

Town Centre Regeneration Fund

Information &
Guidance



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Town Centre Regeneration Fund – Information & Guidance for applicants

Before you apply

Please read the following documents before completing your application:

- Information and Guidance for Applicants
- Application Form
- Application Form Help Notes

The above documents are available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/tcrf>

Please ensure that your application for funding addresses the purpose of the Town Centre Regeneration Fund and that the applicant organisation and area meet the eligibility requirements.

Introduction

The Scottish Government has been clear from the outset that it wants to take a strategic approach to government with a focus on outcomes. We are focussing all of government and public services on a single, overarching purpose:

“To create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.”

The Scottish Government established a National Performance Framework, published in the Spending Review 2007, to underpin delivery of this purpose. You can view the performance framework at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms>

The Scottish Government recognises the important contribution made by Scotland's town centres to the achievement of its purpose. They are a key element of the economic and social fabric of the nation, acting as centres of employment and services for local communities and a focus for civic activity. We want to see town centres reach their full potential and to support local economies through these challenging economic times.

The new Town Centre Regeneration Fund is a sign of our commitment to the improvement of Scotland's town centres and local high streets. We are making available £60m in 2009-10. We want these significant new funds to support community and business leaders to regenerate and grow our town centres. This funding will help our town centres adapt to modern markets, and supply the access, mix of facilities and services, and environment that will meet the needs of local communities and businesses.



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The Fund will make a key contribution to the National Outcomes of the Scottish Government, in particular helping to ensure that:

- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
- We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

How much is available?

£60 million capital is available from April 2009 to March 2010. While there are no minimum or maximum award levels, we will expect all projects to make a strategic contribution to the long term plans for their town centre; and we expect all areas of the country to benefit. In practice, this may mean that bids for less than £100,000 or for in excess of £3,000,000 require additional scrutiny.

What will the Fund support?

The Fund aims to support local community and business leaders to make real and lasting improvements to town centres across the whole of Scotland. We will consider all capital activity. This might include for example:

- Improving pedestrian or vehicle access to a town centre
- Improving parking provision within a town centre
- Attracting increased footfall, both by day and by night
- Diversification of the mix of services and amenities within a town centre, underpinned by an understanding of the requirements of the local community
- Acquisition of gap sites and vacant properties for redevelopment
- Streetscape improvements which enhance and improve how a town centre operates, providing these are of sufficient scale and ambition to represent a capital investment
- Remediation of vacant or derelict sites within the town centre to fit them for retail, residential, business or recreational use
- Purchase of gap sites to allow for use as residential, retail, business or recreation
- Remodelling of existing premises to provide a suitable mix and floorplan of retail, business, residential and recreational uses, or to comply with Disability Discrimination Act legislation

We will be looking for evidence that the investment is needed, and that it will contribute to long term strategic improvements to the town centre. Inclusion in local plans and evidence of the support of local partners will be important.



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What will the Fund not support?

The Fund is capital only and so cannot support any non-investment activity. This might include, for example:

- Running costs such as staffing costs
- Marketing activity
- Payment for consultants, including for masterplanning activity
- Partnership engagement exercises

We will also not offer funding retrospectively or as a substitute for programmed spend. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that capital investments which have already taken place or for which funding has already been allocated will not be reimbursed.

What is a 'town centre'?

Scottish Planning Policy defines town centres as:

“city, town and district centres, irrespective of size, that provide a diverse and sustainable mix of activities and land uses which create an identity that signals their function and wider role.”

Based on this definition, each local authority in Scotland identifies in their development plans a network of centres. We want all town centres and local high streets across Scotland to be able to benefit. All areas recognised in local authority development plans as town and district centres will therefore be eligible for funding. This will include town centres and high streets within cities, although city centres are excluded. All funding applied for must be spent within these areas; although we will welcome bids for multiple town centres within the same local authority area or across local authority boundaries.

Who can apply for funding?

We want to encourage a diversity of ideas and ensure that all parts of the community have an opportunity to get behind their local town centre. We will therefore accept bids from local authorities, Community Planning Partnerships, Town Centre Management organisations, Business Improvement Districts, local Chambers of Commerce, Urban Regeneration Companies, businesses, Registered Social Landlords and third sector groups.

Organisations applying to the Fund must:

- Be established organisations with an appropriate legal personality
- Be located or operating/trading in a recognised town centre



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- Have appropriate management and governance arrangements in place to support our investment

The following are not eligible for the Fund:

- Organisations that are insolvent or at risk of insolvency
- Organisations that lack an appropriate legal identity
- Organisations that have no nexus in an eligible town centre

Other key points about the Fund

- We will accept only one bid per organisation per town centre
- We will be particularly looking for proposals which are coordinated through local partnership arrangements including, for example, the Community Planning Partnership or Business Improvement District
- We welcome thematic applications for multiple town centres, either within the same local authority area or across local authority boundaries
- We will not fund retrospectively. That means we can't pay for any expenditure incurred before a formal offer of grant has been issued and accepted
- If you are successful, you must claim all funding by March 2010

VAT

If your organisation is eligible to reclaim VAT, the amount of funding you ask for must exclude VAT. The Scottish Government will not support VAT costs where these can be reclaimed.

