority area(s) will your project take place?**
Please tick all that apply.

**Q.9  Which type best describes your project activity?**
Please tick all that apply. This information helps us to match information readily to information requests.

**Proposed Activities**
**Q10  Please provide details of your project proposal and all planned activity. This must include timescales for completing this work outlining how you will deliver the activity and any information on work already undertaken to date. Please note that projects with an employability focus are <u>not</u> eligible for ACF funding. (***max 800 words***)**
Please complete this section outlining:
- what it is you are aiming to do
- the ways in which the project is new, or will ensure enhanced activity.  If enhanced activity, please explain the ways in which it is different from previous activity
- what you plan to do and why, explaining how your project will be staffed and delivered, improve outcomes for people who experience poverty and disadvantage
- how will the project and activities enable you to grow your organisation, and improve and/or increase services or products for beneficiaries
- where will you be delivering activity or services supported by your proposal (location and venue)
- please identify any work associated with the activity outlined in your proposal that has already been undertaken

**Q.11  Please describe the rationale for your project, setting out the need and demand and its fit with *national and local plans.* You should include a brief summary of the outcomes of Stage 1 activity. (***max 800 words***)**

Please describe how your project will fit with the strategic aims of the Aspiring Communities Fund and ESF Operational Programme. In setting out the evidence and rationale for the project this should include a brief summary of the Stage 1 activity.  In addition, please include:

- the need for your project and approach, highlighting the issues the intervention will tackle, which builds upon the rationale indicated at Stage 1;
- evidence and data to justify the need for the project – for example how target groups have been identified, what barriers they experience, what evidence and data have you used, what discussions you have had with local

people/beneficiaries. As above this will build upon the activity and specifically the outcomes of your Stage 1 project;

- how your project will contribute towards tackling poverty and inequality and promote social inclusion;
- how your project contributes towards national priorities i.e. The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, Fairer Scotland Action Plan, Scotland's Economic Strategy, Scotland's National Outcome etc.;
- any local plans and priorities that the project will work towards achieving, including CPP locality plans and Local Outcome Improvement Plans.

**Q.12  Who will benefit from this funding, what impact will this make at a community level and how are you putting communities first by involving local people in the process?** *(max 500 words)*

- This funding round is targeted at the most deprived and fragile communities in the Rest of Scotland (LUPS) areas, and interventions will reflect local circumstances and needs, aimed at target groups identified by the ESF Programme and local priorities.  <u>At least one</u> of the three ESF groups of workless, low income or lone parent households <u>must</u> be targeted.  However, we recognise that funding supports multiple outcomes for wider impact within a locality and across various groups. Therefore, the fund will support people experiencing disadvantage and/or inequality in its many forms including disabled people, those with alcohol/drug dependence, ex-offenders, homeless people, looked after children, BME communities and other communities of interest, providing this includes support for <u>at least one</u> of the ESF target groups of workless, low income or lone parent households.
- How you will put communities first, effectively involving local residents in the process and empowering communities.
- Please tell us about the geographic area(s) that you are targeting and why.  This must include a list of communities and localities being supported.
- Please detail how your project will make an impact locally.
- Please tell us what target groups your activities will support and why support is needed.

The ESF Operational Programme identifies the particular needs of:

- Communities with multiple deprivation
- Fragile areas and communities that  share some of the characteristics of areas of multiple deprivation, but which can additionally be subject to permanent geographical handicaps, fuel poverty, distance from services and demographic decline

**Data Sources** include:

**Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take

account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation.  SIMD16 was published on 31 August 2016.

SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). People using SIMD will often focus on the data zones below a certain rank, for example, the 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.  SIMD provides a wealth of information to help improve the understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

Further information and guidance can be found on the SIMD website.

**Community Planning Outcomes Profile**

The Improvement Service's Community Planning Outcomes Profile  is a tool to measure outcomes and inequalities of outcome in Community Planning Partnership areas, using a set of core measures on important life outcomes including early years, older people, safer/stronger communities, health and wellbeing, and engagement with local communities.

These are not the only ones, but the application does need to include current robust and reliable evidence to support the need for the project.

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result.

**Q.13  Please describe any established and/or proposed partnerships or collaborative approaches that will help to take this proposal forward *(max 500 words)***

Please describe your plans to engage and include other community and third sector organisations and local strategic partners within the partnership or collaborative approach you are undertaking.

- how will the proposed activities help to deliver the aims and objectives of any local plans aimed at tackling poverty and increasing inclusion.
- what new or enhanced services will be introduced that put communities first and tackle issues associated with poverty and inequality, and make best use of local resources.  If this is a consortium application, also provide evidence of partner commitment to this proposal (e.g. memorandum of understanding) and how they will each be involved.
- explaining the community-led nature of the partnership or evidence that the service or activity required will act as a catalyst for engagement involving local people,  whilst also providing opportunities and pathways for social and community integration.
- demonstrating the value of the collaborative approach e.g. greater impact, sharing responsibilities or better and new ways of working.
- acknowledging barriers and how the proposed approach will attempt to overcome these.

