



Sustainable Development Fund Highland Region Guidance on accessing funds

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, your project must benefit communities that lie wholly within the Highland Council area.

You don't need to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution (governing document or set of rules) and not be set up for individual profit. If you are unsure if your group is eligible, please contact us for advice.

Key information

Who can I contact if I have any questions or need guidance?

Marianne Townsley
Community Fund Manager
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Working Pattern: Tues to Fri

Lindsay Dougan
Community Fund Manager
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Working Pattern: Tues to Thurs

The team is available by email and phone. We encourage applicants to contact us in advance of submitting an application to discuss your proposed project. We can arrange for a telephone meeting if requested in advance.

Where does this money come from?

Communities can access funds which SSE have made available on a voluntary basis near each of its renewable energy developments.

SSE created the Sustainable Development Fund as part of its community benefit arrangements from its onshore renewable energy developments in Highland, primarily the Strathy North, Bhlaraidh and Dunmaglass wind farms.

What can the grants be used for?
What are the aims of the fund?

The fund is to be used to provide support for strategic projects in the regions in which we are investing. The following themes have been established for the Highland region and any successful application must meet one or more of the following outcomes:

- **Creating opportunities:** Create or enhance opportunities for education and employment through activities that develop skills and improve an individual's chance of entering the workplace.
- **Empowering communities:** Empower communities to become more resilient and protect vulnerable residents through measures which demonstrate long-term social, environmental or economic improvements.
- **Sustainable places:** Stimulate meaningful regeneration to improve or enhance local infrastructure, landscape, biodiversity or heritage and make a lasting difference to the places we live, work and visit.

Successful projects will have the potential to make a significant and sustainable difference to people within the region. For example, initiatives which combat the effects of rural isolation, developing local energy projects, establishing an apprenticeship scheme, or projects which generate income to provide communities with long term revenue streams.

How do I apply?

If your project meets the fund criteria, please complete and submit an application form, which can be requested from SSE or downloaded from <http://sse.com/sustainablefund>



You must include a business plan with your application.

We encourage potential applicants to contact the SSE Community Investment Team prior to completing an application to discuss if your project meets the fund criteria.

How much is the fund worth?
How much can I apply for?

In this round, the overall fund is worth approximately £1,000,000.

You can apply for funding from £10,000 up to a maximum of the fund's total value.

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider applications up to 100% of total costs but would encourage groups to leverage other external funding towards the project. This will strengthen your chance of an award from the fund.

The timing of future rounds is yet to be decided and the scale is dependent on SSE's renewable development plans.

What is the timetable?

Round opens	25 October 2017
Deadline for applications	31 January 2018 (12pm)
Panel decisions	May 2018
Awards made	May 2018

- We will contact you within four weeks of the panel meeting date to let you know whether your application has been successful or not.
- Applications received after the deadline will not be eligible.
- Applicants can only receive one grant award per round. Whilst subsequent applications can be made in future rounds, the funding cannot support repeat activity and should not be considered as core funding.

How are decisions made?
Who makes the decisions?

The SSE Sustainable Fund Panel will review applications and determine which projects should receive funding. The panel comprises:

Rt Hon Lord Jack McConnell (Chairperson)

Professor Jan Bebbington *Professor of Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews*

Damien Yeates *Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland*

Professor James Hunter *Emeritus Professor of History, UHI*

Alan Young *Managing Director Corporate Affairs, SSE*

How will the panel assess my application?

The panel will review the application based on its relevance to the priority themes identified above and appraise the **social, economic and environmental impact it could have to the local area**. This will be the primary form of assessment.

It is important to bear in mind that the panel will be looking for projects with the potential for **transformational change**.

Additional consideration will be given to projects that demonstrate:

- Value for money – evidence that the project has a high impact for the amount invested
- Community involvement – evidence that the community is engaged in the development and implementation of the project. This may be in the form of surveys, service user involvement, community consultations, open days, letters of support or volunteering opportunities.
- Financial viability – evidence that the project will be maintained beyond the period of grant funding
- Evidence of need - demonstration of a real financial need for the application and evidence that the applicant has leveraged other sources of external funding



Who can apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups or organisations which need funding to support projects or activities consistent with the priority area listed above. • You don't need to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution (governing document or set of rules) and be set up on a not-for-profit basis. If you are unsure if your group is eligible, please contact us for advice.
When must grants be spent by?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any grant received should begin drawing down spend within one year of being awarded. Long-term projects (such as building work or multi-year projects) will be released in stages and must demonstrate progress within one year of award.
What happens during and at the end of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSE is committed to understanding the social impact of the fund. One of the key requirements of successful applicants is to monitor and evaluate your project. • We utilise an Outcomes Report based on Big Society Capital's Social Outcomes Matrix. Applicants will be asked to identify outcomes at the start of the funding and confirm outcomes at the end of project. We require successful applicants to provide copies of evaluation activity to SSE. • The SSE Community Fund Managers will provide evaluation guidance and support.
What's the difference between this fund and SSE's local community funds?	<p>This fund supports projects which take a longer term view and focus on the identified priority theme. Groups based within the Highland Council boundary are eligible to apply.</p> <p>Local funds exist to support the community organisations closest to our wind farms to help them achieve their aims. Only groups from the immediate local area to the development are eligible to apply.</p> <p>Groups that are eligible to apply to SSE's local community funds are also eligible to apply to the Sustainable Development Fund.</p>
Are there any activities you're unable to support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects which do not meet the Sustainable Development Fund criteria • Projects which do not benefit people living within the Highland Council boundary • Individuals, or groups without a constitution • The advancement of religion or politics (including requests to support the core activities of religious or political groups) • Direct costs of energy consumption • The repayment of loans or payment of debts • Trips abroad • Costs already incurred or activities which will take place before we have made a decision on an application (retrospective funding) • Payments towards areas generally understood to be the primary responsibility of statutory authorities

Please note:

Funding decisions are at the sole discretion of the SSE Sustainable Development Fund panel.

