

Closing Loops Participative Budgeting Grants

Information & Guidance

What is Closing Loops?

FoodFutures and the Closing Loops Partnership (LESS, Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions, Scientists for Global Responsibility, Eggcup, Global Link, and Shared Future) have been awarded £1.5 million by The National Lottery Community Fund to run the Closing Loops project.

The project will illustrate how food production, consumption and waste in the Lancaster District can be transformed into 'closed loops' to produce much less waste, enable more regenerative food production and support a thriving local REconomy. It aims to create a healthier, fair, and resilient food system.

What is a REconomy?

Inspired by the philosophy of regeneration, a regenerative enterprise operates in a way that enhances the health of the nested systems it's part of. This may involve collaborating with others to generate multiple forms of capital; nurturing the wellbeing of all workers and operating in a way that increases the capacity of communities, ecosystems and the networks they are connected to. A regenerative economy or REconomy is an extension of this concept - seeing networks of enterprises (or enterprise ecologies) working collaboratively to generate multiple forms of capital; enhancing the health of the systems they are part of.

What will the project do?

The project will focus on four interlocking programmes of activities that will raise local community awareness and interest in closed loop processes:

Building Connections (Images)

Sustainable consumption lifestyles and zero waste practices start to become normalised and a source of inspiration for people of all backgrounds

Training and skills development (Skills)

Increasing access to opportunities to learn about and develop the skills needed to support, be supported and initiate zero waste initiatives, regenerative enterprises, sustainable consumption and lifestyle practices and compost.

Creating physical and social infrastructures (Stuff)

Locally sourced, seasonal, sustainably produced and packaged food and other goods are more accessible across the District and infrastructure is in place to support a range of people and organisations to redistribute, compost, re-sell, re-purpose and re-cycle 'waste'.

REconomy, Learning and Sharing (Scaling Out)

Democratic participatory grantmaking and capacity building to enable community-led organisation and innovation. Scaling out also refers to the sharing of knowledge, skills and learning with: the wider FoodFutures partnership, our local communities and other communities acting on climate change locally, nationally and globally.

The Closing Loops Fund

The Closing Loops Fund will distribute £200,000 over five annual rounds, using a democratic approach that enables local citizens to engage with the process.

Grants will be distributed at participatory grant giving events, where everybody who has applied for a grant will have the opportunity to discuss their proposals and make presentations, build connections, and decide how the grant pot is best used.

What kind of projects can receive funding?

The Closing Loops Fund will provide grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 for projects lasting up to 12 months (although we can be flexible) toward the development and implementation of new:

- zero waste initiatives;
- regenerative enterprises;
- composting projects;
- and sustainable consumption initiatives.

These projects don't have to just involve food. Through the Closing Loops Fund we want to also support projects that deal with waste streams such as textiles, plastic, and packaging.

As the funding we are distributing is intended to expand the reach of the work planned by the Closing Loops team, projects could deliver work related to one or more of our programmes (Images, Skills, Stuff, and Scaling Out) or choose new ways of working and engaging with people.

Organisations may only submit one application per year.

We are looking to support organisations that are serious about taking action to reduce their, and our District's carbon footprint whilst building local ability to cope with and respond to climate change. As such, money awarded will not be channelled towards the work that undermines this core aim of this work.

We will not fund organisations or projects involved in destructive environmental and social practices. Although organisations farming animals will not be excluded, priority will be given to organisations which encourage alternatives to animal consumption.

We can fund a wide range of activities within your project, including:

- Putting on events or taking part in other people's events
- Publishing content like websites, videos, podcasts or books
- Providing training or education
- Purchasing and using equipment and services
- Improving land or buildings
- Paying staff or consultants
- Working with volunteers and paying their expenses

There are some things we can't fund, which are:

- Activities which have already taken place or you have already spent money on
- Alcohol
- Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
- Payment to some else to write your application

- Profit-making or fundraising activity
- VAT that the organisation can reclaim
- Religious activities (religious organisations can be funded for projects that benefit the wider community)
- Statutory activities (activities that statutory organisations are required to deliver)
- Activities that improve educational attainment
- Overseas travel
- Projects that take place outside the Lancaster district, which is all wards electing members to Lancaster City Council.
- Political activities

Who can apply?

Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations are all eligible to apply. Your organisation must be at least one of the below:

- Unregistered voluntary or community organisation
- Constituted group or sports club
- Registered charity
- Charitable incorporated organisation
- Not-for-profit company
- Community interest company
- School, College or University (as long as the project provides wider community benefits)
- Statutory body
- Faith-based group

We can't accept applications from individuals, or from limited companies that are not also charities.

