



Community Benefit Funds

Northern Ireland Application Guidelines

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How to apply online

We believe in making a positive change to the communities in which we operate across the UK and Ireland. Applications to all SSE Renewables Community Benefit Funds are made through an online application form on the SSE Community Investment Portal (CI Portal). Please click on [Northern Ireland](#) to access your Community Fund and the link to SSE Community Investment Portal is found under the How to Apply Section.

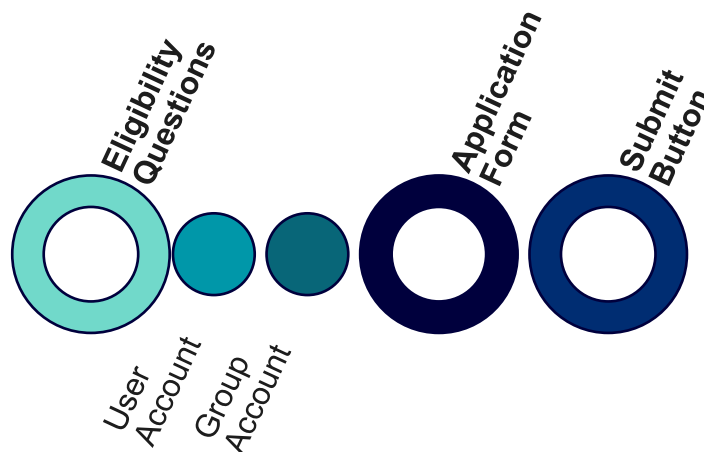
Getting Set Up

If you have not applied to the SSE Renewables Community Benefit Funds in 2024 you will need to Create a user Account and Register your Group (Steps 2.1 + 3.1 below). **You must have your Constitution document available to upload.** Your registered details and constitution are available for download on Companies House website - <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/> or The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland website - <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-search/?pageNumber=1>

Questions to ask yourself:

- Has anyone else within your organisation set up an account or applied for SSE funding previously (See Step 3.1 later in this document). If they have, please request the registered user for your group email the SSE Community Investment Manager (with your details and requesting for you to be added as a Portal user for that organisation).
- Your draft application will save at key points, so you can log out of the Portal and resume drafting it when you log back in, should you not wish to complete and submit it in one session. To do so, log in [here](#) and click 'launch' next to the relevant application.

Alternatively, once you complete the Eligibility Checks you will gain access to complete the Application Form.



Step 1 - Confirm your eligibility to apply to the Fund

After reviewing the Fund objectives and priorities, the Area of Benefit, the eligibility criteria, and these Guidance Notes, please complete the Eligibility Questions to confirm your eligibility for the SSE Renewables Community Benefit Fund. This will help ensure that your application aligns with the fund's objectives and prevents any unnecessary effort if the fund isn't suitable for your group's proposed project.

Step 2. User Account

- Log Into the CI Portal using your Username and password
 - Your username will be your email address with “.sse” at the end
 - If you forget your password click the 'Forgot your password?' link
 - If an additional user is required, the registered user must contact NICommunityFund@sse.com with the name and email address of any additional users to be registered.

Step 2.1 Create User Account

- It is essential that you are authorised to make an application on behalf of your group.
- Click the “Not Registered?” link
- Enter your First Name, Last Name, and Email address
- You will receive an email containing your Username and a link to create a password. Keep this email safe as a reminder of your username.
- Enter a unique password that meets the criteria and keep it safe.
- You can watch the video instructions [here](#).

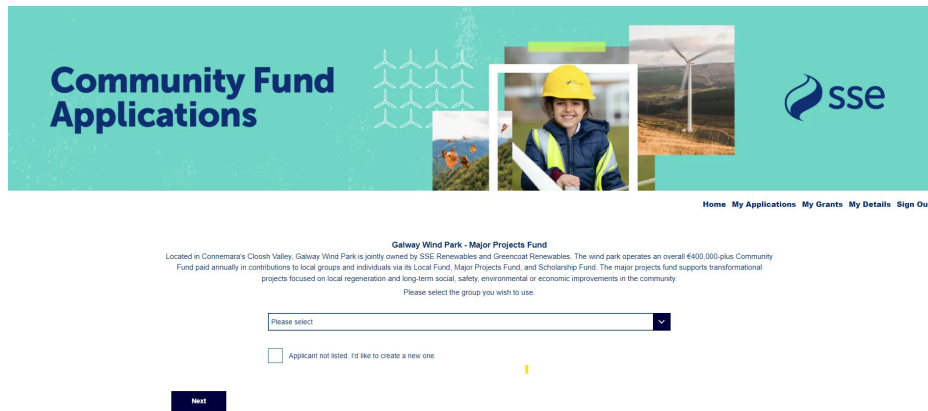
Step 3. Group Account

- An organisation must only be registered on the Portal once.
- You can review and update your Group Details under the [My Details](#) section of the CI Portal.