**Q.14 Which of the ESF Operation Programme targets below will your project meet? It is not essential that you meet all of the targets but you must explain how your project will fit with <u>at least</u> one of these from (i) to (iii) <u>and</u> at least one from (iv) or (v).** *(max 500 words)*
**Please tick all that apply**

The Aspiring Communities Fund will contribute to the achievement of the ESF Operational Programme targets:

(i)    community based or community led services supported
(ii)   new childcare places available
(iii)  deprived or fragile communities supported
(iv)  People benefitting from new services/support
(v)   new or improved community owned assets (capital for acquisition must be obtained via non ESF sources)

Please describe how you will ensure that all project targets are realistic and appropriate and how you will put processes in place to ensure that all reported outcomes are accurate and can be evidenced appropriately.

**Q.15 What are your project's planned outputs and outcomes by the end of the grant funding period?** An outcome is the longer lasting impact of the project, for example, Improving Access to Community Services. An output describes how the project will be delivered and should be SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound), for example, 6 Information Workshops delivered over a 12 month Period *(max 500 words)*

Please provide outcomes and outputs in bulleted format. For example:-

Outcomes
   • Improving access to community services

Outputs
   • 6 x Information Workshops delivered over a 12 month period

**Q.16 How will you ensure your project addresses the Horizontal Themes of Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunites and Non Discrimination and Equality between Men and Women?** *(max 500 words)*

The three ESF Horizontal Themes:

   • Sustainable Development,
   • Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination and
   • Equality between Men and Women

are at the centre of EU, UK and Scottish Government policy priorities. Applicants must demonstrate how they have considered and integrated these themes into their proposal.

Monitoring Horizontal Themes to ensure they have been considered and embedded within supported projects is a European Social Fund requirement. Successful projects may also be used as case studies to comply with European Commission requirements. Please tell us:

• how you promote each of the Horizontal Themes in your organisation
• how you will ensure each Horizontal Theme is considered in the design and delivery of your project

## Sustainable Development

Please describe how your project will:-

- Promote environmental awareness and good practice in the implementation of activity;
- Integrate sustainable development into your project by undertaking awareness raising education and training programmes;
- Adopt or improve Environmental Sustainability Strategies;
- Promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and
- Recognise and promote health and wellbeing as one of the corner stones of a healthy, vibrant economy.

## Equal Opportunities and Non Discrimination

Please describe:

- How the project will take account of and reflect the diverse needs of the target group(s) in the development and delivery of all activity.
- Any particular focus given to one or more of the Equality Act protected characteristics:
  (i) age (ii) disability (iii) gender reassignment (iv) marriage and civil partnerships (v) pregnancy and maternity (vi) race (vii) religion and belief (viii) sex (ix) sexual orientation;
- Outline any potential barriers to access to participation, how these have been identified and how the Project will overcome these barriers;
- Consider how possible discrimination (including unconscious discrimination) will be addressed. In addition, how will the planned activity, and the way it is to be delivered, contribute to eliminating discrimination? Specifically, what processes are in place to tackle discrimination if it occurs?

## Equality Between Men and Women

Please describe:-
- How the project will address gender equality

| Sustainable Development | Environmental policies, sourcing goods and services locally, reducing waste, recycling, use of public transport where possible, promoting walking/cycling initiatives, ensuring where possible premises are energy efficient, maximising technology e.g. video conferencing/online materials/electronic filing. |
|---|---|
| Equal Opportunities and Non Discrimination | Equal Opportunities policies, staff training on Equal Opportunity issues, childcare vouchers, flexible working arrangements, accessible premises and adapted equipment, materials available in different formats, and no discrimination. |
| Equality Between Men and Women | Inclusive work place environments; promote equality of opportunity for staff, including the reconciliation of work and private life |

**Q.17 Please describe the 'added value' of your project, and explain why ESF grant assistance is needed to enable it to proceed.** *(max 500 words)*

You should provide evidence to address the following:
- that other sources of finance have been explored and why these have been ruled out the amount applied for is the minimum grant necessary to enable the project to proceed
- how the project is additional to your current activity and aligned with/or complementary to other ESF projects
- how it will add value to existing services available in a locality or place e.g. increased number of services, new activities, jobs created and people supported

**Q.18 How will European Social Fund and Scottish Government support be acknowledged?** *(max 250 words)*

Applicants will be required to acknowledge the funding support received for the project in line with ESF Publicity Guidance. Please detail your action plan to maximise awareness of ESF and SG support to:
- those within your organisation, board and other stakeholders
- to those that will benefit from the project
- the wider community, public locally, and other networks

**Q.19 How will project activity be sustained beyond the end of the funding period?** *(max 250 words)*

Applicants must have an appropriate exit strategy in place to ensure continued sustainability of their project beyond the ACF grant funding period. This should include resourcing and options for continued funding, and project development to ensure there is a legacy resulting from the ACF grant award, noting that ACF will not fund staff posts designed to identify and source funding. Please explain how project activity will be sustained beyond the end of the funding period.

