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Circular Economy Fund

Guidance notes



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Ten Towns Circular Economy Fund

Introduction

The aim of the Circular Economy Fund is to support activities which contribute to the advancement of the Circular Economy as part of the Ten Towns initiative.

Seed corn funding of up to a maximum of £5,000 per applicant will be made available to support communities to develop circular economy activities in town centres that help deliver positive environmental, social and economic benefits for the local community, assisting to develop sustainable projects in reducing local carbon footprint.

Funding of up to 100% of total projects costs will be available.

Eligible project activity

Funding has been secured via the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

Please note that all projects seeking funding under the Circular Economy Fund must be delivered by December 2024 at the very latest. Projects must also be in a position to achieve and evidence outputs and outcomes within this timeframe.

The fund will support the following eligible projects:

- Library of Things
- Repair Cafes
- Community composting facilities/infrastructure
- Textile reuse/repair projects
- Plastic recovery projects
- Swap shops
- Circular Economy awareness raising workshops/events
- Capacity building/training to facilitate circular economy activities/projects
- Scrap stores

Eligible Areas

The fund is available for projects that will be delivered in the County's rural market towns, namely:

- Cross Hands
- Cwmaman
- Kidwelly
- Laugharne
- Llandeilo
- Llandovery
- Llanybydder
- Newcastle Emlyn
- St Clears
- Whitland

Levels of grant

Financial support will be made available via a third-party grant scheme for constituted groups:

Grant threshold is between £1,000 - £5000.

Eligible Organisations

Eligible organisations include:

- Constituted Voluntary and Community Groups
- Registered Charities
- Not for profit organisations
- Social Enterprises
- Town and Community Councils can apply for community projects that are additional to normal statutory responsibilities which will benefit the community.

Eligible/ineligible costs

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs / activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up costs.• Insurances for new groups (covering period up to end of December 2024 only)• Volunteer costs.• Training.• Equipment/assets required for the delivery of the project• Marketing and communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs incurred outside/not associated with the circular economy projects.• VAT (unless unrecoverable)• Project costs outside of the funding timescale.• Project costs that are considered excessive.• Overheads.• 'Business as usual' staff costs.

Assessment Process

Applications will be assessed and prioritised in line with the following criteria:

- Applicant can demonstrate a clearly identified need
- Project will deliver against the scheme outputs and outcomes
- Can deliver within the timeframe (all projects must be completed by the end of December 2024 at the latest)
- Value for money
- Have considered how people and skills opportunities are part of wider project deliver

Measurable Outputs

Each project must identify which of the following outputs and outcomes will be achieved as a result of the funding. Definitions can be found in [Annex A](#).

Outputs

- Number of organisations receiving grants
- Number of local events or activities supported
- Number of volunteering opportunities supported
- Number of people reached
- Number of people attending training sessions

Outcomes

- Improved engagement numbers
- Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support
- Supply end of year data on volume/weight/number of re-used/remanufactured/recycled material this project has produced

Cross Cutting Themes

All activities will be required to demonstrate how they will meet the following cross cutting themes:

Impact on the Welsh Language

The Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice places a statutory requirement on the Council to ensure that the grants it awards have a positive effect on opportunities for persons to use Welsh, and on not treating Welsh less favourably than English.

To meet these requirements you must make every effort to do the following:

- Operate bilingually publicly, giving Welsh a high visual presence and status at every opportunity (promotional materials, posts, press releases)
- Communicate bilingually with the public (emails, press releases, phone call letters)
- Collaborate with partners who promote the Welsh language (Mentrau Iaith, Urdd, Young Farmers, Meithrin, Cymraeg i Blant, Welsh medium Schools, Welsh for Adults, chapels, choirs, local newspapers, forums and networks that promote the Welsh language)
- Ensure that there is a workforce with Welsh language skills, or other arrangements in place, that will enable activity in accordance with the Standards.
- Provide services in person or online in Welsh

Digital accessible services

Outlined below are potential actions for organisations to consider when developing and delivering their projects:

