

Minister's foreword

Welcome to Transforming Local Infrastructure, which is being administered by Big Fund (the non-Lottery arm of the Big Lottery Fund) for the Office for Civil Society, Cabinet Office. Transforming Local Infrastructure is an England fund.

We want people to have more power and responsibility for their own lives, the community they live in and the services they use. This Big Society vision underlies an ambitious plan to transfer real power to communities; open up the public services and encourage more social action.

That process will present local charities, social enterprises and community organisations with many new opportunities to improve people's lives whether it be by giving voice or delivering services. This scale of change is challenging and we want to be sure that 'frontline' civil society organisations receive the best possible local support.

We have a large network of so called 'infrastructure' organisations that provide support, networking and volunteer brokerage. Our consultation showed how valued the 'best in class' are to the communities they serve. However, whilst it highlighted success stories, it also revealed real concerns about inconsistent quality, unnecessary duplication and fragmentation of resources.

I know the difficult funding environment makes the job of leading both general and volunteering infrastructure organisations all the more challenging. But from my many conversations with the sector, I also know there is agreement that business models need to change and local infrastructure must develop and prove its value to local customers.

We announced our intention to offer a new fund to support local infrastructure in the Giving White Paper. This document sets out more detail. You will see that the fund is not designed to support "business as usual". We want to encourage local leadership that sees the need to adapt to both economic reality and the changing needs of frontline groups and communities. So we will be looking to support plans that are designed to develop more efficient and effective forms of support to local charities; social enterprises and community groups. We anticipate

and support more consolidation and collaboration. We would like to encourage fresh thinking about the support that civil society needs and how it is best delivered. We want to see better links with local business, more peer to peer support and stronger partnership with local strategic bodies.

In short, we want this fund to be a catalyst for change and more sustainable business models.

I am delighted that we are working with Big Lottery Fund on a new, integrated approach. We both share a desire to help infrastructure organisations find a path that maximises their value and relevance to their local customers and partners. In doing so, they will help unlock the potential of our hugely valuable social sector to improve the quality of life for many more people in this country.

Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society

These guidance notes are for organisations that want to apply for a grant from Transforming Local Infrastructure. This is Government funding, not Lottery funding.

Other formats

If you need these guidance notes in another format, for example braille, on audiotape, on disc or in large print, call us on:

0845 4 10 20 30

(textphone: 0845 6 02 1659 for people with hearing impairments).

If you have any queries, we will be happy to help.

Call us on: 0845 4 10 20 30

(textphone: 0845 6 02 1659).

Email us at:

general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

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About Transforming Local Infrastructure

This guide contains important information that partnerships interested in applying to Transforming Local Infrastructure need to know.

Transforming Local Infrastructure aim

The Office for Civil Society (OCS) has made up to £30 million available in short-term funding, to provide better support for frontline civil society organisations by transforming local infrastructure services.

OCS views this as a final national level investment in this area, aimed at transformational activities such as:

- collaboration and consolidation – creating more efficient, effective and agile organisations through rethinking business models, asset consolidation, merger of back-office functions and shared services
- the redesign and integration of services towards more imaginative and enterprising approaches that are valued and supported locally
- better links with local businesses; more peer-to-peer support within the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and stronger partnerships with local statutory bodies, particularly the relevant local authority
- sustainability in the long-term without ongoing support from central Government.

Transforming Local Infrastructure outcomes

The word ‘outcome’ is used to describe the changes OCS wants Transforming Local Infrastructure to lead to. Projects must meet all of the outcomes for this fund:

- ▶ Frontline civil society organisations can access a wider range of high quality support, networking and volunteering brokerage opportunities and value them more highly.
- ▶ There is stronger local leadership for civil society organisations which contributes to better partnerships with local businesses and the local statutory sector.

- ▶ Infrastructure organisations, including volunteering infrastructure, are transformed so that they are more efficient, effective and are able to learn and grow with less dependence on state funding.

