

Cairngorms Green Recovery Fund 2021 – Guidance Notes for Applicants

What is the Green Recovery Fund?

The Cairngorms Green Recovery Fund has been established to support the recovery of the Cairngorms National Park, its communities and businesses from the impacts of COVID19. It seeks to do this in a way that ensures we protect and replenish our natural and social capital. By this we mean supporting projects that contribute to the conservation and enhancement of nature, tackle climate change and reduce emissions, enhancing the networks of relationships among people who live and work in the Cairngorms or contributing to strengthening our communities and businesses through capital project delivery. The fund will seek to cover projects and actions that are not supported from other, existing national programme funds or financial allocations.

Fund Purpose

To support the recovery of the Cairngorms economy from the widespread impacts of COVID19, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and seeking to address the ongoing impacts of climate change.

The Fund's Principles

The Fund has four guiding principles:

1. **Green** – projects will contribute to strengthening the natural and social capital of the Park
2. **Cairngorms** – projects will be Cairngorms National Park focused and contribute to the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan.
3. **Partnership** – applicants will work in partnership with others to deliver projects, focused on green recovery, well-being and economic growth.
4. **Employment** – Projects will endeavour to maximise their contribution to local employment and impact for the NP.

The Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan

You can find out more about the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan at:

https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/170707CNPPP17-22FINAL_SinglePage.pdf. The three headline long-term outcomes of the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan are:

1. Conservation: a special place for people and nature, with natural and cultural heritage enhanced
2. Visitor Experience: people enjoying the Cairngorms National Park through outstanding visitor and learning experiences
3. Rural Development: A sustainable economy supporting thriving businesses and communities.

How much is the Fund worth?

The Fund has a total of £300,000 available to support projects, made up of £250,000 from the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and a further £50,000 from the Cairngorms Trust. The fund will have 2 rounds, the first opening in April followed by a second round in September. It is anticipated that approximately 75% of funding will be awarded through the first round. All funding will need to be spent by 31st March 2022.

Who is eligible to apply?

The Fund is open to groups, organisations (including community bodies and groups, charities, Business Associations and partnerships) and individual businesses. Individual businesses must clearly demonstrate the public benefit that their application will deliver and

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may wish to discuss this prior to submission. The Fund will consider new or follow-on applications from organisations that applied to the Green Recovery Fund 2020/21. Applicants must have a bank account into which grant payments can be made by BACS transfer.

What it will fund?

The Fund is interested in supporting the recovery of the Cairngorms economy from the widespread impacts of COVID19, while protecting and enhancing the nature of the national park and seeking to address the ongoing impacts of climate change. To achieve this the Fund wishes to support Cairngorms communities and the businesses based in those communities, in taking locally-led action to address:

- The most significant impacts of COVID19; and/or
- Overcome the most significant local barriers to economic and community recovery.

Projects should address all of the Principles of the Fund in order to qualify for consideration.

What are the key dates?

- 5th April 2021 – GRF Round 1 application window opens
- 9th May 2021 – Round 1 Applications window closes
- 3rd June 2021 – Round 1 successful applications announced
- 2nd August 2021 – GRF Round 2 application window opens
- 5th September 2021 – Round 2 Applications window closes
- 29th September 2021 – Round 2 successful applications announced
- 31st March 2022 – All projects must be complete

How much can be applied for?

There is no upper or lower limit for applications. The quality of the outcomes which are proposed and impact that the project will have is a more important factor. It is hoped to support projects of varying sizes but the average award is expected to be between £10,000 and £25,000. Larger awards may be made for projects which are considered to deliver exceptional benefits and value. Your application will be stronger if it includes match funding.

If I am unsuccessful in Round 1 can I reapply for Round 2?

Applications that are unsuccessful in Round 1 may reapply in Round 2. However, it is strongly recommended that any applicant in this position obtains feedback from the Fund before resubmitting its application.

Can I make multiple applications for different projects?

Applicants may only submit one application per funding round. Consideration may be given to applications in Round 2 from organisations that were successful in Round 1 but success will be dependent on progress with any ongoing GRF funded project and availability of funds.

When will funds be received if our application is successful?

We understand that cash flow for new projects can be difficult to arrange. For approved projects, we are willing to provide grants on the following basis:

- a) On approval of project and confirmation of start: 40%.
- b) At mid stage (date to be agreed) on basis of reasonable evidence of progress: 40%.
- c) On completion of project and provision of any delivery information required: 20%.

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As we are distributing public and charity funds, we may need to see reasonable evidence of need for “upfront” funding at the start of the project in order to justify provision of cash prior to the start of spending on a project. For example, a copy of a bank statement showing current cash funds available to the applicant.

Green Recovery Fund Criteria

Applications will be assessed against a scoring system based on eight criteria listed below.

1. **Green Recovery** – How well does the project contribute to strengthening the natural and social capital of the Park?
2. **Cairngorms** – how well does project contribute to the outcomes of the National Park Partnership Plan?
3. **Partnership** – how well will project work in partnership with others to deliver the desired outcomes
4. **Employment** – how well will the project contribute to local employment and what impact will it make for the National Park?
5. **Timescales** - Will the project be fully complete 31st March 2022?
6. **Value for Money** - What level of match funding (including volunteer time or other resources) does the project have and is the project good value for money?
7. **Project Planning** - How well thought-out is the project? Does it have clear objectives, measurable outcomes and is it deliverable?
8. **Project Risk** - What's the level of project risk and can the risks be managed?