- Publicising your project digitally: in addition to traditional paper-based publicity methods, try using a range of different social media platforms; a project website or blog. Create digital content such as videos and podcasts that can be shared with the community.
- Holding hybrid meetings – allowing the community to attend a meeting either in person or online via technologies such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

- Using online surveys (e.g. SurveyMonkey or Microsoft Forms) to engage and consult with the community. They can also be used to evaluate a projects' impact.
- Consider appointing a team of digital champions to support the project to exploit the benefits of digital technologies.
- Encouraging more users in the community to engage with digital technologies.
- Engage with [Superfast Business Wales](#) or [Digital Communities Wales](#) for further ideas and advice on improving your digital content and skills
- For info - [Digital Toolkit for Business \(gov.wales\)](#)

Equality of Opportunity

Equality is a short-hand term for all work carried out by an organisation to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination, both in employment and in carrying out its work and delivering services.

By putting equality right at the heart of project design and implementation, organisations are more likely to achieve better outcomes.

Procurement

Purchasing goods, services or works

When procuring works, goods and services, applicants are expected to conduct the process in a manner which ensures openness, value for money and fairness and must follow the procurement procedures as they are outlined in this section.

Procurement Thresholds

The precise procedures to be followed will depend upon the size of the order or contract to be let. Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) operates a graduated set of procedures which recognises the need to lighten administrative requirements for contracts involving smaller amounts. All applicants must adhere to the rules included at [Annex B](#).

Public sector bodies that are covered by the EC Procurement Directives are required to follow their own organisational procurement rules and procedures.

Failure to fully comply with the procurement thresholds will render the costs ineligible for assistance under this fund.

Publicity

Successful applicants must demonstrate support from Carmarthenshire County Council and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, this includes any publicity including press releases in relation to the funded project.

Public Subsidy

This scheme is covered by the current UK Government Subsidy Control Act (2022). The total amount of Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) received over a rolling period of three fiscal years should not exceed £315,000 per business*. If you have received any other financial assistance in the past 3 financial years, you will be asked to declare that this has not been exceeded in the event of an offer being made.

Health & Safety

You must ensure your project is compliant with health and safety regulations and that there are no potential risks or hazards to members of the public. Please ensure appropriate insurance and cover is in place.

Environmental Compliance

You must ensure your project is compliant with all environmental regulations.

Annex A

Programme Outputs and Outcomes

Output	Definition	Audit Evidence
Number of organisations receiving grants	<p>Number of organisations receiving grants. Organisations here will either be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The end beneficiary is the recipient of the award itself, for example, a local authority, higher education institute or an organisation representing specific sector who may be undertaking a feasibility study. - An organisation that is an end beneficiary and does not fit into the above description nor can be classified under the business output indicators, for example, a charitable organisation. - Grant means a cash payment by the project that is not repaid 	Project Monitoring Database, Monitoring Claim Form and supporting evidence
Number of local events or activities supported	<p>Number of local events or activities supported. An event refers to planned activities. These should fall into the below categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those related to: (1) Film, TV, Music, Radio (2) Heritage (3) Arts, Museums and Libraries. - Other activities and events include, for example but not limited to, sports, volunteering, tourism and social action. 	Details of planned event i.e., marketing and promotion, photos
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	<p>Number of organised volunteering roles supported as a direct result of the intervention. This includes opportunities for people to volunteer on a regular basis, and opportunities for one-off volunteering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal volunteering refers to those who have given unpaid help via a group, club, or organisation: for example, leading a group, administrative support or befriending or mentoring people 	<p>Signed confirmation from volunteer of role undertaken directly relating to SPF support.</p> <p>Completed volunteer timesheet.</p>
Number of people attending training sessions	<p>Number of people attending training sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training sessions include but are not limited to: training focusing on digital, management, leadership, collaboration, networking and lower-carbon alternatives skills. 	Register of attendees Details of training undertaken
Outcome	Definition	Audit Evidence