The Supporting Stronger Civil Society consultation reinforced how valued the best local infrastructure organisations are. It also highlighted examples of how mergers have created stronger infrastructure better able to represent and provide services to frontline civil society organisations.

But the consultation also revealed real concerns about inconsistent quality, unnecessary duplication and fragmentation of resources.

OCS wants to make sure that the resources available are used effectively and efficiently to provide the best possible service to frontline organisations. Proposals must clearly show how they represent the best possible value for money, and have sought to reduce duplication and address fragmentation at local level. It is important that frontline groups are presented with integrated services with a clear route to the support they need.

Local authority areas

OCS will only accept one application per upper tier local authority area to Transforming Local Infrastructure. For a list of upper tier local authority areas, see www.bigfund.org.uk/tli If more than one application is received from a local authority area, none of the applications submitted will be considered.

This is a competitive process, so having an application accepted for a local authority area is no guarantee of receiving a grant. As there are limited funds available, Transforming Local Infrastructure will not be able to fund project activities in each local authority area. OCS will only fund bids of very high quality which set out clear and considered plans to rationalise and transform infrastructure provision in local areas.

The majority (75 per cent) of your project activities must be delivered in your local authority area. If you wish to deliver some activities outside the boundary of your local authority area you must be able to evidence a need for this and explain why you are best placed to do this.

Transforming Local Infrastructure may accept a limited number of applications for projects covering more than one local authority area. In these circumstances only one application will be accepted from all the local authority areas involved.

If you want to submit an application covering more than one local authority area, please contact Big Fund on tli@bigfund.org.uk as early as possible before applying, setting out your reasons why you think this is the best way of meeting the outcomes of the fund. We will confirm if this is acceptable.

Partnerships

OCS wants infrastructure organisations to work together more efficiently and effectively. This means that a significant part of Transforming Local Infrastructure will be about funding projects which result in merger, collaboration or sharing of services across an upper tier local authority area. If there is more than one infrastructure organisation in your local authority area this means working in partnership to develop an application that will show how you will work together to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

We expect all partners to meet the eligibility criteria listed under the Who can apply? section of this document. If they do not, you must be able to show how their involvement in the partnership will help to deliver the Transforming Local Infrastructure aim and outcomes. A partner is defined as an organisation that has some responsibility for delivering the project outcomes.

Lead organisations will need to have a written agreement with any organisation with which it will deliver the project, making it clear what the responsibilities of each of the organisations are and how they will work together. This partnership agreement can be in principle when you apply, but if you are awarded a grant it must be formalised before any payments can be made. You must therefore be able to have a formalised partnership agreement in place by 24 February 2012. You can include costs for formalising your partnership agreement in your project budget.

For more information on partnerships please read the guide 'Partnership agreements requirements' available at www.bigfund.org.uk/tli

Who can apply?

You can apply if you meet both of the following criteria:

- ▶ You are an infrastructure organisation.

By infrastructure organisation, we mean civil society organisations whose main or only purpose is to support the work of other groups in the voluntary and community sector. This purpose will usually appear in the governing document of your organisation or will be apparent from the work you have carried out. If supporting other organisations is not an explicit purpose in your governing document doing such work must be within the scope of the work your governing document allows you to do.

- ▶ You are one of the following types of organisations:

- a registered charity
- a voluntary and community unincorporated charitable association
- a community benefit society registered as an industrial and provident society
- a community interest company
- an organisation of another type if you operate as a social enterprise and principally reinvest your surpluses for social benefit.

You are not eligible to apply if you:

- are a statutory organisation such as a school or local authority, including statutory organisations that have charitable status
- are an individual or sole trader
- make a surplus or profit which is not principally reinvested for social benefit
- are applying on behalf of another organisation.



Forming a partnership

If you want to be involved in forming a partnership in your area you must register on www.bigfund.org.uk/tli by 5 August 2011. This will help your local networks to ensure that everyone registered from your area is involved in discussions to submit a single application for your local authority area.

If you do not register by 5 August 2011 you may miss the opportunity to be involved.