Who are the Cairngorms Trust?

The Cairngorms Trust (full name The Cairngorms Local Action Group Trust), is a Scottish Registered charity (SC046495). www.cairngormstrust.org.uk. It targets investment in six priority areas for the Cairngorms as set out in its Local Development Strategy:

- Building community capacity to facilitate and support local development through partnership working.
- Grow the economy of the Cairngorms National Park, by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and business diversification, and increasing the numbers of workers employed in the Cairngorms.
- Attract, support and retain young people in the Cairngorms.
- Improve transport, connectivity and service provision within the Cairngorms National Park.
- Protect and enhance the Cairngorms National Park's landscape, wildlife and local heritage.
- Support excellence in sustainable tourism and recreation, to enhance enjoyment of the Cairngorms National Park by both visitors and residents.

Ready to apply?

If you have read these Guidance Notes and think you have a project that meets with the Green Recovery Fund Principles and Criteria, then please apply using the application form. Notes to help with completing the application form are set out below.

How to contact the Fund

If you need any further information on the Green Recovery Fund, please contact the Fund by emailing adminoffice@cairngorms.co.uk or using the contact form available on the Cairngorms National Park Authority's website at <https://cairngorms.co.uk/contact/>.

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Completing the Green Recovery Fund application form

Please complete all sections of the form as indicated. Text boxes can be expanded to accommodate additional text. Failure to complete all sections of the form will mean that we will be unable to consider your application. Where necessary you may enclose additional information with your application. Where additional information is enclosed please label this clearly and make it clear through a reference at the relevant question what additional information you are sending with your application.

If you wish to discuss your funding application, with regard to eligibility or any other queries, please use the contact methods set out in the Guidance Notes above.

Part 1: Applicant Details

Please provide all details requested.

The applicant is the person or organisation who will receive the grant payment in return for having organised, supervised and paid for the work proposed in this application. They must have a bank account into which grant payments can be made by BACS transfer.

Part 2 Project Details

Describe the project that you are seeking funding for. This should include details of the work that a grant from the Green Recovery Fund will support and details of how, when and by whom, the work will be carried out. Tell us about your intended project outcomes and what your project achieve (its impact). You may enclose additional, relevant information to support the main application form where appropriate. This could include evidence of need, study reports, site plans etc.

Where planning consent is required for a project to be delivered, the applicant must commit to ensuring that the necessary permissions will be in place to enable the project to be delivered within the timeframe of the Fund (i.e. by 31 March 2022).

Part 3: Basic Eligibility Criteria

All projects must be completed and payments processed by 31st March 2022.

State Aids rules may apply to projects which involve economic activities and / or involve supporting businesses or organisations engaged in economic / commercial activities. We have therefore asked in this section whether you have received any state aid funding over the last three years from any public bodies to help us evaluate the potential implications of our funding for your organisation if your application is approved. You should be aware of this as the public bodies who have funded you in the past will have provided you with a letter setting out that their funding is classed as state aid.

Further information on State Aids rules is available at www.gov.scot/publications/state-aid-guidance/ . Use the contact details set out in the guidance if you need to discuss state aid considerations further with us.

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Part 4: Why your project deserves Green Recovery Fund support

This will be a competitive application process and it is expected that the Fund will be heavily oversubscribed. Use this section to explain how your project meets the principles of the Fund and how it will deliver against the assessment criteria that will be used to select successful projects.

Part 5: Project Costs

Provide a full breakdown of Project costs.

Where item includes a unit cost or hourly rate, include this to show how total cost for that item is reached. For example:

Purchase of trees: 2000 trees @ £0.68 each = £1,360

Tree planting 10 hours @ £10/hr cost = £100.

You should provide evidence with your application that costs for each item/activity are reasonable. This should be commensurate with the costs involved. So for example reference to supplier list prices, quotes where list prices cannot be obtained or evidence from comparable activity/ experience. Evidence from any competitive tendering process should be submitted for higher value projects. Where this has not yet taken place, justification of the costs applied for should be made.

For volunteer in kind contributions, state the breakdown between unskilled, semi-skilled or professional labour and the hourly rates used.

Where evidence on costs is lacking we may contact you to seek clarification.

VAT

We will only cover the VAT costs that an applicant is not able to recover from their usual VAT returns. Therefore, we will only cover costs that fall to an applicant to cover. The application form asks for your VAT status to help us assess what element of VAT costs you may expect us to cover through our grant funds if your application is approved.

If the applicant is not VAT registered input VAT incurred in qualifying costs can be included in the claim. If the applicant is VAT registered the claim can only cover input VAT to the extent that it is not recoverable from HRMC.

Irrecoverable input VAT should be separately identified and included in the detail of project costs disclosed at section 5 of your application form.

While we are happy to give further guidance if you have any questions on this point, all applicants are advised to take appropriate advice from their professional advisors on specific VAT issues if necessary.

Part 6: Declaration

Complete the declaration and return to adminoffice@cairngorms.co.uk by the closing date set out in the Guidance Notes above.