

Community Renewal Fund Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and Useful Information

This document will be reviewed regularly and/or amended by further information and guidelines issued by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

If you would like more information/guidance or you have a question that has not been answered below, please email CRF@wmca.org.uk or visit our website [here](#).

Questions

Will the WMCA 'Lead Authority' put forward a bid?

The WMCA will act in a coordinating role and explicitly rules itself out of originating bids for the Community Renewal Fund.

When does the Lead Authority need bids to be put forward by?

The closing date for bids to be submitted to the WMCA is 12 noon on Wednesday 12th May, submissions will not be allowed after this date.

What are the priority areas for the WMCA region?

We are interested in bids in four key areas:

- 1. Investment in skills*
- 2. Investment in local business*
- 3. Investment in communities and place*
- 4. Supporting people into employment*

More details on WMCA priorities can be found on pages 3 & 4 of our [Invitation to Bid](#)

What is the WMCA's 'Lead Authority' shortlisting process?

As the lead authority The West Midlands Combined Authority will assess all bids submitted aligned to UK Government [UKCRF Assessment Process](#) further information is also set out in pages 5 & 6 of our [Invitation to Bid](#)

Given funding is released for successful projects in two stages, will the Combined Authority be able to provide funding to cashflow smaller organisations for whom not receiving all funding up front would be a barrier to applying?

WMCA are still awaiting further guidance from MHCLG on how successful projects will be funded and will provide an answer once we have clarity.

How many bids can an area put forward? Are you able to submit two bids as lead partner?

Whilst there is no limit on the number of bids that an area ([place](#)) or applicant can put forward, there is a requirement for submissions by the lead authorities to be up to a maximum of £3m [per place](#), with 90% of funding to be revenue. Further information can be found in the [CRF Prospectus](#) and [Technical note for project applicants and deliverers](#)

*The WMCA **are not** imposing any limit on the number of bids that can come in from any institution or group.*

Are there expectations from Government for the bids to be cross-sector partnerships?

This is not an explicit requirement of the fund but is encouraged. The [CRF Prospectus](#) provides further information for prospective applicants.

What funding is available for a successful applicant?

Lead Authorities are eligible to submit a shortlist of projects up to a maximum of £3 million per place (as set out in the list of places). Projects in excess of £3m per place will not be considered.

What does the government want to see from the overall outcomes from the bids?

The [UK Community Renewal Fund Prospectus](#) sets out the full scope of the fund. Section 3 provides further information and guidance for investment priorities.

What is the position on match funding?

Section 7 of the [CRF Prospectus](#) states:

“ The UK government encourages applicants and lead authorities to maximise the leverage of other funding. This has a number of benefits including enhanced alignment with other provision and efficient delivery which increases value for money.

We recognise that not all projects or applicants will be able to secure match funding, and it is not expected for employment support projects. However, applicants and lead authorities should note that value for money is a selection consideration. This will take the overall funding package for each project, including any match funding, into account.”

Is it a maximum of £3m per LA not the WMCA Region?

Yes, it is up to £3m per place (defined as a Local Authority area)

How many organisations are you looking to submit bids with for each area - i.e., is that £3m per area to work with one organisation or a maximum of 10 organisations (for example)

The prospectus from MHCLG ‘encourages’ bids of over £500k, which gives an indication of approximately how many bids we would submit per area. It is important to note that bids can be across multiple areas and so the total figure for a project could be over £500k but only a portion of that would be declared as part of a specific areas £3m limit (e.g., project total is £1m, 70% in Birmingham and 30% in Dudley. If we submit this bid, then we could submit £2.3m further in Birmingham and £2.7m further in Dudley).

The targets do not seem to specify numbers is there any indication to what percentage of the funding would be available for specific work?

There is no allocation between the different priorities – our assessment criteria (based on MHCLG’s) will look at the strategic fit and deliverability of bids and make decisions on this basis.

Are there any briefing events planned please or further information that we can view?

We are not currently intending to hold any webinars or briefing sessions given limits on our communications during the pre-election period.

As we have been asked to limit the number of bids submitted to the UKCRF should we only lead on 2-3 bids and can be partners in more?

We are not imposing any limit on the number of bids that can come in from any institution or group. All are able to put in as many bids as they wish and can also partner on as many bids as they wish – the quantity will not be factored into our appraisal of any specific project.

What potential is there for bidding jointly with non-3rd sector organisations and what might this mean in terms of the process?

The WMCA would welcome coalitions and would encourage organisations to reach out directly in order to form them.

For the Coventry area, is there an allocation of Community Renewal Funding?
Yes, funding is up to £3m per place (defined as a Local Authority area)

What funding is available for a successful applicant?

There is a requirement for submissions by the lead authorities to be up to a maximum of £3m per place, with 90% of funding to be revenue. Further information can be found in the [CRF Prospectus](#) and [Technical note for project applicants and deliverers](#)

Could the Community Renewal Fund support current ESF customers?

Yes, current ESF customer could receive support funded by the community renewal fund. Though there will be a need to clearly evidence this support offer, does not duplicate existing activity and is additional.

Are there any consortium approaches to CRF funding through Local Councils etc Can any key contacts be provided within the target councils that we could be approached?

We will be able to provide contact details for our Local Authority partners. Please provide further information on the location and theme you wish to engage further on via our CRF email account crf@wmca.org.uk

We are considering an application for a remote/online pilot, however being online, there would be no geographical boundaries. We would therefore like to ask whether you would consider a national project that encompasses many of the 100 priority areas outlined in the guidance? If yes, how and who would we apply to?

Project applicants can submit to more than one Lead Authority in response to local bidding processes if their project responds to requirements set out across more than one place.