State Aid

State aid is a European Commission term which refers to forms of assistance from a public body, or publicly-funded body, given to undertakings on a discretionary basis, with the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union.

The 'State aid rules' are set out by the European Commission and comprise various articles of the EC Treaty, regulations, frameworks and guidelines - which set out what aid can be given. The European Commission governs member states' compliance with these rules and must be notified of all schemes involving State aid. State aid granted without Commission approval is viewed as unlawful and may be subject to repayment - by the aid recipient.

The Scottish Government, and all other public bodies (including bodies administering public funds) are required to ensure that they provide funding in adherence with the State aid rules and must consider applications in order to establish whether a measure constitutes State aid. Where State aid is involved, it must be provided under the cover of an exemption; approved scheme, or the de minimis regulation.



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Further information on State aid can be obtained here:

<http://www.stateaidscotland.gov.uk>

Appraisal and assessment process

Applications will be subject to a four stage assessment process comprising:

- An initial sift to ensure eligibility conditions are satisfied
- Scoring of all applications against the criteria to produce a ranking of bids
- Consideration by an Independent Assessment Panel which will consider the spread of bids geographically, organisationally and by size of town and, combining this with ranking information, recommend to Ministers the allocations that ought to be made
- Consideration and final decision by Ministers

Stage 1: Initial Sift

The Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Division will, with the support of colleagues in COSLA and across the Scottish Government, undertake all appraisal and assessment at stages one and two of this process.

At the initial sift stage, we will eliminate any application from an ineligible town centre; applicant; or for activity which does not constitute capital investment. In addition, we will be looking for evidence that:

- The Fund would complement rather than replace existing planned spend (i.e., we will want to be sure that additionality is offered);
- A degree of leverage of funding from other public and/or private sector sources will be achieved;
- Spend can be achieved in an appropriate timescale. The Fund represents monies accelerated from 2010-11 into 2009-10 and we will therefore be looking for bids that can quickly deliver a lasting impact in our town centres.

Stage 2: Scoring against Criteria

Bids that satisfy eligibility criteria will proceed to the second sift stage, at which point they will be scored against a number of criteria. Scores will be used to produce a ranking of applications which will help to inform selection of the projects that are eventually chosen.

The first four criteria represent Scottish Government National Outcomes and will assist in determining the degree to which projects support the achievement of our priorities.



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Criterion 1: *We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe.*

Criterion 2: *We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people*

Town centres have a key contribution to make to the economic vitality of Scotland and we want the fund to support local economic growth and employment opportunities for local communities. We would expect projects that aim to increase footfall in the town centre, by day and by night, to have a positive impact on their economic vitality, as would those that create opportunities for further investment.

We will be looking in particular for evidence of:

- Leverage from other public and private sector sources. Higher rates of leverage will attract higher scores
- The involvement and support of the local business community in the bid, through the Community Planning Partnership or other local partnership arrangements
- Creation of employment opportunities, particularly where these are long term and will benefit the local community
- Potential to attract future investment

Criterion 3: *We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need*

A successful, sustainable town centre will meet the needs of and be accessible to the local community. Local plans set out the strategic context for each town centre and describe the long term actions required to ensure that the centre meets the needs of the local community.

We will be looking in particular for evidence that the bid will support delivery of relevant local plans, agreed between local partners.

Criterion 4: *We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations*

Clean, well maintained, attractive town centres with recreational facilities will attract footfall.

We will be looking for evidence that bids will enhance the built and natural environment of the town centre through, for example, remediating gap sites or perhaps undertaking a fundamental clean of the built environment.

Criterion 5: *Project can be delivered, and within the accelerated timescale of the Fund*



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The Fund seeks to make a real difference to our town centres, and to do this quickly as a means of supporting our town centres through difficult economic times.

We will be looking for assurance that applicants are ready and able to quickly deliver outcomes. This will particularly include evidence that:

- All necessary planning consents are in place
- All necessary building consents are in place
- All grant will be claimed by the end of March 2010

Criterion 6: Strategic impact and long term sustainability

The Fund aims to make a significant difference to our town centres. We want to make sure that applications are underpinned by investigations and engagement of local statutory, private and third sector representatives, which have in turn given rise to a strategic plan for the town centre. We want to be able to see how the project will support delivery of long term aims for improvement of the town centre. Finally, we want to be sure that resource implications of projects are recognised and committed.

We will be looking for evidence that:

- The bid supports local delivery plans
- All local partners have been/are involved and supportive
- Funding for all other elements of the project are identified and committed
- Any ongoing revenue costs arising from the investment are identified and a local partner is committed to meeting these costs

Stage 3: Consideration by Independent Panel

At the third stage of assessment, scoring information on ranked bids will be considered by an independent expert panel which will include a representative from local government, from the private sector and an independent chair. Their role will be to recommend to Ministers the allocations that should be made. In doing so, they will consider the geographic spread of bids to ensure that all areas of Scotland benefit from the Fund. They will also consider the spread of bids across towns of differing sizes and will look to ensure that small and medium sized towns benefit fairly from the Fund. This information will be weighed up alongside the scores achieved by bids to arrive at a recommendation for allocations that reflects the relative merits of bids whilst ensuring a good spread across all of Scotland.

