

AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND MARINE

Review of the Climate Challenge Fund

Changeworks

The Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) is a Scottish Government scheme that supports communities to take action to address climate change. A review of the CCF was commissioned to focus specifically on CCF3, the CCF's third phase. CCF3 included a 'refresh' approach addressing three themes: *broadening* access to the CCF, *deepening* the impact of projects to embed more profound change and *exploring* new approaches. The review also explored how the CCF or any successor scheme could best enable communities to contribute to the Scottish Government's climate change objectives and targets.

Main Findings

- **CCF refresh:** this has been successful in many ways, but with some variation across the refresh themes:
 - **Broadening access:** this theme was successful in that over two-thirds of CCF3 projects were delivered by groups new to the fund, over one quarter of all project awards went to communities among the 30% most deprived in Scotland, 17% went to Junior CCF (JCCF) projects and 7% went to minority ethnic communities.
 - **Deepening impact:** there was clear evidence of existing CCF groups being encouraged to reapply for CCF funding. There was however little take-up of the Ideas Bank, which was designed to share ideas and best practice with potential CCF projects.
 - **Exploring new approaches:** relatively small proportions of projects included elements of innovation and adaptation, which were acknowledged as challenging issues for community groups to address. There was only limited evidence of revenue-raising by CCF projects, although many groups had been able to supplement their CCF grant with funding secured from elsewhere.

- **Wider impacts:** CCF projects have delivered wider successes, benefits and legacies including: behavioural and attitudinal changes; community education relevant to climate change; skills and employability; community cohesion; health and wellbeing and community development. There is also evidence of the CCF ‘pulling’ projects towards climate change, as well as supporting groups already working on this issue. Given this range of impacts, any successor scheme will need to consider what its core purpose(s) are and, from this, develop the scheme and its criteria.
- **Carbon savings:** CCF projects are required to set targets for carbon savings and measure progress against these, to help them think through the logic of how they are addressing climate change. This process was perceived as challenging, complex and confusing by many community groups. Target-setting encouraged some projects to expand the scope of their work, but also restricted activities for others where it was felt that measurement of changes was difficult. Clarifying the role, purpose and use of calculating carbon savings should be a key area of attention in the development of any successor scheme
- **Support and training:** offered as part of the CCF, this was identified as playing a positive role in supporting projects. However a need for enhancements was identified including: improved best practice guidance (including support on behaviour change, evaluation and topic specific issues); improved local networks; and bringing training geographically closer to more remote groups.
- **Enhancing strategic links with Scottish Government policy areas:** there would be opportunities to co-ordinate any successor fund more closely with Scottish Government climate change policies, its target low carbon behaviours, and the areas of focus for current climate change targets that relate to communities. This would give the scheme and communities a clearer purpose, and would more strategically meet Government aims related to addressing climate change.
- **Key elements to retain in any successor scheme:** the focus on disadvantaged groups and the option for innovation should be retained, but not to the exclusion of all alternatives. There could be scope for groups to continue to deliver ongoing projects should a clear need or demand be presented.
- **Funding options:** co-funding and revenue-raising approaches should be options rather than requirements of any successor fund. It was not felt that loan funding would be appropriate for CCF-type projects.

Introduction

The CCF was launched in 2008 and aims to support communities to take action to address climate change. CCF projects must meet three criteria: they must be community-led, must foster behaviours that lead to measurable carbon emissions savings, and must achieve a sustainable legacy through physical, behavioural, awareness or social change in the community. The CCF is administered by Keep

Scotland Beautiful (KSB), which provides support to grant applicants and grant recipients.

In 2015 the Scottish Government commissioned a review of the CCF, focused specifically on the third phase of the CCF (CCF3) which has run since 2012. CCF3 included a ‘refresh’ approach aimed at *broadening* access to the CCF, *deepening* the impact of projects to embed more profound change and *exploring* new approaches.

Specific research aims were to:

- review how CCF3 had delivered on its ‘refresh’ themes;
- explore how the CCF, or any successor scheme, could best enable communities to contribute to the Scottish Government’s climate change objectives and targets.

Research Methods

The review used the following research methods:

- Review of KSB’s CCF projects database, to enable profiling of CCF projects.
- Review of the results of an online survey of 170 CCF groups (administered and analysed by the Scottish Government).
- Semi-structured interviews with 20 stakeholders (half internal to the Scottish Government and half external).
- Focus groups with the CCF and Junior CCF (JCCF) grants panels.
- Case study research with 24 CCF groups.

Impact of the refresh themes

The ‘refresh’ of the CCF has been a success in many ways, but with some variation across the refresh themes.

The broaden theme aimed to increase access to CCF funding. It succeeded in increasing access from new, disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups, including minority ethnic groups. In total 292 CCF3 projects (and 96 development grants) were funded. Of these, 197 projects and 85 development grants were from groups new to the fund. 27% of all project awards went to deprived communities (among the 30% most deprived in Scotland), 17% to JCCF projects and 7% to minority ethnic communities. Development grants were introduced to help disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups. They have enabled groups, particularly those new to CCF and from minority ethnic groups, to assess potential demand for full project applications and to access funding to purchase equipment to set up projects. The JCCF and the focus on youth projects was also positively received, but also identified as an area for improvement in any future scheme, with potential scope to explore more effective ways to include young people.

