

Funded by UK Government  Wedi ei ariannu gan Llywodraeth y DU

CONWY SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS – KEY FUND GRANT

Criteria and Guidance



SECTION A – KEY FACTORS

Introduction

This project is funded by the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.’

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

The fund would support our local (commercial or social) businesses to renew and develop into the future.

The key fund will enable the provision of larger grants to support economic growth and sustainability through the delivery of a range of project with a focus on UK defined interventions such as

- Strengthening Local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate including through local networks
- Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.
- Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy.
- Funding to support relevant feasibility studies.

The scheme is targeted at small and medium sized enterprises (employing up to 250 people) with either a turnover at less than €50 million or a balance sheet at less than €43 million.

The scheme offers funding of UP TO 70% on eligible capital and/or revenue expenditure for projects with awards offered from £3,000 up to £100,000

It should also be noted that the minimum individual item cost is set at £100.

This enhanced grant scheme is discretionary and will be operated on a first come first serve basis dependent upon availability of funds and completion of the project within the detailed timeframe.

All offers of funding will be subject to approval of applications by a Grants Review Panel

The grant will close to applications in November 2024 or at such time as the

funds have been fully committed, if earlier

Following confirmation of award all offers will need to have been accepted and have drawn down funds within 6 months or no later than December 2024 whichever is earlier.

With prior written agreement from CCBC the 6 month deadline may be extended however no extension to the December 24 deadline will be possible.

As a limited time fund all grants offers (in whole or in part) not drawn down in line with the above will automatically expire.

Eligibility Factors

The scheme is targeted at small and medium sized enterprises (employing up to 250 people) with *either* a turnover at less than €50 million *or* a balance sheet at less than €43 million.

To be eligible to receive investment support, businesses must be located and operating in the County of Conwy, have been actively trading over 6 months and registered with HMRC

To be considered, your project should fit one or more of the defined interventions and deliver one or more of the following outputs and outcomes

- Job Creation
- Job Safeguarding
- Introduction of new to firm technologies or processes
- Improved productivity
- Increased amount of investment
- Projects arising from funded feasibility studies.
- People attending training
- Low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed
- Increasing competitiveness
- Aiding business growth
- Making efficiency gains
- Increasing sustainability
- Introducing new products, services or markets to the firm
- Focus on decarbonisation and the climate emergency

Ineligible Sectors

- Coal/Steel
- Shipbuilding
- Synthetic fibres production

- Banks
- Insurance companies
- Housing
- Statutory education
- Statutory Health services
- Fisheries/aquaculture/agriculture and Annex 1 food production/milk substitutes/export related activities
- Gambling, Tobacco, Production of Weapons and Ammunition or any sectors that give rise to significant environmental impact or are ethically or morally controversial.

Eligible Projects

Capital and revenue projects including (but not limited to)

- Capital equipment including tools and IT hardware
- Marketing materials designed to implement a targeted market plan which should be included in the application (not advertisements)
- Specialist training of business owner or staff (Standard training i.e. H&S, First Aid, Driving Lessons etc. will **not** be considered). Only short-term courses can be considered i.e. Courses completed within less than 6 months
- Specialist professional fees to achieve a tangible outcome (e.g. ISO, IIP)
- Installation/Labour costs for equipment/development works
- Carbon reduction projects i.e. solar panels/low energy lighting
- Digitalisation upgrade i.e. improving/initialising digital approaches

Ineligible Projects/Items

- Activities which have already started (items cannot be purchased or ordered until grant approval has been given)
- Projects to satisfy statutory requirements
- Renewals i.e. replacement of old for new, Maintenance and/or Running Costs
- Projects detrimental to the environment
- Projects without relevant statutory consents (if applicable)
- On road vehicles
- Items which are not essential for the success of the project
- Purchase of Land and/or Property
- Staff Costs
- Recoverable VAT
- Stock purchases
- Acquisition of assets under Hire Purchase (HP), Extended Credit Agreements or Lease

Critical Factors to Note

Quotations

Original estimates/quotes for project items/works (2 itemised quotes for items/works costing up to £10,000, 3 itemised quotes for any item/works costing in excess of £10,000 or more)

The quotes should follow the same template and where applicable be broken down into parts to show the costs of individual elements of work e.g. equipment cost /labour/installation costs.

Cash Purchases

No funding will be paid where cash transactions have been undertaken.

Retrospection

No funding will be paid on any retrospective expenditure.

SECTION B – GRANT PROCESS

Making an Application

Full Application

1. It is important to ensure that your application form is fully completed and that all supporting documentation is included at the time of submitting. This includes:
 - Up to date Business Plan
 - Most recent annual accounts * / **
 - Projected Cash Flow & Profit & Loss Statement
 - Confirmation of Match funding
 - Confirmation of ***Planning Permission and / or Building Regulations (If applicable) including 'Change of Use'.
 - Proof of Ownership / lease**** if applicable
 - Original estimates / quotes for project
 - All Statutory Legal Requirements for the Business (if applicable)

- Confirmation of registration with HMRC

** If the business has not been trading long enough for accounts to be available a minimum of 3 months bank statements will be required to evidence trading*

*** For larger funding request more than ones years' financial information may be requested.*

**** in cases where planning permissions are in process but not yet received applications can be considered but any offer of funding would be conditional on the receipt of the relevant approvals/permission being received.*

*****As standard a minimum of 5years remaining lease is required*

Decisions on applications will be made based on the information provided in the application form, associated evidence and information checks that are conducted from other sources.

