



Social Innovation Challenge Fund – Guidance Note & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This guidance note & FAQs provides information for those interested in applying to the Glasgow City Council Social Innovation Challenge Fund.

What is the purpose of the Social Innovation Challenge Fund?

The Social Innovation Challenge Fund aims to help underrepresented groups overcome the systemic barriers that make it difficult to become successful entrepreneurs. It aims to catalyse innovation and support people from these groups to take those first steps to starting up, sustain and grow businesses in Glasgow.

Proposals are invited that will connect and empower Glasgow early-stage entrepreneurs and startups. While the Social Innovation Challenge Fund seeks to nurture startups, it does not provide direct funding for individuals to start-up their business.

What are the objectives of the Challenge Fund?

The fund will empower organisations to create and develop new services (or broaden existing activities to new beneficiaries) that provide skills development, ideas exchange and collaboration, expert guidance and foster greater levels of innovation. The fund is opportunity focused; seeking new initiatives that do not duplicate existing activity but fill gaps in the current ecosystem offering in Glasgow.

Who can apply for the fund?

Organisations such as but not limited to:

Existing organisations working with underrepresented groups with experience of supporting entrepreneurs to set up or grow a business or social enterprise.

Established organisations looking to deliver new projects with pre-start or start-ups that will innovate, inspire and strengthen links between the business support ecosystem and underrepresented groups.

Third Sector organisations/ Social Enterprises enabling early-stage entrepreneurialism and start up in the underrepresented communities.

What is the eligibility criteria for the fund?

The fund is open to applications from organisations that align with the aims and objectives of the fund that are operating within Glasgow.

Applications can be made by private, or Third Sector organisations seeking to develop or scale up initiatives which meet the objectives of the Fund.

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Eligibility

	Does your organisation have experience of supporting entrepreneurs in the Glasgow City Council Area		Is the proposed project for new activity in the Glasgow City Council Area		Is the proposed to scale up an existing activity in a different area? Or to support a different underrepresented community?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Organisation with physical premises within Glasgow City Council Area registered for Non-Domestic Rates to Glasgow City Council, delivering services that align to the aims and objectives of the fund. (https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)	Eligible	Non-Eligible	Eligible	Non-Eligible	Eligible	Non-Eligible
Organisation with physical premises outwith Glasgow City Council Area	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible
Virtual Organisation located within Glasgow e.g home working paying Council Tax to GCC. Operating within Glasgow – delivering services that align to the aims and objectives of the fund	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible
Virtual Organisation – not located with GCC Area.	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible	Non-Eligible

Please note Non-Glasgow Based and Virtual organisations would be eligible to apply if they partner with a lead eligible Glasgow based organisation.

We will not accept applications from the following:

- Individuals or Sole Traders
- Statutory/Public Bodies such as Glasgow City Council and its Arm’s Length External Organisations, Community Councils, NHS, Police Scotland etc

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- Businesses who possess undischarged bankrupts, subject to insolvency proceedings or an individual who has entered into an arrangement with his/her creditors (including a trust deed)

The programme cannot support projects that have already started. Any outstanding debts to Glasgow City Council will be taken into consideration.

What kind of applications will be considered?

The fund is open to applications that align with any of the four key themes:

- Promote and establish new entrepreneurial engagement with underrepresented groups in the city.
- Promote Glasgow as a place to start a business, breaking down barriers that exist in preventing people from taking risk and becoming entrepreneurs.
- Promote actual or new networks (business related or not) that support the development of businesses of minority ethnic communities and/or other underrepresented communities.
- Promote the business support services of Glasgow City Council and those of our partners, ensuring a conjoined and collaborated approach.

How much funding is available?

Total funds of £250,000 have been identified, covering the period from 1st April 2025 until the end of March 2026. Project proposals in the region of £50,000 are sought, although consideration will be given to other sums. A minimum project cost of £30,000 and maximum project cost of £100,000 will be applied. Examples of eligible and non-eligible spend are in the Eligible Spend section below.

Project proposals should demonstrate a clear strategic economic importance and impact. Any amount of funding awarded will be based on the strength of application and on availability of funds.

When will the Social Innovation Challenge Fund open for applications?

Expression of Interest – The expression of interest stage is open for online applications from Thursday 5th December 2024 and closes at 1pm on Monday 6th January 2025 at 1pm.

How does my organisation apply?

If your organisation has a project idea or initiative which you think meets the purpose and eligibility criteria please complete an expression of interest form for the Social Innovation Challenge Fund. You can find this [here](#) or at <https://glasgow.gov.uk/article/11411/Social-Innovation-Challenge-Fund-Expression-of-Interest>

Applications will be progressed as follows:

1. **Expression of Interest (EOI)** – The expression of interest stage is now open for online applications from Thursday 5th December 2024 and closes at 1pm on Monday 6th January 2025 at 1pm.

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Online application process, reviewed against set of criteria with successful applicants invited to complete the full fund application process.