<p>Improved engagement numbers</p>	<p>The increase in number of individuals engaged in the local area / activity during the last 12 months. Engagement can include physical and digital engagements.</p> <p>What is classed as the 'local area' where events are recorded should remain consistent throughout the collection e.g., should not include/ exclude events in neighbouring locations which were excluded/included in previous returns.</p>	<p>Evidence of attendance numbers, website/app visits, photos</p>
<p>Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support</p>	<p>The number of organised volunteering roles created as a direct result of the intervention. This includes opportunities for people to volunteer on a regular basis, and opportunities for one-off volunteering.</p> <p>- Formal volunteering refers to those who have given unpaid help via a group, club, or organisation: for example, leading a group, administrative support or befriending or mentoring people</p>	<p>Details of volunteers roles created, number of hours</p>

Annex B

Third Party Grant Procurement Rules

Requirement	Value	Procurement Process
All	up to £4,999	<p>A minimum of 1 written Quotation <u>must</u> be obtained and retained.</p> <p>Best value for money must be obtained and reasonable care must be taken to obtain goods, works or services of adequate quality at a competitive price. A documented record to support the decision must be retained for audit purposes.</p> <p>Applicants are requested to ‘Think Carmarthenshire First’ when seeking quotations for the purchase of Goods/Services. Please therefore, explore the market place to establish if there are any businesses within Carmarthenshire that can provide the goods / service that you are seeking to purchase. Applicants may be required to demonstrate such quotations have been sought</p>
All	£5,000 and £24,999	<p>A minimum of 3 written Quotations <u>must</u> be sought from competitive sources*. The quotes must be based on the same specification and evaluated on a like for like basis.</p> <p>A documented record of the quotes sought, the evaluation process and the decision to award must be recorded.</p> <p>Applicants are requested to ‘Think Carmarthenshire First’ when seeking quotations for the purchase of Goods/Services. Please therefore, explore the market place to establish if there are any businesses within Carmarthenshire that can provide the goods / service that you are seeking to purchase. Applicants may be required to demonstrate such quotations have been sought</p>
NB- spend thresholds of £75K and under are exclusive of VAT		
NB- spend thresholds for Goods / Services under £213,477 and works under £5,336,937 are exclusive of VAT		

Important Guidance

Advertising via Sell2Wales

* It is possible for you to advertise on the National Procurement website, <https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales> if you are in a situation where you have difficulty in identifying the minimum number of suppliers required and/or would like to vary or attract new suppliers to quote or tender. Advertising via Sell2Wales is best practice, however you may feel that you are better able to identify potential suppliers who could provide the best overall offer.

This facility is available to you free of charge, please visit the Sell2Wales website: <https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales> and contact the website helpline on 0800 222 9004 for further information.

Seeking Quotations/Tenders

For spend above £5,000 it is essential that the quotes/tenders are sought from appropriate suppliers for the goods, works or services required. In circumstances where it is evident that unsuitable quotes/tenders have been sought, there may be a requirement to advertise via Sell2Wales.

Other Funders

If a project involves any other or additional funding streams, these Third-Party Grant Procurement Rules must be followed as a minimum for the total estimated spend of the requirement.

Avoiding conflicts of interest

We recognise that it is possible that applicants / developers or persons connected with them (such as relatives, business partners or friends) may wish to tender for a contract being offered by the applicant / developer. This is acceptable, but applicants will need to ensure that the tendering process is undertaken in an open, transparent and fair manner, as outlined above, which does not give one person or company tendering any advantage over another, which arises from the process. Appropriate measures to prevent identify and remedy any conflicts of interest must be carried out.

If an applicant / developer or any person connected with them directly or indirectly, has a financial, economic, political, or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure:

- that applicant / developer, or any other person or party with an interest must declare that interest in writing to the Project officer who will offer advice accordingly.
- specifications and evaluation criteria must not be biased or tailored to favour one solution or any one party over another.
- that person or party with an interest should take no part whatsoever in any of the tender evaluation procedures to ensure that the process is fair to all. It is acknowledged that the grant applicant may be required to provide the final approval
- every stage of the procedure must be recorded formally.
- If the contract would normally be subject to a single tender procedure, it is recommended that the sponsor should seek written quotes from at least two other suppliers (i.e. following the procedure set out above for contracts between £5000 and £25,000)

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that there is fairness in the spending of public money and that the integrity of the applicant is not compromised.