## Section 4:  Financial Information

A maximum of £125,000 can be applied for.  **Please note that grant is paid quarterly in arrears. European rules do not allow for costs to be paid in advance so please ensure that your organisation has the reserves to support ACF costs for 3 months at a time.**

### Q.20   Please detail the project costs

Please insert the employing organisation, the job title(s) of the individual(s) who will be working on this activity, their gross annual salary including employer's NI and Pension contributions, the number of months they will each spend on the project, the number of hours they will work on the project per week (minimum of 40%), their gross salary over the project period (including Employer's NI & Employer's Pension), 15% or 40% of the gross salary over the project period (expressed in £s), and the total eligible costs (Gross Salary over ACF Project Period + 15% or 40%).

The basic salary plus employer's NI and employer's pension contributions for each individual must be inserted to cover the total number of months the individual will be employed on the project.  Bonus payments or first aid/health & safety additional payments etc **must not** be included in the calculation of salaries.

We can pay the costs of staff who are directly employed between 40% and 100% of their contracted hours on the project plus an additional 15% or 40% towards indirect costs. You must select one model only – this must be applied consistently against all staff. Posts do not need to be in place for the full duration of the project, however the minimum dedicated period of time a member of staff can work on the project is one month.  Activity must be aligned to the payroll period and documented on the staff record.

If none of the consortium members have the required skills in-house to support specific aspects of the activity, then consultancy costs must be justified in the application form as part of Q8 (Proposed Activities).  Non-salaried posts must be separately detailed as a procured cost in the financial table.  The flat rate methodology (ie +15% or +40% for indirect costs) does not apply for consultancy costs as the invoices from consultants would, instead, be treated as actual costs.  Contracts for consultants must either be competitively tendered or procured in line with the organisation's standing orders and/or procurement policy to ensure value for money.

### Q.21  If you have applied the +40% model above please provide justification for the higher indirect cost methodology

If you are applying for Flat Rate +40%, you must clearly justify your reasons, and explain all of the indirect costs the 40% will support. Indirect costs are those related to project activity and delivery, for example:

- Additional staff required to support/deliver the project (who work less than 40% of their time on project activity)
- Travel and Subsistence

- Running/hosting events, workshops or seminars e.g. hire of venues, catering, advertising and publicity
- Any costs, including travel and childcare, that enables end users to participate

Please complete the Total Project Cost table providing figures relating to grant requested; match funding, eligible project costs and ineligible project costs for each of the years identified.

## EXPENDITURE PROFILE

Please complete the drawdown table with anticipated drawdown figures for both calendar and financial years.

Please complete the Match Funding Sources table with the names of the organisations that will provide match funding, the value, the funding period covered, and whether it has been confirmed or not. Match funding should relate to the delivery of Aspiring Communities Fund activity only. Costs associated with the wider delivery of a more holistic project which ACF activity forms part of is not classed as match funding and should not be included. Consideration will be given to projects with no match funding where clear justification is provided explaining why this is the case. The lead applicant must check all match funding to ensure that it is **not from another European source and that it has no proposed ACF outputs/results attached to it as part of any conditions**. Evidence of match funding must be forwarded in support of your application. Further information on match funding can be found in the National Rules.

**Q.22  Have you or any of the partners in your proposal received de minimis aid in the last three fiscal years?**

Please tick the appropriate box. If No, please state *not applicable* in the table below.

If Yes, please provide details of the funding and the value received over the last three fiscal years. The Regulation allows aid of up to €200,000 (euros) to an individual recipient from all public sources awarded under the de minimis rule. If you have received de minimis aid this will be notified clearly in your grant offer letter from the public body. Aid under an approved scheme does not affect de minimis aid if it is granted for different activities/support. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to check and declare any aid received, ensuring it does not exceed the maximum aid level.

See the **STATE AID** section of this Guidance.

## Section 5: Legal Requirements

Please read this information carefully.

**COMPLIANCE WITH INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Freedom of Information**

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 introduced important rights for all to access information held by Scottish public authorities - anyone asking for information will be entitled to receive it unless the information requested falls within an exempt category and even where information falls within an exempt category, there may be a public interest in the information being disclosed.