After 5 August it is your responsibility to contact everyone who has registered in your local authority area to agree on one partnership, as only one application can be accepted from each area. You must also agree on a lead applicant who will submit an application form on behalf of the partnership and be responsible for delivering the project.

The lead applicant must make an Expression of interest, providing details of the partnership, and submit this via the website www.bigfund.org.uk/tli by 2 September 2011. If more than one Expression of interest is received from a local authority area, Big Fund will contact all parties to advise them that only one can be accepted. It is the responsibility of the partnerships involved to resolve this.

Only when one Expression of interest has been received from a local authority area will the lead applicant for the partnership be sent an application form.

If you are the only infrastructure organisation working in your area you should also register and submit an Expression of interest in order to receive an application form.

Frivolous and contentious Expressions of interest

We reserve the right to declare ineligible any Expression of interest which is frivolous or contentious, such that it stands no reasonable prospect of success.

How much funding can organisations receive?

Grants are available:

- between £250,000 and £400,000 per local authority area or up to £600,000 for local authority areas with a population of over one million people (Birmingham, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire and Surrey)
- for up to 18 months
- mainly for revenue funding
- but can include up to £5,000 of capital funding.

What can you spend your grant on?

You must spend your grant in the way that best helps you meet the Transforming Local Infrastructure outcomes on page 4.

For example your project activities could include:

- developing new and/or redesigning existing services
- restructuring or moving to a different business model, including redundancy costs where necessary
- moving services to or from other organisations
- developing new partnerships, alliances, mergers and/or shared services

- staff training, for example to enable you to take on different kinds of support roles which are more suited to meeting the needs of frontline civil society organisations
- leadership development activities
- getting expert advice and support.

If you are successful, you must spend most of your funding on activities that focus on transforming your organisation to meet the Transforming Local Infrastructure outcomes. You can spend a small amount of your grant (up to 25 per cent) on continuing to deliver existing services but you will need to explain why this will help you achieve the outcomes.

Grants cannot pay for:

- costs that have been incurred before a grant offer is made
- items that only benefit an individual
- items that are not directly needed to deliver the proposed work
- travel outside the UK
- funds to build up a reserve or surplus, whether distributable or not
- loan repayments
- contributions to general appeals
- religious or political activities.

Match funding

If some of the money for your project will come from other sources, this must be in place when you apply or you must be able to show that the outcomes can be delivered without relying on any other sources of funding. You must provide evidence that the funds are secure with the application form. This could be in the form of a grant offer letter, or if any partners will contribute funds, a letter from their governing body confirming the contribution they will make to the project.

State aid

State aid is a European law term which refers to forms of financial support from a public body or

publicly-funded body, given to undertakings engaged in economic activity on a selective basis, which has the potential to distort competition and affect trade between member states of the European Union. Your application will be assessed to review whether awarding you a grant might breach state aid rules and what additional requirements would have to be met if you were to be awarded a grant.

Grant payments

If you are successful, you will receive a first payment in March 2012. You must provide all grant set up information when requested, in time to meet this deadline. All payments will be made by March 2013.

Bank and building society account requirements

If you are successful and your organisation is not a registered charity you will need to set up a separate bank or building society account for the sole purpose of receiving and administering Big Fund grants. You do not need to set up the account before you apply, but you must be able to have it in place by 24 February 2012.

The separate and designated account must bear the legal name of your organisation and state BIG in brackets, for example 'The Blue Team (BIG)'.

You will also be asked to complete a bank details form which you will have to have verified by your bank.

Assessing your application

Big Fund may contact you to discuss your project as part of the assessment process. Your application will be assessed using the following criteria:

Criterion one: The proposed project outcomes meet an identified need and help achieve the programme outcomes.

Criterion two: The organisation can deliver the project well and achieve the proposed outcomes.

If you have received a Big Lottery Fund grant or a Big Fund grant, how you managed it will be taken into account when your application is assessed.

The Transforming Local Infrastructure timetable