Your organisation also needs:

- To have at least two unconnected people on the board or committee, that is not a relation by blood, marriage, civil partnership, in a long-term relationship or people living together at the same address.
- To have a UK bank or building society account, in the legal name of your organisation, with at least two unrelated people able to manage it.
- To produce annual accounts, or plan to if your organisation is less than 15 months old. Accounts should be produced by a method and in a format relevant to the size of your organisation.

How do we apply?

Apply by creating an account at <https://morecambabay.grantplatform.com>

This secure service allows you to work on your application, saving and returning to it as many times as you like before submitting. It is also where we will record information we create regarding your application and anything else you send us while you are delivering your project.

You can also request a paper application form or an electronic version (Microsoft Word .docx).

In the application form, you will answer a few brief eligibility questions related to the criteria above, and then briefly tell us about your project, answering these questions:

- Why is your project needed?

- What would you like to do?
- Who will be involved?
- When and where will your project take place?
- How will your project make a difference?
- How much will your project cost? (including an indicative budget)

You don't have to use all the words available or be certain about costs. You'll have the opportunity to develop your ideas during the participative budgeting process.

You'll will need to tell us some information about your organisation, and provide the name and contact details of two people we can discuss the application with.

We will ask you to upload some documents. They are optional at this stage, but we'll need to see them before we can issue a grant agreement so providing them at the time of application will speed up our process. The documents are:

- A bank statement, showing the following:
 - Your organisation's legal name
 - The address the statements are sent to
 - The bank name and/or logo
 - Account number
 - Sort code
 - Date (must be within last 3 months)
 - For bank accounts opened within the last three months, we can accept a bank welcome letter. This must confirm the date your account was opened, account name, account number and sort code.
 - If you're a school using a local authority bank account, we'll need a letter from the local authority dated within the last 3 months. It should show:
 - Your school name
 - The bank account name
 - Account number
 - Sort code
- Your most recent accounts
- Your organisation's memorandum and articles of association, certificate of incorporation, constitution, or rules.
- If your project works with children, young people or adults at risk of harm, provide your safeguarding policy which explains how they'll be safe.
- If your project includes activities which require public liability insurance and you already have this, provide the certificate of insurance.
- If your project requires people in your organisation who are running activities to have special qualifications, memberships or affiliations, and these are already in place, please provide evidence.

- If your project benefits the public through changes to land or buildings, such as starting a farm or garden or conducting a refurbishment, you will need to provide one of the following:
 - proof that your organisation owns the property;
 - proof that your organisation has a lease on the property that cannot be ended for at least five years;
 - or a letter from the owner of the property showing they intend to provide such a lease.

Finally, you will be asked to agree our terms and conditions for the Closing Loops Fund (which are also at the end of this document), and confirm that you are authorised to make the application, that all the information you've provided is accurate, and that you understand how we will use your data.

What happens next?

After you've submitted your application, your nominated contacts will receive an email receipt from us. We'll then check your application, looking at your answers to the eligibility questions and that the rest of the form is filled in properly, before beginning our due diligence checks using any documents you uploaded at this stage.

Applications are then examined by an independent verification panel, who will assess them using a 'traffic light' system (Green, Amber, Red) against three criteria:

- Legal: That the bid is eligible for funding under this programme. That it meets the projects aims, the applicant meets all criteria at step A, is inclusive and the benefits open to all etc
- Fair: The bid is in the spirit of the overall Closing Loops programme, there is no indication of collusion or conflict of evidence and the applicant understands the decision making process. (e.g. confirms they have read the FAQ)
- Feasible: The application can be delivered within the indicated budget and timescales for the programme

Any amber or red lights are returned to the applicant for further discussion.

The participative budgeting process is the final decision-making event. Each applicant progressing from the verification stage will be invited to the meeting, which is also open to the community. Applicants will present their projects and everybody present will have the opportunity to vote. You will receive full information about the format and rules for this meeting well in advance.

Within a week of the event, our steering group will review the results to confirm that it ran fairly. We will ask you for any further documents we need to complete our due diligence checks, and once those are complete your grant agreement will be issued.

Getting help

If you need help with the application process at any time, we are here to provide support. In the first instance, get in touch with us by email at hello@lancastercvs.org.uk or by calling 01524 555900, and we will pass your message on to the appropriate colleague.

