UK Community Renewal Fund

Assessment Process

March 2021

UK Community Renewal Fund - UK Government assessment process

1. The assessment process set out in this document will be used by UK Government to assess:
    - Shortlisted applications put forward by lead authorities in Great Britain.
    - All project applications in Northern Ireland.
2. Associated documents are available on gov.uk:
    - UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus,
    - Application Form,
    - Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers and
    - Technical Note for Lead Authorities.

Great Britain
Stage 1. Gateway criteria

Criteria	Assessment
1. Project proposal will be delivered (including all expenditure incurred) by 31 March 2022. 2. Project proposal responds to a need identified in the prospectus.* 3. Project proposal does not duplicate other national or local provision.* 4. Project proposal does not conflict with national policy.* 5. Project proposal will be delivered by a legally constituted organisation that can receive public funds. 6. Project proposal will be delivered in line with subsidy control/State Aid requirements.* 7. Project proposal will be delivered in accordance with branding requirements. 8. Project proposal has been submitted by the lead authority. Bids submitted independently from the lead authority will not be accepted. 9. The lead authority must also show they have led an open process by which organisations are invited to submit bids.	**Pass/Fail** Projects must pass all gateway criteria to be considered for selection. Failure to adequately demonstrate one or more of these criteria will result in project rejection. *Criteria 2-4 and 6 are assessed as **Pass/Fail/Partial**. Where the project could proceed with amendments, it will be considered to pass Gateway Criteria.*

Stage 2: Scoring

Criteria 1: Strategic fit		
Sub-criteria	**Example evidence of meeting the criteria** *This is non-exhaustive and other evidence may be provided and considered as part of the assessment*	**Assessment**
1. Level of contribution to local needs articulated in relevant local plans and with evidence of local support.	As a minimum, projects will need to articulate how they demonstrate strategic fit as defined under 3.2 – 3.5 in the prospectus and reference local needs. Projects are likely to score higher where they • directly address a priority intervention in a local plan – such as investing in a target sector or place, or • where there is clear support from local partners such as other local authorities or elected representatives. Note - Lead Authorities will also provide an assessment of this criterion which UK Government will take into account.	**Each sub-criteria is given a mark out of 5. These are summed with equal weighting.** **This is converted to a percentage score for the theme (e.g. a maximum mark of 25 would give a score of 100%).** Projects that predominantly focus on priority areas must score a minimum of 50% to be shortlisted. Projects that do not predominantly focus on priority areas must score a minimum of 80% to be shortlisted.
2. Level of contribution to an articulated investment priority set out at sections 3.2 to 3.5 in the prospectus	As a minimum, projects will need to articulate: the priority groups they intend to support; the proposed project activities and the applicable interventions they propose to deliver under sections 3.2 -3.5 in the prospectus; and how the interventions will deliver and contribute to relevant fund outcomes. Projects are likely to score higher where they • focus on priority groups or interventions identified in the prospectus and	

	• will deliver a significant and observable contribution to relevant fund outcomes (e.g. 100 people have moved into employment, including self-employment, following support).

Project Applicants should consider summarising the customer journey using a flow chart showing specific project activities; and/or provide a supporting logic model or theory of change which clearly demonstrates the links between the activities and inputs, outputs and outcomes. | |
| 3. The extent of contribution to net zero objectives, as set out at section 3.1.1 of the prospectus, or wider environmental considerations (not applicable to employment support interventions) | As a minimum, bids should meet the clean growth principle and not conflict with the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.

Projects are likely to score higher where they actively support progress to net zero for example:

• adopting and supporting innovative clean technology
• supporting net zero skills and supply chains e.g.
   o Considering carbon literacy and wider environmental consideration for skills sectors being supported;
   o Full carbon footprinting, supporting carbon and environmental impacts in key supply chains;
   o Community engagement & supporting local climate plans. | |
| 4. The extent to which the project can inform the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through | As a minimum, projects should commit to project level evaluation and to work collaboratively with the UK government on programme level evaluation. | |

transferable learning or opportunity to scale up for local partners and UK government.	Projects are likely to score higher where, for example: • the approach has demonstrable application elsewhere, or • is trialling a response to an identified priority set out in section 3.2 to 3.5 of the prospectus.	
5. The extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in service delivery.	Projects are likely to score higher by: • introducing new delivery approaches (for example, trialling new modes of delivery) • delivering integrated approaches across policy themes or • achieving collaboration across more than one place.	