Consideration will be given to the financial information such as turnover in relation the amount of funding being requested.

Additional evidence may be requested to support application.

If any data is incomplete or incorrect or the evidence provided is insufficient we will contact you.

Failure to comply could delay a decision. Please note that the approval timescale does not commence until such time as all the documentation required is received by the Local Authority.

You are reminded at this stage not to undertake any expenditure on the grant funded project until a formal decision has been reached on the bid and written confirmation of this has been received.

2. *Where asked to do so please provide as much information as possible to explain the project, its benefits, impact and how it will deliver the required interventions, outputs and outcomes.*

Please see the supporting Interventions document [LINK}

3. Please read carefully all the information and guidance provided and in particular note and understand all aspects of the application form and guidelines relating to the awarding of the Support Local Business Grant. In particular you should be aware that:

- **No funding will be paid on retrospective expenditure**
- **No funding will be paid where cash transactions have been undertaken**

STATE AID / SUBSIDY CONTROL

The grants will be awarded under Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA)
Minimal financial assistance (MFA) allows public authorities to award low-value subsidies (up to £315,000)

Additional MFA cannot be given to a beneficiary that has already reached their MFA threshold.

As part of the application process you will be required to:

- Declare your understanding the funding is offered as a subsidy under MFA
- Declare the MFA threshold specified in section 36(1) of the Act will not be exceeded by the enterprise receiving the proposed assistance

When making your declaration you should take into consideration all subsidy support (including grants) received through the following schemes during the previous 3 fiscal years

De Minimis, 'Special Drawing Rights' (SDR), UK de minimis, 'Small Amounts of Financial Assistance' (SAFA, the current name), 'Small Amounts of Funding Exemption' (SAFE) and 'Minimal Financial Assistance' (MFA).

Examples could include Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) linked grants Economic Resilience Fund, Start-up Grant, Freelancer Fund, and Local Authority Discretionary Fund, Conwy Business Support Grant.

Processing Your Application

On receipt of your full application form the Council will:-

- Check that all the details provided are in order and if not inform you of what further information is required.
- Undertake consultation which may include:
 - A bank reference
 - A search with a credit reference agency in relation to your business. *The agency will keep a record of that search and may share that information with other agencies.*
 - Make enquiries with respect to company director(s) with a credit reference agency.
 - Local searches e.g. Council tax and/or non domestic rates
- Refer the application to the Grants Panel for a decision. *Each application shall be considered on merit and in accordance with the scheme's aims and objectives.*

Advising of the decision

You will be informed of the decision by email. If successful you will be advised of the amount of funding offered and any specific conditions relating to the award. Attached to the letter will be the '*Terms & Conditions*' contract that you must adhere to. This has to be *signed and returned within 28 days* as acceptance of the funding offer.

Making a Claim

All of our funding is on a defrayed basis (i.e. the claimant must spend the money first and they then claim the agreed amount back as stated in the grant offer letter.

We would usually do this in 1 / 2 instalments depending on the project and it's spend profile.

Following confirmation of award all offers will need to have been accepted and have drawn down funds within 6 months or no later than December 2024 whichever is earlier.

With prior written agreement from CCBC the 6month deadline may be extended however no extension to the December 24 deadline will be possible.

As a limited time fund all grants offers (in whole or in part) not drawn down in line with the above will automatically expire.

When submitting a claim, proof of expenditure will be required. This must include

- All relevant receipted accounts/invoices (*invoices must not pre-date the signed and returned offer letter/contract*).
- Copies of corresponding bank statements showing payments going out of the company's accounts will also be required.

No cash transactions will be accepted as part of a claim.

The Council will satisfy itself that the activity for which the funding was awarded (works undertaken or purchases made) has been carried out fully in accordance with the proposal made within the application and any conditions attached to the approval. This may be by inspection or such other means as the Council determines. When all the above is completed the Council will release the funding to your Business Bank Account by means of BACS payment.

Post Award Monitoring

Monitoring of agreed outputs will be undertaken post completion of the project.

During the 3 year funding compliance period the Council, or its agents, may visit your premises in order to carry out a monitoring inspection of the business and Support Local Business Key Fund Grant funded aided assets.

All successful applicants will be required to participate in a monitoring review as requested

On projects that have stated job creation and or safeguarding as an output, the Council may require evidence of the employment factors.

For all other projects, either evidence of increase in turnover or evidence in how the Support Local Business Key Fund Grant award has impacted the business must be demonstrated by the applicant.

CONTACT DETAILS

 <p>CONWY CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p>Conwy Business Support business@conwy.gov.uk 01492 574574</p>