Stage 4: Consideration and Decision by the Scottish Ministers

Finally, Ministers will be asked to consider the recommendations of the panel and to decide to which applicants grant will be offered.



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The Application

Timescale for applications

The Town Centre Regeneration Fund will be available from 1 April 2009 until 31 March 2010. Applications will be taken in two tranches to allow rapid action and results, as well as the opportunity for all bodies and all activities to have a fair chance to apply.

Tranche One

The first deadline for applications will be 5 June 2009. We would hope to complete the assessment process and be able to announce offers of grant around 30 July 2009. It is our expectation that we would look to allocate up to about £40m of the Fund in the first tranche, however allocations will depend on the quality of applications received and our desire to see the whole of Scotland benefit from the Fund.

Successful projects will receive offers of grant. Unsuccessful applicants will receive written feedback on the reason their bid was unsuccessful. There will be no prohibition on re-submission of bids for the second tranche of funding. Feedback will be limited to an explanation of reasons for lack of success, and will not extend to assisting in preparation of a further bid.

Tranche Two

The second and final deadline for applications will be 21 August 2009. We would hope to complete the assessment process and be able to announce offers of grant around 19 October 2009. It is our expectation that around £20m would be available in this second tranche.

Successful projects will receive offers of grant. Unsuccessful applicants will receive written feedback on the reason their bid was unsuccessful.

The Applicant

While we will accept applications from a wide range of individual organisations or bodies, consortium or partnership applications from two or more organisations/bodies are encouraged. In this instance the partners need to agree an eligible lead organisation who will be responsible for completing the application on behalf of the partnership or consortium. We also ask for information about all the partner organisations and their individual roles in the proposal. The lead partner must explain how any funding will be managed and distributed amongst the other partners.



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Demonstrating additionality

You will be expected to demonstrate the additionality of the project you are seeking funding for, highlighting how any monies awarded would allow for clear benefits for a town centre or local high street area, that otherwise would not be possible.

For further guidance on completing your application, you should refer to the associated guidance that is available with the application form.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will want to work with all successful applicants to evaluate the impact of the Fund. This may include e.g. seeking your own monitoring information or visiting a selection of sites.

Additional Scottish Government support for town centres

In February 2009 the Scottish Government launched a new learning network aimed at providing long term support to practitioners and front line decision makers in Scotland's town centres and local high streets.

The learning network better connects a range of people across Scotland including local authority regeneration, planning and economic development staff; Community Planning Partnerships; town centre managers; developers; retailers; Business Improvement District staff and community representatives.

Through a variety of online and face-to-face events, the learning network aims to help stakeholders to learn from one another, as well as providing access to good practice and evidence of what works. Members of the learning network also have opportunities to work together to identify gaps in resources and support and to work together to address these gaps.

The learning network will play a key role in evaluating the impact of the Town Centre Regeneration Fund. All organisations and bodies receiving funding will be expected to work closely with the learning network in order to document experiences and lessons learned from the process - therefore we would encourage all applicants to engage and become familiar with the learning network.

For more information on how the Town Centres and Local High Streets learning network can help you, please contact:

Yvonne Gavan
Network Co-ordinator
The Scottish Government
Scottish Centre for Regeneration
Highlander House



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Yvonne.gavan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

How to apply

Please ensure you download and carefully read:

- Information and Guidance for Applicants
- Application Form
- Application Form Help Notes

The **Application Form Help Notes** explain the information we are looking for and will help you focus your answers. The **Application Form** is available in Word and PDF formats. All of the documents are available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/tcrf>

Please send a hard copy of the completed application form and all supporting documentation to:

Town Centre Regeneration Fund Administrator
The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Regeneration Division
Area 1-G
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

All applications and supporting information should be typed. If you do not have access to a PC, please complete a hard copy of the form in **black ink** and post it to the above address. Please note that word limits should be adhered to and that all applications should be legible - additional content or illegible entries will not be considered. Applications received after 5pm on 21 August will not be considered.

Data Protection, Freedom of Information, and the Environmental Information Regulations

Applicants to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the Data Protection Act 1998.



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Please therefore note that information provided, including personal information, will be held, published and disclosed in accordance with the aforementioned legislation. When submitting an application, please let us know if there are any parts of it which would prejudice your commercial or other interests if they were made public. However, given our obligations, please note we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Equalities and Environmental Legislation

All organisations submitting an application to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund must satisfy themselves that they are compliant with relevant equalities and environmental legislation, including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Further information on equalities legislation can be obtained from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission www.equalityhumanrights.com and guidance on relevant environmental legislation from the Scottish Government www.scotland.gov.uk. Specific details on SEA requirements can be accessed at www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/14587.

We may require proof from you that you have considered your obligations as required under legislation.