Criteria 2: Deliverability, effectiveness, and efficiency		
Sub-criteria	**Example evidence of meeting the criteria** ***This is non-exhaustive and other evidence may be provided and considered as part of the assessment***	**Assessment**
1. That it can be delivered as proposed by March 2022 with realistic milestones identified.	Projects are likely to score higher where they demonstrate: • a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities, skills, capability, or capacity needed • a fully secured funding package (including match funding where relevant) or a clear and realistic plan to secure prior to project start • a good understanding of how the proposal is compliant with UK subsidy control regime (where relevant) • under Part 1 (Q1i), the Application sets out a realistic timetable which includes milestones for: ○ Securing internal approvals for the project or any other funding	**Each sub-criteria is given a mark out of 5. These are summed with equal weighting.** **This is converted to a percentage score for the theme (e.g. a maximum mark of 25 would give a score of 100%).**

	- Establishing the project team - project launch and recruiting beneficiaries, - key points on the beneficiary journey - procurement for external services/suppliers	Projects that predominantly focus on priority areas must score a minimum of 50% to be shortlisted.
2. Project risks have been identified and are adequately mitigated, including project-level management controls.	Projects are likely to score higher where they have: - carefully considered and identified implementation and delivery risks - there are corresponding and appropriate mitigations for key risks - arrangements for managing and escalating risk are articulated including roles and responsibilities - contingency plans are in place to manage risks, including project delays.	Projects that do not predominantly focus on priority areas must score a minimum of 80% to be shortlisted.
3. The applicant sets out an efficient mode of delivery, taking account of the level of innovation proposed and will operate at an appropriate scale. This shall include an assessment of value for money taking account of: - the level of contribution to programme outputs for funding sought - the amount of match funding or leverage proposed to maximise	Projects are likely to score higher where they: - include a realistic theory of change demonstrating how outcomes will flow from the interventions, at an efficient rate and an appropriate scale - demonstrate value for money taking account of - the level of contribution to programme outputs for funding sought - the amount of match funding or leverage proposed to maximise impact UK Government assessment will take account of innovation in service delivery (including potential higher initial costs of innovative delivery approaches).	

impact (not applicable to employment interventions).	*Note - match funding is not a requirement for any project and will not be an assessment consideration for projects solely focused on employment interventions.*	
4. That the project would not proceed without funding or could only be delivered on a smaller scale.	Projects are likely to score higher where they have clearly articulated the additional outcomes, benefits and impacts UK Community Renewal Funding will achieve, compared with the status quo.	

5. An effective monitoring and evaluation strategy has been identified for the project.	Projects are likely to score higher where they set out well developed and credible plans that have:
	
	• key actions identified for baselining, monitoring, data collection and dissemination of lessons learnt.
	• a credible approach for an effective evaluation that is appropriate to project size and covers
	    o appropriateness of initial design
	    o progress against targets
	    o delivery and management
	    o outcomes and impact
	    o value for money
	    o lessons learnt
	
	Note - the approach will vary depending on the scale and nature of each project and evaluation may be undertaken by someone with necessary skills (whether in-house or external).	

Stage 3: Selection

1. Appointable projects will be grouped into three bands:
   a. **Band A:** Projects that have scored 80% or above on both 'strategic fit' and 'deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency' and predominantly focus on priority places.
   b. **Band B:** Projects that have scored 80% or above on both 'strategic fit' and 'deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency' and do not predominantly focus on priority places
   c. **Band C:** Projects that have scored 50% or above on both 'strategic fit' and 'deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency' and predominantly focus on priority places

2. With reference to the above, to assess the predominant focus of the project we will determine whether the majority of spend (51% or over) is in priority places listed here. Project applicants have been asked to set out the amount of spend in each place on the application form.

3. Projects will be selected in order of their bands. Within these bands, projects will be selected in order of a combined percentage score (i.e. out of 100) across the two themes with equal weighting. For example, a project that scored 70% on strategic fit and 60% on deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency would receive a combined score of 65%.

4. In selecting projects we will apply a cap of £3m per place (listed here) which will be based on the indicative breakdown of spend by place provided as part of proposals.

5. In the event where two or more projects have the same combined score but cannot all be funded, funding will be awarded to the project which will be delivered in a place highest on the index. If a project invests in more than one place, we will use the ranking of the place which receives the most spend under the proposal. Project applicants have been asked to set out the amount of spend in each place on the application form.

