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**HS2**



## **HS2 Community and Environment Fund**

### **Guidance for religious/ faith organisations and places of worship**

This guidance document has been written for organisations who are interested in applying for HS2 Community and Environment Fund (CEF) funding and their proposed project will have links to religion, faith or a place of worship.

Please note this has been designed to help with commonly asked questions and to support the application process. It is not a replacement document for the CEF Guidance document and religious organisations will need to read the full CEF Guidance and FAQs document before applying, in addition to this tailored guidance.

You can find the CEF Guidance & FAQs document containing important information for all applicants here: <https://hs2funds.org.uk/home/community-environment-fund/community-environment-fund-guidance/>

#### **CEF Application Criteria**

Before applying for CEF funding, religious/faith organisations need to fully consider the points below. The applicant must also manage its own funds and have its own bank account, which the grant funds will be paid into. Additionally, if the project is requesting funding towards a staff post, the applicant must be the employer.

#### **Wider Community Benefit**

Section 3.3 of the CEF Guidance & FAQs document highlights that projects or activities that are primarily for the promotion of religion, religious beliefs or faith are ineligible. Whilst religious/faith organisations may be able to apply for funding, the project must primarily deliver wider community or public benefits to be eligible. We will not contribute to projects or project costs that are for the promotion of religion or religious beliefs.

#### **How to evidence that your project provides wider community benefit**

Your application needs to show a clear understanding and acknowledgment of how your project will benefit the wider community. This includes:

- Details of how many people from the local disrupted community will use your project for non-religious purposes. This should include detail on the number of community beneficiaries, residents and groups that will use your project (equipment, facilities, services, etc.). You should name groups and provide

letter/s or emails from them confirming their support for and their need for the project.

- Details of when groups will use the project and the frequency that they will use it.
- How many beneficiaries there will be from each group.
- Details of need for the project from the wider disrupted community through community consultation. Your consultation information should include details of consultation with the wider community, such as residents, and any community groups, and a summary of the results of this consultation, if relevant, specifying findings by types of groups or specific local areas.
- Where the wider community beneficiaries will be drawn from (e.g. the location of the groups and people that will use the project) and how these beneficiaries are disrupted by the construction of HS2.
- The beneficiary numbers you quote should be unique beneficiaries and not attendances. For example, if a person attends three different activities/events then they should be counted as 1 and not 3.

## **Project Funding**

How much funding you can apply for depends on what type of project you are proposing and the amount of use for religious purposes or activities in comparison to the wider community benefit (community use). Only projects that primarily benefit the wider community in disrupted communities are eligible for consideration by the Fund.

Projects that are solely for promotion of religion or religious activities are ineligible under this funding programme.

Projects that involve the delivery of both religious activity/promotion of faith plus a wider community benefit are however eligible, but you still cannot request funding from CEF for costs linked to the delivery of religious activities/promotion. You can only apply for costs that relate to the delivery of activities linked to the wider community benefit element of the project.

If your project will be used for religious/faith practices for 10 hours a week and by the community for 15 hours a week then religious use will be 40% and community use represents 60%. In this scenario if the community beneficiaries are from disrupted communities, you could apply for 60% of the total cost of your project from CEF and the other 40% must be covered through your own funding or other partnership funding sources. However, an additional point to note is that CEF will not contribute to capital work to improve the main fabric of the religious building.

You should ensure that the number of religious beneficiaries from your project are also included in the breakdown of your beneficiary number to ensure that the total number of people that will benefit from your project is clear.

For a further example of this, please see the project case studies below.

## **Applications for Capital Funding**

Capital Projects – up to £20,000: section 3.4.1 of the CEF Guidance & FAQs document states that if you are applying for capital funding of up to £20,000 you do not formally need security of tenure if the freeholder/landowner is a not-for-profit organisation. However, you will require permission from the freeholder/landowner which includes a statement guaranteeing public access to the project for a minimum of 2 years from when the capital work is completed. You will find the Funds permission form that will need to be completed by the freeholder/landowner and submitted with your application here <https://hs2funds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/HS2-Landowner-Permission-Form.docx>

Capital Projects – over £20,000: section 3.4.1 of the CEF Guidance & FAQs document states that to be eligible to apply for capital funding of over £20,000, the applicant must either own the freehold interest or have a sufficient leasehold interest in the land involved in the project. A copy of the leasehold or freehold document will need to be submitted with your application.

## **How to ensure the correct organisation is the applicant**

You will need to check who owns the land or building that will be improved through the project.

- If the land or building is owned by the applicant, they can apply directly.
- If the land or building is owned by another organisation, for example a PCC then the PCC should be the applicant.
  
- If you are the leaseholder, you need to make sure the lease meets the programme requirements (in terms of its length and that there is no break clause contained in it).
  
- If you are the leaseholder, please check your leasehold document and if the document refers to the landowner needing to give permission for any capital work or changes to the land/building then you will need to provide evidence of permission from the landowner.

We understand that some landownership situations can be complex and would encourage you to contact us if you have any doubts or concerns.

## **Applications for Revenue Funding**

Section 3.5 of the CEF Guidance & FAQs document highlights what revenue funding can be used for.

With specific regards to applications from religious/faith organisations, if you are requesting revenue funding to cover staff costs and or general running costs of a CEF project then the applicant needs to be the organisation that will employ this

person directly. For example, if a place of worship employs its own staff and has full control of their own funding they should be the applicant. If the place of worship is managed by another organisation, for example the PCC who employ the staff and managed budgets and funding then the PCC need to be the applicant.

Please note that we will not part fund a post which provides both community and religious/faith based work.

## **Case Studies**

### **Improvements to a church hall**

A church wishes to undertake improvements to the church hall which is in need of modernisation. The church hall is a separate building, or separate room, to the main church space used for worship. The hall is in a village that is close to the line of the HS2 route and the village will be disrupted by construction traffic.

The hall is used for religious activities such as a Sunday school and religious studies/discussions. It is also well used by the local community who are from a disrupted community for a range of activities including uniform groups, health and fitness activities, a play group and by the university of the third age.

The church estimates that community use of the hall represents 80% of the total usage. They have consulted with existing users and other groups (who are from the local disrupted area) that would potentially use the hall if it was modernised and they are in support of the project and have provided letters of support. The hall is also the only community facility in the village and is a vital community asset.

The total cost of the proposed works is £65,000. The church could therefore apply to CEF Local for 80% of the costs (linked to community use) which would be £52,000. They would need to provide partnership funding for the remaining 20% which totals £13,000.

### **Structural work to place of worship (example 1)**

An organisation wishes to undertake structural work to the roof of a place of worship that is impacted by the construction of HS2.

The building is only used for religious activities and promotion and is not used for any other purpose by the local community.

This project is ineligible as the project is solely for the promotion of religion and religious activities.

### **Structural work to place of worship (example 2)**

An organisation wishes to undertake structural work to the roof of a place of worship that is impacted by the construction of HS2.

The building is used for both religious activities and promotion and by the wider local community for community activities.

This project is ineligible as the project is for work to the main fabric of the religious building. The same would apply if the project was for any other capital work to the main fabric of the building.

### **Further Information**

If you need any further information please contact Groundwork UK by email ([HS2funds@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:HS2funds@groundwork.org.uk)) who can arrange a telephone call to speak to you about your project idea and the criteria of the Funds. You can also visit the Funds website (<https://hs2funds.org.uk/>) which includes an online map of projects that have been funded to date by the programme, including examples of religious organisations that we have funded to date: <https://hs2funds.org.uk/home/projects-funded-by-hs2-funds/>