**Data Protection**

The form contains information that is personal data for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and in respect of which the Scottish Government is obliged to supply the following information:

- The data controller is the Scottish Government.
- The legal basis for collecting the information is Article 6(1) (c) and Article 6(1)(e) - of the GDPR.

The information you provide will be used for the following purposes:

a) Processing your application. Your application will be made available to Managing Authority colleagues and the Aspiring Communities Fund Independent Panel as part of the appraisal process.
b) Where you have identified additional funding sources within your application, the application may be shared with those funders as part of the assessment and appraisal process.
c) If your application is successful, we may publish this application in hard copy or on the internet.
d) Data may be used for statistical and Scottish Government performance reporting and evaluation.

The application form will be stored securely and retained in order to ensure compliance with grant conditions that apply to projects that are successful in receiving funding.
Apart from a) to d) above, the information you provide will not be disclosed to any other organisation for any purpose other than detecting or preventing fraud. For
the purpose of the detecting and preventing fraud, data may be disclosed to (i) subcontractors or sub-contractors employed by the Scottish Government for this purpose (ii) Audit Scotland and (iii) law enforcement agencies.

Your Rights :

- You have the right to request information about how your personal data is processed and to request a copy of that personal data.
- You have the right to request that any inaccuracies in your personal data are rectified without delay and you can edit your contact details at any time. This should be done in the first instance by contacting the organisation providing you with support.
- Further information on The Scottish Government and its processing of personal data can be found here https://beta.gov.scot/about/contact-information/personal-data/

## Section 6:  Declaration

Please complete the declaration fully by double clicking in the grey boxes to edit.  The designated signatory must be at Chief Executive or Director level or equivalent with the authority to sign off this application for funding.  Please note that the application form must be signed and dated as per Section 6 above.

## SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

If you have any questions about the Fund or the guidance please send an e-mail to our mailbox AspiringCommunities@gov.scot and a member of the team will contact you.

**APPLICATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The assessment criteria will be used by the Aspiring Communities Fund team and ACF Assessment Panel to assess and score eligible applications.

**Aspiring Communities Fund Assessment Criteria**

**1. Impact on the community and putting communities first – 30%**

Empowering our communities, building capacity and enhancing their capabilities must be the focus of your activity.

You must demonstrate:
- How the activity supported will contribute towards achieving ESF targets, including job creation, and at least one of the ACF targets;
- The impact of the project activity in developing and improving services and support for the target groups;
- The potential transformational changes the project will have on individuals/target groups and the wider community;
- The people/beneficiaries/target groups the project will work with;
- How you will put communities first, effectively involving local residents in the process and empowering communities;
- Examples of joint working with other community organisations and local partners;
- The geographic area(s) that the project is targeting and why. This must include a list of the communities and localities being supported.

**2. Partnership working – 25%**

Through this fund we will explore collaborative approaches that deliver community activity tackling poverty and inequality. We are keen to encourage collaboration between statutory bodies and local communities that have an interest in exploring new and sustainable ways of working to improve local outcomes.

We require evidence:

- Explaining the community-led nature of the partnership or evidence that the service or activity required will act as a catalyst for engagement, involving local people, whilst also providing opportunities and pathways for social and community integration.
- Demonstrating the value of the collaborative approach i.e. greater impact, sharing responsibilities or better and new ways of working;
- A joint agreement by relevant partners of the approach and activity requiring funding, with clear links to the operational and strategic approach with other related service providers;
- New or enhanced services are introduced that put communities first and tackle issues associated with poverty and inequality, and make best use of local resources;

- Acknowledging barriers and how the proposed approach will attempt to overcome these.

### 3. Fit with local plans, reflecting national priorities – 20%

Proposed project activity must fit with local plans that reflect wider national priorities. This should be evidenced by:

- Services being identified as a priority in key national and local policy and delivery plans such as community plan, strategic plan of the local authority or emerging locality plans;
- The proposed activity must demonstrate a clear fit with a local plan.

### 4. Evidencing the need and demand for your project – 15%

The fund will help enable community bodies and third sector organisations in our most deprived and fragile communities to develop and deliver long-term local solutions that address local priorities and needs, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to tackle poverty and inequality at a local level.

You should demonstrate:

- How your approach will reflect local circumstances and needs, and aimed at target groups identified by the ESF Programme (workless, low income and/or lone parent households) and local priorities;
- Why you are targeting the specific geographic area(s) within your project. This must include a list of the communities and localities being supported;
- What target groups your activities will support and why support is needed;
- Evidence the need and demand for your project.

### 5. Deliverability, added value and longer-term sustainability – 10%

This fund is about change and creating new or enhanced services. You should tell us:

- How the project will be delivered and in what timescale;
- How the project will add value to existing services available in a locality e.g. increased number of services, new activities, jobs created and people supported;
- How the project activity will be sustained beyond the funding period.