Changes to the specification or contract

If any changes are required to the specification after seeking quotes/tenders which affects the original scope of the requirement, a new procurement exercise may need to be undertaken to ensure that best value for money has been achieved. This may occur where there are unforeseen additions to the original

requirement, where tenders are received in excess of the available budget, where funding levels change etc. The grant applicant must inform the Project officer who will offer advice accordingly.

- **Failure to observe the relevant procedures outlined above will be considered non-compliant and may lead to a withdrawal of the grant offer and potential claw-back of funding.**
- **In cases where you are unable to satisfy the requirements of these procedures you must always inform the project manager.**
- **If you have any queries as to how these procedures should be applied, you should contact the project manager for clarification and further guidance.**

Do's and Don'ts of Tendering

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are declared at the earliest opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't skew the specification to eliminate or to discriminate against suppliers i.e. limit the specification to a specific brand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comply with the appropriate rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't change the scope of the specification once distributed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the specification is precise and not in excess of the requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't change the evaluation criteria during the process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the Evaluation Criteria is directly relevant to the subject of the contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't give companies too short notice to quote.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete and retain full records for future reference and audit purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't enter too much detail verbally with suppliers regarding specific questions. The same information must be provided to all suppliers to ensure the process is fair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that quotes/tenders are evaluated on a 'like for like' basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't reveal prices to potential suppliers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that you treat suppliers in an open, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't breach confidentiality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow sufficient time for companies to quote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't open quotes/tenders in advance of the deadline.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the value of the Goods/Works or Service is estimated accurately at the start of the process to apply the correct procurement process. The aggregated value must be used where applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't consider submissions received after the deadline.

Procurement Definitions

Title	Description
Aggregation	Adding together the value of separate contracts for the same supply, service or works.

Contract	A Contract for the purposes of these Rules shall be any agreement (whether in writing) between the grant applicant and one or more other parties for: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the sale of goods or materials. • the supply of goods or materials. • the execution of works • the provision of services (including accommodation and facilities).
Competitive Source	an independent provider bidding against another independent provider
Goods	are material items i.e. equipment, food, vehicles etc
Public Contracts Regulations 2015	are rules and regulations that Public Sector organisations must adhere to when procuring Goods, Works and Services over a certain value threshold whereby an official Tender Exercise in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 should be undertaken.
Evaluation	a method of determining which offer provides the best value for money in accordance with the pre-determined evaluation criteria
Evaluation Criteria	A list of key requirements taken from the specification that will enable suppliers to explain how they intend to deliver the requirement which will be evaluated. The criteria by which the most economically advantageous tender will be determined is based on a combination of price/cost and quality criteria.
Evaluation Panel	It is best practice to establish an evaluation panel to undertake the evaluation exercise. It may be appropriate to have a cross functional team as a panel. Panel should agree specification and evaluation criteria. Panel should be consistent throughout each stage of procurement exercise
Sell2Wales	is a National Procurement Website where all public sector contracts are advertised. Third Party Grant Recipients can also advertise via the website free of charge, please visit the Sell2Wales website https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales and contact the website helpline on 0800 222 9004 for further information.
Services	tasks undertaken by people i.e. consultancy services, translation services etc
Specification	this is a written statement that defines the requirements. The specification will vary according to the work, product or service concerned. For a simple product the specification may be a brief description, while in the case of a complex requirement it will be a comprehensive document. The description of the goods, works or services required must not refer to a specific make, brand, or source.
Tender/Quote	is the document compiled by a potential supplier in response to an invitation to quote/tender. It sets out general information demonstrating the capability and eligibility of the supplier - including detailed information about how they propose to fulfil the specifications of the requirement.
Works	include landscaping, construction, building works etc

‘Mae croeso i chi gysylltu gyda’r cyngor trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu’r Saesneg.

You are welcome to contact the council through the medium of Welsh or English’