2. **Eligibility** - Eligibility checks will be carried out to ensure that organisations applying are a suitable potential Fund Recipient. This will include but is not limited to:
 - Applicants should hold eligible legal status as outlined in the EOI (e.g a community interest company, limited company, limited liability partnership, public limited company, sole trader or legally constituted third sector organisation).
 - Application aligns with the aims and objectives of the fund
 - Applicants are operating within Glasgow
 - Applicants have no flags or sanctions registered against their organisation on Companies House, OSCR.
3. **Assessment of Expression of Interest** – all EOIs submitted will be accessed by the Social Innovation Challenge Fund Programme Team
4. **Stage Two Application** – Successful applicants who progress from EOI stage will be invited to apply for Stage Two of the application process
5. **Assessment of Stage Two Application** – Applications will be brought before an Economic Development and external partner formed advisory group. The group will include representatives of the underrepresented groups the fund is aiming to support.
6. **Funding Award** – Advisory group will review Stage Two applications against each of the themes and will be scoring according to the following criteria:
 - **Suitability:** the alignment of the proposed project to the purpose of the Fund.
 - **Deliverability:** the feasibility of delivering the project and completing all key steps within 12 months from award decision.
 - **Project Team:** whether there is enough support available within the project team to realise the proposal.
 - **Impact:** the likelihood and extent of positive community impact.
 - **Long Lasting Legacy:** the sustainability of the project in the community.
 - **Net Zero/ Climate resilience** - the extent to which the project supports the council's ambition for Glasgow to be a net zero, climate resilient city by 2030
 - **Additionality:** How the funding will help to make the project happen - the difference this funding makes and how it and how the project could not otherwise happen.
7. **Final Decision** – Shortlisted applications will be brought to Economic Development Funding Panel for review and final approval of funding award.

How will the funding be awarded?

Successful applicants will be issued with a Fund Award offer from Glasgow City Council. It is proposed that the Fund Award is paid in three milestone- based instalments; 40% of funding will be awarded upon commencement, 40% after three months upon meeting of initial project milestones, 20% after

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six months, provided milestones have been met. Details of eligible and ineligible spend is listed in Eligible Spend section below.

When must the projects be delivered?

All proposed activity must be delivered, and all project costs incurred by 31st March 2026.

Where should the projects be delivered?

Activity should be as accessible as possible and therefore welcome any projects taking part across Glasgow and especially within disadvantaged / underrepresented areas where beneficiaries may have experienced additional barriers in accessing entrepreneurial support activity.

What is the timeline?

The expression of interest stage is now open for online applications from Thursday 5th December 2024 and closes at 1pm on Monday 6th January 2025 at 1pm.

Expression of interest applications assessed from 7 January 2025 to 24 January 2025.

Successful applicants invited to progress to Stage 2 on 27 January 2025 and submit Stage 2 Application Form by 10 February 2025.

Stage 2 applicants advised of outcome of application on 14 March 2025

Successful Stage 2 applicants awarded first instalment of funding 7 April 2025

Can an organisation apply on behalf of a partnership or collaboration?

Yes, but one organisation is expected to apply as lead partner.

We will consider being a part-funder alongside other organisations. However, GCC will require to see evidence of other parties' funding being in place *before* issuing our own funding award and may withdraw a funding offer should this evidence not be provided.

Whilst such collaborations are welcomed, please note that GCC would only transfer a funding award to one organisation. The organisation receiving the funding award would then be responsible for passing on money to any project partner organisation.

Can organisations submit more than one proposal?

Yes, but applicants are strongly advised to focus their resources on a single application. An applicant could apply as an individual organisation and/or as part of a partnership or collaboration.

Can the project be changed once the award has been made?

Projects are expected to be delivered as approved. Applicants must be proactive about staying in touch with the Social Innovation Challenge Fund programme team at GCC to ensure any issues identified are raised.

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What happens if a project cannot be delivered?

At any point if an organisation becomes aware that their proposed project is not going to be deliverable inform the Social Innovation Challenge Fund programme team as a matter of urgency. They will work with the organisation to explore any potential solutions. Only in circumstances where no alternative solution can be found would the offer of the funding award be withdrawn. Any milestone payments provided in advance of planned activity which does not take place, may be recoverable by GCC.

What can and can't be supported?

All proposed activity should be justified as proportionate and appropriate for the successful delivery of the aims of the Project and clearly aligned to the themes of the Fund.

You can apply for some or all of your project costs including:

- Project Employee costs
- Activity and project costs
- Project running costs including premises, utilities, equipment
- Event costs

You cannot apply to the fund for the following:-

- Capital costs
- Management fee
- Religious or political activities
- Costs already funded by someone else
- Costs incurred before the activity starts
- Existing initiatives - Proposals should preferably be for new activities or existing activities that are being significantly developed/scaled up to reach broader groups and widen participation/accessibility.
- Alcohol or drugs
- Recoverable VAT
- Loans or interest
- Mortgages
- Activities out with Glasgow

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Additional Information

Important - Please note

Successful applicants must retain all records, receipts, and invoices for a minimum period of 7 years following the close of the contract. GCC will undertake spot checks on spend incurred under the scope of the award. Where spend cannot be evidenced, GCC reserves the right to claw back funding. When checking evidence, GCC will be guided by the principles of fair, appropriate, and proportionate spend of public funding on the agreed activity. Should applicants have any queries re eligible spend that is not answered please contact businesssupport@glasgow.gov.uk to discuss prior to incurring spend.



Where can you get help to complete your application?

The GCC Business Support Team can be contacted at businesssupport@glasgow.gov.uk We are happy to explain any aspect of the Expression of Interest form or the process. If you have additional accessibility needs, please contact the GCC Business Support Team for support.

Please note : Once your proposal has been submitted, and after the deadline of 6 January 2025 we will not be able to enter any discussion about applications until the outcome of the expression of interest process concludes on the 24 January 2025.