6. In addition to selecting projects based on a project's score and the prioritisation of the place, Ministers can exercise discretion to meet the following finite set of additional considerations:

a. Ensuring a reasonable thematic split of approved projects (e.g. skills, local business, communities and place, employment support)
b. Ensuring a balanced spread of approved projects across Great Britain
c. Ensuring that the balance of approved projects between those focused on priority and non-priority places gives appropriate regard to priority places
d. Where no distinction can be made between two or more projects on the basis of the combined score and the prioritisation of the relevant place(s) via the index (i.e. where projects score the same and e.g. cover the same geography), Ministers can make decisions between projects based on which they consider the best value for money in delivering the objectives of the programme.

7. Applicants should note that this is a competitive process and there is no minimum amount available per place. Where bids do not meet the criteria described above, they will not be supported.

Northern Ireland
Stage 1. Gateway criteria

Criteria	Assessment
1. Project proposal will be delivered (including all expenditure incurred) by 31 March 2022. 2. Project proposal responds to a need identified in the prospectus.* 3. Project proposal does not duplicate other national or local provision.* 4. Project proposal does not conflict with national policy.* 5. Project proposal will be delivered by a legally constituted organisation that can receive public funds 6. Project proposal will be delivered in line with subsidy control/State Aid requirements.* 7. Project proposal will be delivered in accordance with branding requirements	**Pass/Fail** Projects must pass all gateway criteria to be considered for selection. Failure to adequately demonstrate one or more of these criteria will result in project rejection. *Criteria 2-4 and 6 are assessed as **Pass/Fail/Partial**. Where the project could proceed with amendments, it will be considered to pass Gateway Criteria.*

Stage 2: Scoring (consistent with Great Britain)

Criteria 1: Strategic fit		
Sub-criteria	**Example evidence of meeting the criteria** *This is non-exhaustive and other evidence may be provided and considered as part of the assessment*	**Assessment**
1. Level of contribution to local needs articulated in relevant local plans and with evidence of local support.	As a minimum, projects will need to articulate how they demonstrate strategic fit as defined under 3.2 – 3.5 in the prospectus and reference local needs. Projects are likely to score higher where they • directly address a priority intervention in a local plan – such as investing in a target sector or place, or • where there is clear support from local partners such as other local authorities or elected representatives.	**Each sub-criteria is given a mark out of 5. These are summed with equal weighting.** **This is converted to a percentage score for the theme (e.g. a maximum mark of 25 would give a score of 100%).**
2. Level of contribution to an articulated investment priority set out at sections 3.2 to 3.5 in the prospectus	As a minimum, projects will need to articulate: the priority groups they intend to support; the proposed project activities and the applicable interventions they propose to deliver under sections 3.2 -3.5 in the prospectus; and how the interventions will deliver and contribute to relevant fund outcomes. Projects are likely to score higher where they • focus on priority groups or interventions identified in the prospectus and • will deliver a significant and observable contribution to relevant fund outcomes (e.g. 100 people have moved	

	into employment, including self-employment, following support). Project Applicants should consider summarising the customer journey using a flow chart showing specific project activities; and/or provide a supporting logic model or theory of change which clearly demonstrates the links between the activities and inputs, outputs and outcomes.

3. The extent of contribution to net zero objectives, as set out at section 3.1.1 of the prospectus, or wider environmental considerations (not applicable to employment support interventions)	As a minimum, bids should meet the clean growth principle and not conflict with the UK's legal commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
	
	Projects are likely to score higher where they actively support progress to net zero for example:
	
	• adopting and supporting innovative clean technology
	• supporting net zero skills and supply chains e.g.
	    ○ Considering carbon literacy and wider environmental consideration for skills sectors being supported;
	    ○ Full carbon footprinting, supporting carbon and environmental impacts in key supply chains;
	    ○ Community engagement & supporting local climate plans.

4. The extent to which the project can inform the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through transferable learning or opportunity to scale up	As a minimum, projects should commit to project level evaluation and to work collaboratively with the UK government on programme level evaluation. Projects are likely to score higher where, for example: • the approach has demonstrable application elsewhere, or

for local partners and UK government.	• is trialling a response to an identified priority set out in section 3.2 to 3.5 of the prospectus.	
5. The extent to which the project demonstrates innovation in service delivery.	Projects are likely to score higher by: • introducing new delivery approaches (for example, trialling new modes of delivery) • delivering integrated approaches across policy themes or • achieving collaboration across more than one place.	

