



CONNECT FUND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Rounds of the Connect Fund

Q: What are the dates for the two initial rounds of the Connect Fund?

A: Round 1 will run from 12 June 2025 to 31 March 2026, with applications being accepted from 10 August; Round 2 will run from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.

Q: If oversubscribed and round 1 closes early, could round 2 be brought forward?

A: Round 2 will open 1 April 2026 regardless of when round 1 closes.



Connect Fund Eligibility and Project Scope

Q: Does the Connect Fund support one off activities or longer term Projects?

A: The Connect Fund supports both! You should be mindful of the dates that rounds are open when submitting applications. Funding must be drawn down during that period and cannot be carried across.

Q: Can social enterprises apply?

A: Yes, social enterprises can apply.

Q: I've already built up a relationship with my counterparts in GB. Can I still apply to strengthen that relationship?

A: Yes, that would be permitted.

Q: Is there an age restriction on applications, can we work with children?

A: There is no age restriction. Applicants working with children, young people or vulnerable adults will, of course, need to have a safeguarding policy in place explaining how they'll be safe.

Q: Would study visits be appropriate under the Connect Fund?

A: If your application meets the grant's objectives, it will be considered.

Q: We want to host a residential. What is your travel policy?

A: We have not set out travel costs for all possible projects. You should take the stipulated accommodation subsistence allowances and



translate them across into residential costs, noting the difference in costs arising for residential in comparison with overnight stays. For example, you should detail the additional amenities/activities provided by the residential provider (beyond accommodation and subsistence), outlining why these amenities/activities are necessary and how they contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Connect Fund objectives.

Q. Can projects focused on religious activity be funded through the Connect Fund ?

A: The Connect Fund does not fund religious activities, but faith-based organisations are welcome to apply for funding for projects which will benefit the communities of Northern Ireland and do not promote a specific religion. Funding is available for projects which are inclusive and not exclusive to members of a particular faith, and which have a clear East-West lens and deliver on one or more of the Fund objectives.

Q. Can an application to the Connect Fund include organisations or participants from outside of the UK?

A: The Connect Fund will not provide funding to cover the costs of project participation or attendance for organisations or individuals outside of the UK. Whilst organisations and participants based outside the UK are not eligible for funding under the Connect Fund, their inclusion is welcomed should applicants find alternative ways of facilitating this, recognising the value of expertise and best practice from other regions.

Q: If our project is successful, can we bid to run it again during Round 2?

A: Yes, that would be permitted.



Application and Project Partners

Q: Is a partner always required?

Northern Ireland organisations can apply individually. Organisations applying from GB must always have a partner organisation in Northern Ireland.

Q: Can application partners be identified in multiple applications at one time?

A: Yes, provided they have the capacity to deliver on their role.

Q: Can partners be in receipt of other funding?

A: Yes, that is acceptable.

Q: Who holds the budget?

A: Payment will only be made to the lead organisation, who is responsible for managing appropriately with partners.

Q: Is it possible for eligible organisations to partner up with for-profit partners/individuals?

A: For-profit individuals/organisations cannot be partners in an application. Applicants can, however, include in their application their intention to hire for-profit individuals/organisations to support the delivery of their one-off activity or longer-term project. Details should be provided on the purpose for hiring for-profit individuals/organisations in the Activity Outline section of the application, with associated costs noted in the Resourcing and Costs section.



Q: Is it possible for eligible organisations to partner up with partners/individuals from outside of the UK?

A: Organisations from outside of the UK are not eligible to be partners in proposed projects. Whilst organisations and participants based outside the UK are not eligible for funding under the Connect Fund, their inclusion is welcomed should applicants find alternative ways of facilitating this, recognising the value of expertise and best practice from other regions.

Funding and Financials

Q: Can funding be carried across rounds or Financial Years?

A: Funding must be fully drawn down during the round for which it has been allocated and cannot be carried across.

Q: Is it possible for funding to be provided before I begin the Project?

A: If your project is under £10,000, you are eligible to request funding in advance of beginning the project. You will need to demonstrate you have delivered agreed milestones and must return any underspend within 30 days of project completion. If you have requested over £10,000 funding, a payment schedule will be agreed.

Q: If successful in August, does that mean funding can be drawn down until the following August?

A: Funding must be fully drawn down during the round for which it has



been allocated and cannot be carried across. If you are successful in August 2025, funding must be used by March 2026 and cannot be carried across into round 2 starting April 2026.

Q: Can the same organisation fund numerous projects at the same time?

A: No, we will fund one project at a time, per round. Organisations can apply for funding in both Round 1 and Round 2, which can be either for the same project as the previous round or a different project.

Q: Will you carry across underspend from Round 1 to Round 2?

A: This can be considered closer to the time if required

Application Requirements and Submissions

Q: How much detail are we expected to provide on the project plan?

A: You should use the template provided [here](#).

Q: Do you provide a function where we can pitch ideas ahead of applying?

A: Currently, we do not provide this function. If there is considerable appetite, we will consider introducing an offer.

Q. My application has an end date of April 31st, but the new grant end date is March 31st. Will my application automatically fail?



A: No, your application will not automatically fail. We understand that the end date has been adjusted to align with the Financial Year, which may affect some applications submitted before August. We will work with any applicants who are in this situation.

Unsuccessful Applications

Q: If unsuccessful, are applicants entitled to reapply?

A: Yes, if unsuccessful, applicants may reapply. Organisations are allowed to have one 'live' application/project at a time. That means that applicants must await a decision on their current application before submitting a further application.

Q: Will you provide feedback for unsuccessful applicants?

A: We are actively considering whether feedback can be provided for applicants within the resource available for and without adverse impact on the effective administration of the scheme.

Q: If I score over 30 overall, but under a 4 on value for money, will I have the opportunity to re-submit the requested templates or do I need to put in a new application?

A: If you scored above a 30 but under 4 on value for money, you will have the opportunity to resubmit your project plan and budget template without being required to formally submit a new application on findagrants, provided the contents of the proposal do not change.

Q: I'm trying to resubmit an application, after being unsuccessful, but it's not working. What should I do?



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A: You are eligible to reapply for funding in the same round if you were unsuccessful. You will, however, need to use a different email address to sign up to findagrants. We are currently working through with engineers to resolve this. If you are unable to use a different email, please reach out to us on ggms_connectfund_nio@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Other Questions

Q: I have another question, who do I reach out to?

A: If you require any further information for your application please contact ggms_connectfund_nio@cabinetoffice.gov.uk