Closing Loops Fund Terms & Conditions

1. By submitting an application to the Closing Loops partnership, the organisation named in the application (referred to as “you” in these Terms and Conditions) agrees, if awarded a grant, to:

1.1. hold the grant on trust for the Closing Loops Partnership (referred to as ‘we’ or ‘us’) and The National Lottery Community Fund and use it only for your project as described in your application or otherwise agreed with us, and only for expenditure incurred after the date of your grant award;

1.2. provide us promptly with any information and reports we require about the project and its impact, both during and after the end of the project. These include, but are not limited to the following: at the beginning of your project, a basic equality and diversity monitoring form; half-way through your project, a monitoring report and/or interview; at the end of your project, a final report due within one month;

1.3. act lawfully in carrying out your project in accordance with best practice and guidance from your regulators, and follow any guidelines issued by us about the project or use of the grant and let us know promptly about any fraud, other impropriety, mismanagement or misuse in relation to the grant;

1.4. acknowledge Closing Loops and National Lottery funding using our logos in accordance with the relevant guidelines for recognising your grant, which will be supplied to you by email;

1.5. hold the grant in a UK based account or building society account, which is in the legal name of the organisation that is applying for funding from The Closing Loops Partnership;

1.6. adhere to our guidance on financial controls and banking arrangements, ensuring that no single individual has sole responsibility for any single transaction from authorisation to review and completion and that the account is managed by at least two unrelated and authorised individuals in your organisation;

1.7. immediately return any part of the grant that is not used for your project or which constitutes an unlawful subsidy;

1.8. comply with The National Lottery Community Fund’s safeguarding policy for grant holders, which will be supplied to you by email;

1.9. We may commission research into and/or evaluation of your funding. You confirm that you will co-operate with any research or evaluation-related activities which we carry out and further confirm that we may use any part of your application and/or project information for research or evaluation purposes.

1.10. comply with data protection laws and obtain the consent of your beneficiaries for us and you to receive and process their personal information and contact them;

1.11. keep accurate and comprehensive records about your project both during the project and for seven years afterwards and provide us on request with copies of those records and evidence of expenditure of the grant, such as original paper or electronic receipts, invoices, and bank statements;

1.12. allow us or representatives of The National Lottery Community Fund reasonable access to your premises and systems to inspect project and grant records; and

1.13. FoodFutures, the Closing Loops Partnership and/or The National Lottery Community Fund publicising and sharing information about you and your project including your name and images of project activities. You hereby grant us a royalty free licence to reproduce and publish any project information you give us. You will let us know when you provide the information if you don't have permission for us to use it in this way.

2. You acknowledge that we are entitled to suspend or terminate the grant and/or require you to repay all or any of the grant in any of the following situations. You must let us know if any of these situations have occurred or are likely to occur.

2.1. You use the grant in any way other than as approved by us or fail to comply with any of these Terms and Conditions.

2.2. You fail to make good progress with your project or are unlikely in our view to complete the project or achieve the objectives agreed with us.

2.3. You have match funding for the project withdrawn or receive or fail to declare any duplicate funding for the same project costs as funded by the grant.

2.4. You provide us with false or misleading information either on application or after award of the grant, act dishonestly or are under investigation by us, a regulatory body or the police, or if we consider for any other reason that public funds are at risk or you do anything to bring us or the organisations we work with and receive funding from into disrepute.

2.5. You enter into, or in our view are likely to enter into, administration, liquidation, receivership, or dissolution.

2.6. You receive any grant money incorrectly either as a result of an administrative error or otherwise. This includes where You are paid in error before You have complied with your obligations under these terms and conditions and Offer Letter. Any sum, which falls due under this paragraph 2.6, shall fall due immediately. If you fail to repay the due sum immediately, or as otherwise agreed with us, the sum will be recoverable summarily as a civil debt.

3. You acknowledge that:

3.1. the grant is for your use only and we may require you to pay us a share of any proceeds from disposal of assets purchased or enhanced with the grant;

3.2. we will not increase the grant if you spend more than the agreed budget and we can only guarantee the grant as long as The National Lottery continues to operate and we receive sufficient funds from it;

3.3. the grant is not consideration for any taxable supply for VAT purposes;

3.4. we have no liability for any costs or consequences incurred by you or third parties that arise directly or indirectly from the project, nor from non-payment or withdrawal of the grant, save to the extent required by law;

3.5. these Terms and Conditions will continue to apply for one year after the grant is paid or until the project has been completed, whichever is later. Clauses 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 3.4 and 3.5 shall survive expiry of these Terms and Conditions; and

3.6. if the application and grant award are made electronically, the agreement between us shall be deemed to be in writing and your online acceptance of these Terms and Conditions shall be deemed to be the equivalent of your signature on that agreement.