Criteria 2: Deliverability, effectiveness, and efficiency		
Sub-criteria	**Example evidence of meeting the criteria** ***This is non-exhaustive and other evidence may be provided and considered as part of the assessment***	**Assessment**

1. That it can be delivered as proposed by March 2022 with realistic milestones identified.	Projects are likely to score higher where they demonstrate:
	• a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities, skills, capability, or capacity needed
	• a fully secured funding package (including match funding where relevant) or a clear and realistic plan to secure prior to project start
	• a good understanding of how the proposal is compliant with UK subsidy control regime (where relevant)
	• under Part 1 (Q1i), the Application sets out a realistic timetable which includes milestones for:
	    o Securing internal approvals for the project or any other funding
	    o Establishing the project team
	    o project launch and recruiting beneficiaries,
	    o key points on the beneficiary journey
		Each sub-criteria is given a mark out of 5. These are summed with equal weighting.
		
		This is converted to a percentage score for the theme (e.g. a maximum mark of 25 would give a score of 100%).

	o procurement for external services/suppliers	
2. Project risks have been identified and are adequately mitigated, including project-level management controls.	Projects are likely to score higher where they have: • carefully considered and identified implementation and delivery risks • there are corresponding and appropriate mitigations for key risks • arrangements for managing and escalating risk are articulated including roles and responsibilities • contingency plans are in place to manage risks, including project delays.	

3. The applicant sets out an efficient mode of delivery, taking account of the level of innovation proposed and will operate at an appropriate scale. This shall include an assessment of value for money taking account of:
• the level of contribution to programme outputs for funding sought
• the amount of match funding or leverage proposed to maximise impact (not applicable
	Projects are likely to score higher where they:
	
	• include a realistic theory of change demonstrating how outcomes will flow from the interventions, at an efficient rate and an appropriate scale
	• demonstrate value for money taking account of
	    o the level of contribution to programme outputs for funding sought
	    o the amount of match funding or leverage proposed to maximise impact
	UK Government assessment will take account of innovation in service delivery (including potential higher initial costs of innovative delivery approaches).
	
	Note - match funding is not a requirement for any project and will not be an assessment consideration for projects solely focused on employment interventions.	

to employment interventions).		
4. That the project would not proceed without funding or could only be delivered on a smaller scale.	Projects are likely to score higher where they have clearly articulated the additional outcomes, benefits and impacts UK Community Renewal Funding will achieve, compared with the status quo.	
5. An effective monitoring and evaluation strategy has been identified for the project.	Projects are likely to score higher where they set out well developed and credible plans that have: • key actions identified for baselining, monitoring, data collection and dissemination of lessons learnt. • a credible approach for an effective evaluation that is appropriate to project size and covers o appropriateness of initial design o progress against targets o delivery and management o outcomes and impact o value for money o lessons learnt Note - the approach will vary depending on the scale and nature of each project and evaluation may be undertaken by someone with necessary skills (whether in-house or external).	

Stage 3: Selection

1. Projects will be prioritised based on a combined percentage score (i.e. out of 100) across the two themes with equal weighting. For example, a project that scored 70% on strategic fit and 60% on deliverability, effectiveness and efficiency would receive a combined score of 65%.

2. In addition to selecting projects based on a project's score, Ministers can exercise discretion to meet the following finite set of additional considerations:
   a. Ensuring a reasonable thematic split of approved projects (e.g. skills, local business, communities and place, employment support)
   b. Ensuring a balanced spread of approved projects across Northern Ireland
   c. Where no distinction can be made between two or more projects on the basis of the combined score, Ministers can make decisions between projects based on which they consider the best value for money in delivering the objectives of the programme.

3. Applicants should note that this is a competitive process and there is no minimum amount available per place. Where bids do not meet the criteria described above, they will not be supported.

4. Projects can be of any value up to the total allocation of £11 million for Northern Ireland. However, applicants should note that this is a competitive process, and the UK government will be looking to select a portfolio of different size projects, covering a range of themes and geographies, subject to the volume and quality of proposals received.

5. We recognise the importance of not only meeting our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 but also giving due regard to the additional equalities considerations that apply in Northern Ireland.