Step 3.1 Create Group Account

- **Name of Group:** This should be the name that appears on your group's governing document and bank account
- **Type of group:** You will be able to select from a list: Unincorporated voluntary or community organisation; SCIO; registered charity (other); Company limited by guarantee; Community Interest Company; Community Benefit Society; Community Council; Other
- **Phone Number:** Please enter a phone number on which we can contact the above-named person.
- **Website**
- **Number of people** on your group's board or management committee – in total, not just office bearers
- **Number of people** employed by the group
- **Number of volunteers**
- **Date established:** Please provide the date that your group's governing document was adopted, or if it is a registered company or charity, the date it was registered with the regulator.
- **What are your aims and objectives?** Please describe your main activities including any previous community projects you have carried out.
- Provide a **summary of the main activities or services your group** delivers and/or has delivered to-date.
- **Please outline what communities your projects or activities support.** State which communities or beneficiary groups your group supports. For example, all residents in the community your group is set up to benefit, or young people, or people who are not in education, employment or training.
- **Correspondence address:** This is the address where any postal items should be sent should it be different to the Registered Address.
- **Registered address:** This is the address at which your group or organisation is formally registered, which may differ from the correspondence address.

Step 4. Complete the Application Form



Step 4.1 Select Applicant Group Account

- If you have submitted an application on behalf of your group previously, simply select the correct group from the Drop-down menu.
- If you would like to apply on behalf of a new group, not previously registered, tick the box **"Applicant not listed. I'd like to create a new one."** And complete step 3.1 above.

Step 4.2 Screen 1 - About the Project:

- Please provide a short summary that describes the project or activity you wish to apply for funding. (maximum 25 words)
- Please provide a Postcode / Eircode which represents the geographical area your project will benefit.
- Please describe the project you are looking for funding for. (Maximum 3000 characters)
 - What do you want to do?
 - How will you do this? (activities you will deliver, equipment needed, how it will be used)
 - How will the community be involved in the development and delivery of the project?
 - Who will lead the project?
 - How will you monitor and evaluate the project?
 - What are the proposed start and end dates of the project?
- How will you maintain/ sustain your project after the period of funding is finished? Please also include detail if this project helps make your organisation more self-sustaining. (Maximum 3000 characters)
- How have you identified a need for this project within the local area? (Maximum 2000 characters)
 - Where possible please link this to local data e.g. local community plan, local residents survey, labour market statistics and neighbourhood statistics.
- How many people will benefit from the project? – (Numbers only no text)
 - How have you calculated this figure? (Maximum 1200 characters)
- Will any jobs be supported by this project?
 - If yes, please state how many. (Numbers only no text)

- Will any community assets be built, improved by this project (e.g. community hall, walking path)?
 - If yes, please list how many. (Numbers only no text)
- Will this project help improve energy efficiency or climate action?
 - If so, please state the energy generation or carbon reduction capacity of the project, where known. Resources to calculate available at <http://www.sbcc.sustainabilitytool.com>

Step 4.3 Screen 2 - UN Sustainable Development Goals:

SSE Renewables community programme supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Please review the goals below and identify the main goal your project will support or have an emphasis towards. If you wish to tell us about any secondary goals the project will support, you can also include these.

- Select your primary goal. (Must be one of the 4 priority UN SDGs outlined below)

UN SDG 4. Quality Education - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

UN SDG 7. Affordable & Clean Energy - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

UN SDG 11. Sustainable Cities & Communities - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

UN SDG 13. Climate Action - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- Select your secondary goals.
Full list of Goals available to choose from:

Goal 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 7 – AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 15 – LIFE ON LAND

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Step 4.4 Screen 3 - Project Aims and Success:

Please explain how your project achieves the criteria outlined in the fund guidance document. Review the following sections on the funds webpage and explain how your project meets these objectives and eligibility criteria:

- Eligibility & Area of Benefit
- Fund objectives and priorities

Step 4.5 Screen 4 - Project Bank Details

- International Bank Account Number (IBAN)
- Bank Account Holders Name
- Upload copy of bank statement from within last 3 months.
- Upload a copy of your latest financial accounts.
- Additional Authorised Bank Signatory
 - This must be a different person to the person applying, who has access to the Groups Bank Details and is Authorised to co-sign any loans or Grants. Should you be successful in your application, a copy of the Grant Offer Letter will be sent to this person for co-signing before any payments can be made.
 - First name
 - Last name
 - Email
 - Position in the group

Step 4.6 Screen 5 - Group Finances

- What are the main sources of income for the group?
- What was the group's annual income as stated in your uploaded financial accounts? (New groups: State projected income for first year).
- What was the group's annual surplus or deficit as stated in your uploaded financial accounts?
- How much does the group currently hold in unrestricted reserves?
- Please tell us about your organisation's available reserves position, and where relevant, tell us why your reserves cannot be used towards this project.

Step 4.7 Screen 6 - Project Budget

Please provide an accurate list of all costs involved in the work, services, or items required for the project. This should include all project costs (whether you already have funding in place for those or not).

You will have the opportunity to insert the information into a list / table in the form or to upload your own budget file and enter a figure. Do not do both, please select either List Cost Breakdowns or Upload File.

Note: If you enter costs using the list cost breakdown option, and you then decide to upload a budget file instead, please ensure you delete any entries in the "List Cost Breakdown" before continuing.