UK government is inviting Lead Authorities to collaborate with other Lead Authorities or partners across the UK where relevant – for example to promote cross-border project opportunities that address needs in common or achieve efficient delivery scale. In these circumstances, Lead Authorities may choose to run a joint process and/or assess bids collaboratively.

We are considering submitting an application for the funding under the priority of Skills and would welcome a meeting to discuss: 1. your perspective on this opportunity and 2. provide a brief of what we are thinking and receive any feedback on our offer.

As the impartial commissioner of this fund, and the appraiser of applications, it is very difficult for the WMCA to engage directly in dialogue with potential applicants as this might be perceived as conflict of interest and consequentially jeopardise any subsequent bid submitted by yourselves. We will, however, be able to provide guidance and clarification on the process and eligibility.

An organisation based in Coventry is keen to submit a bid focused on community engagement across the key areas of the Black Country and Birmingham, as they are based in Coventry (a non-priority area) will this be an issue?

The [Invitation to Bid](#) encourages bids being at least 50% in priority places. Therefore, the Coventry based organisation would be encouraged to evidence in their bid how they will deliver the majority of benefits across Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley.

Can Private sector companies within the region be eligible to submit an application?

Private sector organisations and registered charities can be project deliverers where they are providing a service to benefit other organisations or individuals. They cannot receive support if the intention of the project is to further their own business/organisation e.g.,

through the purchase of equipment or offsetting additional staffing or other costs. Private sector organisations and registered charities may also be beneficiaries of UK Community Renewal Fund support provided by project deliverers.

For more information, please check out the [UK Community Fund Technical Note for Project Applicants and Deliverers](#).

Will WMCA allow attachments and website links within the applications?

*As stated in the [CRF application form](#) and guidance it indicates that attachments and website links **cannot** be submitted or considered.*

How will Government assess projects that cover multiple places in Great Britain, including priority places and other places?

A response to this can be found on Governments CRF FAQs found [here](#) and reads as follows “ We will assess the predominant geographic focus of the project, based on the amount of spend in each place set out by Project Applicants on the application form. Projects with the majority of spend in priority places (51% or over) will be considered to be a priority project.”

Will letters of support from MPs, Cllrs, etc, for bids carry any sway for the UK Community Renewal fund, through the WMCA or Government submission process?

The Assessment Process sets out that, as part of the strategic fit criteria, projects are likely to score higher where there is clear support from local partners such as other local authorities or elected representatives. Though applicants should further note that any support will need to be included in the application form as the WMCA or Central Government will not accept additional information/documents as part of the bid submission/assessment process.

How will the WMCA process payments to successful applicants?

WMCA as a Lead Authority will receive payments in two tranches from MHCLG- one at the beginning of the project (Autumn '21) and one at the end (March '22). We intend to issue payments on a quarterly basis to successful applicants, although we are willing to discuss other options if this would inhibit an applicant's ability to deliver their project, particularly applicants from the third sector.

Is there an appetite for projects that cut across multiple places? For instance, Dudley and Sandwell. Or are specific place projects more favourable?

Bids/projects can be across multiple areas and are welcomed. More information on this can be found in the [prospectus](#) or on our [website](#).

Is there a process on having to register with WMCA before applying or do we simply apply directly?

There is no need to register with WMCA beforehand, please complete the [application form](#) and submit it to the CRF email address (crf@wmca.org.uk) by Wednesday 12 May at 12 noon.

The funding is to support a 12-month pilot project. The timeline in the documentation states funding will be awarded July/Aug and all activity needs to be completed by end March. This only provides 8 months for activity. Please can you confirm this?

We can confirm that 8-9 months is the delivery window. All activity needs to be completed and all spend incurred by 31 March 2022, which is stated in the [prospectus](#).

I was wondering if the project can support the technical development of a website dedicated to the project?

If the website development would be to promote and raise awareness of activities for the project, then yes that is eligible based on Part 3c of the [application form](#) and below.

Part 3 - Funding Package

3 c. Summarise the amount that will be spent under the main areas of expenditure. The breakdown must be detailed enough to demonstrate that the funding package and budget is appropriate to the proposed activities and sufficient to deliver the project.

Examples of the types of headings to use are:

- staff costs - salaries and contractual benefits, National Insurance and superannuation contributions
- overheads, at 15% of staff costs
- business travel, subsistence and accommodation
- fees of contractors and consultants
- costs of materials or venue hire
- **marketing and publicity costs**
- grants provided to end beneficiaries
- training participant costs e.g. allowances, travel expenses
- dependent care costs of training participants
- small items of equipment
- evaluation
- external audit cost (Northern Ireland)

Can you please clarify if the proposed project evaluation will take place/wrap up after the end of March 2022? Is there a usual length of time allowed for collating the final data and for the external evaluators to complete their report?

All activity needs to be completed and all spend incurred by 31 March 2022 including evaluation activities. There is an 8-9 months delivery window, which is stated in the [prospectus](#). It also states that successful proposals must meet the following requirements for monitoring and evaluation:

- All proposals will be required to set out the intended impact of the project.
- Project performance will be monitored by progress against agreed targets and milestones.
- Applicants, if successful, will need to develop an evaluation plan between 1-2% of their award to be dedicated to that evaluation with a minimum threshold of £10,000.

All projects will be monitored by the lead authority (WMCA). All projects will be required to submit evidence to the lead authority demonstrating progress towards achievement of project targets and investment profiles at regular intervals. This will need to include both quantitative and qualitative data.

I wondered if there is any movement on the deadline to submit the Bids?

There is no movement on the deadline. All applications must be submitted to the CRF email address (crf@wmca.org.uk) on Wednesday 12 May by 12 noon. Any applications submitted after this time will not be considered.

Further CRF FAQ's can also be found on MHCLG website [here](#)