

Community Enterprise Fund

Application guidance

This document aims to help you prepare your application for the Community Enterprise Fund, which is funded by the Scottish Government through the Social Entrepreneurs Fund (SEF).

Please read it carefully when drafting your application. It explains the steps you need to take to apply and offers further tips and pointers on each question in the application form.

If you have any questions that have not been answered in this document, you can contact Karen Fitzsimmons, Relationship Manager at karenf@firstport.org.uk.

Overview

The Community Enterprise Fund is funded by the Social Entrepreneurs Fund. It supports community organisations looking to start trading or set up a social enterprise in Scotland. It offers awards of up to £5000 to help cover the start-up costs associated with starting a social enterprise. Applications must be able to evidence:

- **A strong business model**– showing how the idea will generate income, so it does not rely on grants in the long term.
- **A clear social impact**– demonstrating that applicants have identified a social or environmental issue they want to tackle.
- **A determined and motivated team** – SEF focuses on the people involved in the idea, so we want applicants to tell us about the skills, knowledge, and passion within their team for the issue they are tackling and how these will help to make the idea a success.

Eligibility Criteria

This programme is open to constituted third sector or community groups. Your organisation must:

- Be based in Scotland

- Operate primarily for the benefit of people or communities within Scotland
- Not be involved in activities concerned with political campaigning or the advancement of religion
- Not yet be trading on a regular basis

Your proposal must:

- Be or plan to be a social enterprise – i.e. an asset-locked organisation where all profits will be reinvested into the business and its social aims (no private individuals or bodies can benefit from the assets or uncapped dividends of the business)
- Be in the early stages of development – i.e. the ‘start-up’ phase and not yet regularly trading
- Request eligible costs associated with starting up a social enterprise
- Cover a 6-month period, with a timetable for spending the funds by the end of that period
- Detail how the enterprise will become financially sustainable through trading as opposed to grant income.
- Provide direct, measurable social impact to individuals, communities, and/or the environment.
- In the case of a proposed social enterprise that requires premises before it can start trading, demonstrate that you have found suitable premises and obtained an agreement in principle from the owner/landlord.

Application Process

- You should submit your application online at <https://www.firstport.org.uk/funding/community-enterprise-fund/>
- You will receive an automatic acknowledgement confirming we received your application. We will then contact you within 2-4 weeks to arrange a time to discuss your application. This is an informal meeting via phone or Teams, which gives you the opportunity to tell us more about your idea, your motivation, and your plan.
- All eligible proposals go to an independent funding panel who makes the final decisions.

- You will normally receive a decision on your application within 12–14 weeks of submitting the form.
 - We expect strong competition for the funding. We will prioritise applications that demonstrate the strongest potential to generate both income and social impact.
 - If you need support to develop your idea, the [Accelerate](#) programme can help.
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The Application Form

The purpose of the application form is to allow you to clearly explain your proposal to the funding panel.

As we intend to consider more applications than we have funds to support, we will prioritise applications that demonstrate the strongest potential to generate both income and social impact.

You can save your application form as many times as you like before submitting it, and there is no need to complete it in one go.

Section 1: About you

This is where you fill out details for the lead contact for this application.

If you have any accessibility requirements, please let us know. Firstport endeavour to make the application process as accessible as possible, so it's important for us to know if and how we can help.

We will also ask you to confirm that you meet the eligibility criteria, that you are happy with how we will use your information and that you understand what will happen next.

Section 2: Developing the idea with another individual or organisation

If you are working on your social enterprise with an individual outside your existing organisation, or in partnership with another organisation, please tick yes, then provide their name and a brief description of how they will contribute to your project.

Section 3: About your idea

If you don't have a name for the proposed enterprise/solution, that's fine – just put n/a.

Keep your idea summary short and factual. Try to present a clear picture of what you would like your enterprise to accomplish. You should cover the following points:

- What challenge(s) your solution addresses
- What services/products will it offer
- How it will generate income
- How it will generate social impact

If your idea is successful in securing funding, we may use this summary to promote your project. You should only include information which you would be happy for us to share externally.

Sector: Your solution may work across sectors, but there should be a main sector which fits the solution in the drop-down list. If there isn't, please select the closest fit.

Beneficiary location: Some solutions are carried out in one specific local region; others work across a wider area. If your project is not restricted to a specific place, please select 'Scotland Wide'.

Primary social impact: Your solution may also be delivering impact against several categories, so please select the closest fit.

Section 4: Organisation details

If there is an existing company or charity in place, please let us know the legal structure and the charity/company number if applicable. You can find this number on [OSCR](#) (charities) or [Companies House](#) (companies).

Although you don't need to have incorporated an organisation as a company or charity before applying, you will still need to have a bank account in the name of your existing organisation (into which we can pay your award).

Section 5: Banking details

Bank account name: – This must be the bank account in the name of your existing organisation and be entered as shown on your bank statement.

Account Number and Sort Code: These should be the same numbers as they are shown on the bank statement. Please enter the sort code as a single six-digit number with no spaces or dashes.

Section 6: Expenditure

This request will form the basis of your award if you are successful and should be for no more than £5,000 in total. We are looking for a clear breakdown of costs to be covered by this grant.

Community Enterprise Fund awards are £5,000 each, to be spent over 6 months.

Eligible costs: The grant can be used for most start-up and development costs. We can cover a wide range of costs, including:

- Legal fees for setting up a legal entity for the enterprise, and/or registration as a charity or community interest company
- Rent for premises/office space
- Venue hire
- Utilities – including phones
- Website, branding, logo design
- Marketing materials and stationery
- Insurance
- Accountancy
- Equipment
- Laptop and/or software– [NB. We can only fund *laptops* to a maximum of £600, if you can demonstrate that it is an essential need. If you require a higher specification laptop for design work or other similar purposes, a contribution to the cost of the laptop may be considered eligible, up to a maximum of £600]

Costs we cannot cover (ineligible items)

- Retrospective costs
- Wages – *this funding cannot be used to cover salaries or otherwise pay for time spent on developing the enterprise, e.g. if you are a professional web designer, you cannot claim for your own time spent designing a website for the enterprise. Firstport funds salary costs through our Build It Fund – please check our website for more information*
- Training/qualifications to deliver core services

- Consultancy work on business plans, market research or feasibility studies. *If you need this type of support, the Just Enterprise programme may be able to assist.*
- Meeting/subsistence costs
- Permanent redevelopment of privately owned property
- Livestock
- Subsidies for beneficiaries
- Overseas travel

Section 7: Equal opportunities

The lead contact for this application should complete this section. ***We only use equal opportunities information for statistical purposes, and it will not form part of your application assessment.*** If you would prefer not to answer any questions, please select 'Prefer not to say'.

You should now be ready to submit! As soon as you click 'Next' on this page, your application will be submitted. You should receive an email confirming we have received your application.

If you're having issues submitting your application, please email us at info@firstport.org.uk or give us a call on 0131 564 0331.

Data protection

Firstport is committed to respecting your privacy and protecting your personal data.

We will keep the information provided within your application file for a period of seven years. It will be permanently deleted after the publication of Firstport annual accounts. This is for accounting purposes and in line with HMRC requirements. You can access our [Privacy Policy](#) on our website.

Submitting an application to the Community Enterprise Fund is acknowledgement that you understand and accept our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) set out in our Privacy Policy.