**Fife Rural Development Fund 2023-24**

**Guidance Notes**

This document provides information about the Rural Fife Development Fund (RFDF) and guidance as to how to make a successful application for funding.

This money for this fund is provided by the Scottish Government (SG) and is managed by the Fife Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG was responsible for all decisions made regarding the LEADER fund that until 2020 covered rural development in Fife. The LAG has now been allocated SG funds to cover projects in rural Fife that will run from August/September 2023 to end of February 2024. The Rural Fife Development Fund priorities for this year are:

* Increase sustainable climate practice, better environmental solutions and work towards Net Zero
* Improve support for young people and minority groups
* Address cost of living and rural poverty challenges
* Rural community capacity building

**Organisation eligibility**

This fund is for community-based organisations. While the fund is for the benefit of communities in rural Fife, non-rural organisations can also apply - providing the activity they are looking to secure funding for takes place in rural Fife. ‘Rural Fife’ follows Scottish Government’s definition of Rural accessible and Rural Remote (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rural-scotland-key-facts-2021/>).

All areas that were eligible under the LEADER programme are eligible for this fund too.

Types of organisations that can apply include:

* Charities
* Voluntary Organisations
* Social Enterprises
* Community Groups or Associations
* Volunteering Bodies
* Housing Associations
* Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee (CICs)
* Charitable Trusts (if set up by a Local Authority the Trust must be fully independent from it)
* Community Enterprise Trusts

Your organisation must be part of a regulated body e.g., registered with OSCR. Where this is not the case, you must be able to provide us with a reference from a regulated organisation that knows you well but is independent of you - for instance a partner you work with in the community.

Small rural businesses (>10 employees can also apply for this fund, providing they also meet the above priorities.

Examples of organisations which are **not eligible** to apply include:

* Arms-length Council bodies including trusts (defined by clauses in the constitution that concede control to the local authority).
* Community Interest Companies with profit distribution.
* Private sector companies
* Local Authorities
* Public Sector

**What can be funded?**

The aim of the fund is to encourage and support community development in Rural Fife through the 4 priorities created by the LAG. Examples of what can be funded include:

* Training of staff or volunteers
* Recruitment of staff (within timeframe of the project delivery)
* Small capital activity – with all consents in place
* Feasibility studies
* Event costs
* Consultant costs

Other ideas will be considered so please get in touch with us before applying to discuss them if you are unsure whether your project is eligible or not. Get in touch with our team by emailing [catharine.idle@fife.gov.uk](mailto:catharine.idle@fife.gov.uk) to set up an informal call.

We recommend you read through the application guidelines to ensure that you can provide the necessary information about your project to apply successfully.

**What can’t be funded through this programme?**

The fund aims to provide additional capacity or resource where there currently is none, so unfortunately it cannot support the following:

* Existing work
* Core costs
* Management fees
* Land property purchase
* Existing staff costs
* Any outstanding debt

**How much can we apply for?**

You can apply for a maximum of £25,000 but it is expected that the average grant amount will be £15,000.

You don’t need to apply for the maximum amount, you should apply for what you need. We need to know what you will spend the grant funds on. **Please note, these funds are usually paid in arrears.** We may be able to pay up to 50% once an initial spend has been incurred and you can evidence this. If you need to, please get in touch with us to discuss this option.

**Application Support**

Please remember that this is a competitive application process. Your application will be assessed against other applications and only the strongest applications chosen will receive a grant. Be clear and focused and make your application as easy to read as possible. Demonstrate clearly the need in your community and the impact your project/activities will have – don’t be afraid to be passionate about your cause! You will also need to highlight that what you propose is not covered by any other existing service or agency.

Funders want to know there is value for money in the projects/activities they are investing in. Talk about the ongoing sustainability and impact of your project/activities on the people in your community. Be sure to include the number and types of people who will benefit from your project, and how they will benefit.

It’s important to also think about the timeframe. Ensure that you will have enough time to deliver your project/ activities within the period of funding. If your project/activities involve input from partners, make sure they know about it and can meet your timescales. If your project will not be completed by 28th February 2024, we cannot offer you funding.

**Key dates**

The fund will open for Expression of Interest (EOI) notes in July 2023. If your project meets the eligibility criteria and your EOI is approved:

* You will be emailed an application form
* Final deadline for applications is 15 September 2023
* Technical checks will be carried out on all applications to confirm eligibility
* LAG assessment of all applications will take place from when they are submitted
* Awards will be communicated by email within 2 weeks of LAG approval
* Mid-point check – 1st December 2022
* Final check – 28th February 2023
* Final claims will be paid in March 2023

If you have any questions, please get in touch: [catharine.idle@fife.gov.uk](mailto:catharine.idle@fife.gov.uk)