The deepen theme aimed to support CCF projects to embed more profound changes. This has been positively received. One hundred and six CCF3 groups (including 95 full project awards and 11 development grants) were previous applicants to the CCF, demonstrating success in encouraging groups to reapply for funding. However restrictions on funding groups to undertake the same activity with the same community were a problem for some groups. The Community Action Support Programme (CASP) of support and training received encouraging feedback for its training programme and networking activity. There were however calls to increase this activity; to bring it closer to more rural groups; and to increase and more effectively target support. There was little take-up of the Ideas Bank, which was intended to share ideas and best practice with potential CCF projects in order to increase the CCF's impact. There were suggestions that this could be enhanced and better explained.

The explore theme aimed to research and test new approaches and areas of activity. This was the least effective of the refresh themes in terms of the number of projects delivered. 5% of CCF3 projects were deemed to have an element of *adaptation* in their project work; 12% included ideas that were deemed *innovative*, and 10% included some *revenue-raising*. However innovation and adaptation projects were acknowledged as being particularly challenging for community groups to deliver, with suggestions that more support was needed for groups to develop such ideas.

In terms of revenue-raising, only a limited number of case study groups had been successful with such activities, and it appears that many project types do not lend themselves to generating this type of income. However there was evidence from the CCF project survey that just under half of CCF projects had been able to supplement their CCF grant with funding secured from elsewhere (via grants and other income).

Other Impacts of the CCF

Overall impact: the research found that CCF3 had many strengths and successful elements. The CCF and its community basis demonstrated an ability to empower communities to support climate change-related activities. There was a wide range of factors driving project ideas, and these were typically very 'bottom-up' and community-driven. The CCF was seen as flexible and adaptable and therefore met these needs well.

Carbon savings: the CCF requires projects to achieve measurable carbon savings in order to help them think through the logic of how they are addressing climate change and to demonstrate the change they have achieved. Carbon savings targets were shown to impact on projects both positively and negatively: adding elements to some projects to increase potential carbon savings, but restricting activities for others where it was felt that measurement of changes would be difficult. Calculating carbon savings was perceived as a challenging, complex and confusing process by many case study groups. There was some concern that this was acting as a barrier to progressive activity within community groups as too much focus was being placed on this element.

Wider benefits: research participants also identified wider achievements and successes achieved by CCF projects. These included behavioural and attitudinal changes; community education relevant to climate change; skills and employability; community cohesion; health and wellbeing and social enterprise developments. Some research participants perceived these as more important achievements for their projects than their carbon savings. There is also evidence of the CCF ‘pulling’ projects towards climate change (through its criteria), as well as supporting groups already working on this issue.

Sustainable legacy: as well as those arising from the wider benefits above, other legacies included community development and capacity-building, volunteer and staff development, and the development of partnerships and networks. In addition, the CCF project survey showed that most groups were still active and involved in activities to address climate change.

Support and training

The CASP programme of support and training, along with KSB’s Development Officers (DOs), played a positive role in supporting projects. However, the research identified project requirements for additional, more targeted and more accessible support for groups and projects, in order to assist in project delivery and sharing of knowledge. Specific needs identified included enhanced provision of templates or best practice guidance for a range of project elements including: community engagement, audience targeting and understanding; volunteer and staff management; project and group management and administration; data collection; and best practice in project delivery (by type of project). To increase accessibility of support, projects also requested enhanced local networks, locally-based DOs and bringing training closer to remote groups.

CCF or any successor fund

Evidence in the review suggests the following key points for consideration for the CCF or any successor scheme.

Enhancing strategic links with relevant Scottish Government policy areas: the research identified that there would be opportunities to build links between the CCF or any successor scheme and the key Scottish Government policy areas addressing climate change targets. Communities are already acting as local agents for change. Co-ordinating any successor fund more closely with Scottish Government climate change policies, targeting low carbon behaviours identified as priorities by the Government, as well as areas of focus for current climate change targets that touch on communities, would give the scheme and communities a clearer purpose. The review found clear evidence that CCF has already shaped applications to enhance their focus on behaviour change and additional carbon-saving activities. This success could be extended to meet the aims of Government more strategically, whilst retaining community ownership and direction.

Core purpose(s) of any successor scheme: this will need to be considered in order to develop any scheme and its criteria, especially given the range of project

benefits identified in addition to carbon savings. Clarifying the role, purpose and use of carbon savings calculated by projects should be a key area of attention. This is an extremely challenging element for many groups and one that many groups are mistaken about the purpose of (i.e. some perceive that the CO₂ savings calculated are directly contributing to the calculations of Scotland's emissions). There is therefore an opportunity to make the project reporting process more worthwhile both for projects themselves and for the fund as a whole.

Key elements to retain in any successor scheme: the research findings suggest retaining a focus on disadvantaged groups and an option for innovation, but not to the exclusion of all alternatives if a clear need or demand is presented.

Funding options for any successor scheme: co-funding and revenue-raising approaches were supported, but it was felt that these should be options rather than requirements. It was not felt that loan funding was appropriate for CCF-type projects due to the limited assets of community groups and the limited ability for many CCF-type projects to generate income.

Conclusion

The review has demonstrated that the CCF is succeeding in supporting communities to address climate change. Communities want to engage in climate change-related activities, are willing to develop their projects towards this agenda, and projects make a difference in many different ways.

Any successor fund could further enhance communities' role in tackling climate change through closer alignment with relevant Scottish Government policy areas and activities, whilst retaining the scope for communities to develop their own projects.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact debbie.sagar@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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