Step 4.7 Screen 7 - Project Budget cont....

- Please tell us how you have costed your project.
- Upload any quotes you have obtained for the project.
 - For any item of value over £8,500 you must seek 3 quotes
 - Upload 1 or 3 quotes per Cost Listed
 - Name each quote with the same name as entered for Cost Details with Q1, Q2, Q3 as appropriate.

Step 4.7 Screen 8 - Project Budget cont....

- Please tell us the amount you are applying to SSE for.
- Note: Please only enter the minimum amount you need from SSE Renewables to deliver this project.

Step 4.8 Screen 9 - Project Funders

- Provide details of all other funding secured or being sought towards the total project costs. For each funding source:
 - Select correct Funding Type
 - Enter Funding Amount
 - Select correct Funding Status.
 - Save and Continue.
- Please provide details of Organisations Reserves, Bridging Finance available and all details that proves the project will, upon receipt of a grant, be able to proceed.

Step 4.9 Screen 10 – Checklist

You will need to be able to answer each of the following to submit your application:

- I can confirm we have appropriate procedures in place to carry out our project safely.
- I can confirm the organisation has at least three unrelated people serving on the management committee/board.
- I can confirm this project doesn't require retrospective funding.
- If requested, I could provide the details of an independent referee.
- I can confirm that any level of salary paid is at, or greater than, the Living Wage.
- **Does the project require any of the following consents?**
 - Planning permission
 - Building warrant
 - Listed buildings consent
 - If yes to any of these - Further consent information
 - Please state whether these consents been applied for. If so, have they been granted? If not, when do you anticipate them being applied for or granted?

Step 4.10 Screen 11 - Additional Uploaded Documents

You will have the opportunity to upload the following documents as part of your application:

- A copy of the organisation's Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult Policy (if applicable)
- A copy of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) minutes
- Letters of support (if applicable)
- Land ownership / lease agreements
- Biodiversity projects require a letter of support from a suitably qualified person outlining that the proposed project is in line with the local and regional Biodiversity Plan.
- Solar PV generation projects must provide evidence in relation to connection agreement requirements from NI Networks.
- Additional information (if applicable)
- Any other documents which you think are required in support of your application. For example, any architects' drawings, a business plan, and/or copies of any relevant permissions, such as planning permission, building warrant and/or listed building consent

Please note due to GDPR we ask you not to include any photos which include people.

Step 4.11 Submit Button

This is the last opportunity to review / edit your application. Once you have submitted your application you will no longer be able to edit the contents.

What happens Next?

- Once the submit button has been clicked, we will send you an email confirming your application has been received.
- If you require a copy of your application following submission, you can request one by logging into the CI Portal and navigating to the '[My Applications](#)' section then clicking on 'Copy of Application' next to the relevant application.
- You'll then receive an e-mail within 24 hours, containing instructions on how to download a copy. Note, due to the limitations of Adobe software, this will not contain any information on your submitted project budget or other funding.
- If you need any further information regarding how to complete the application form please email NICommunityFund@sse.com

Troubleshooting Guide

- We recommend using Google Chrome as your browser. (Not essential)
- If questions asks about a number, enter figures only, **no letters or punctuation** (**10000** vs **10,000 / ten thousand**). Fields where this applies are:
 - Beneficiaries
 - Financial details
 - Grant details
- Preferred document type for upload is PDF other than for any project budget file that you upload, which should ideally be in Microsoft Excel. Please **ensure documents are not password protected.**
- If you haven't received an e-mail from us, it is possible the e-mail has been moved into your 'spam' or 'junk' folder by your e-mail provider. Add the SSE e-mail address it was sent from to your 'Safe Senders' list – this will prevent emails from that address being moved into your spam or junk folder in the future. This can be done by
 - a) adding the address in your safe senders list or
 - b) marking the e-mail as not junk and checking the box '*for this and all future messages from the relevant SSE e-mail address*'.
- If you have any IT problems while trying to access the SSE Community Investment Portal, please contact communityfundsupport@sse.com
- If you have any issues completing your application form, please email NICommunityFund@sse.com

What can be funded?

The fund will consider applications for capital and revenue funding.

- **Capital funding** - For expenditure on new assets or the development of existing assets. These are expected to have "wider community benefit" and to have an expected lifespan of at least 5 years.
- **Revenue funding** – For expenditure on project running costs related for example to the delivery of programmes, training, events that result in tangible outputs – e.g. development of course material, action plans, salaries for facilitators etc.

What cannot be funded?

The Funds will not support:

- Applications benefiting only an individual
- Activities not directly benefiting the local community or aligning with the funding criteria
- Projects benefiting primarily those residents outside the Area of Benefit
- Advancement of religion or party politics
- Direct replacement of statutory funding
- Activities contrary to the interests of SSER or its subsidiaries
- Activities that could damage the reputation of SSER or its subsidiaries
- Anti-renewable energy/wind farm activities
- Existing loans, debts, or retrospective funding (i.e. costs incurred before a decision is made).
- Operational running costs (i.e. day to day running costs, insurance, utilities etc.)