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Recycling Improvement Fund (RIF)

Resource Management

Stage 1 - Expression of Interest Form Guidance Document

April 2021

This guidance document should be read prior to completion of the Stage 1 - Expression of Interest (EOI) form.

Please note that the completed Expression of Interest (EOI) form does not constitute an application for funding. Submission of an EOI registers your interest in the fund and allows an initial assessment of eligibility to take place. Early proposals are invited even if still at a formative stage.

EOI proposals must meet the aims, objectives, and eligibility requirements of the fund before being taken forward to Stage 2: formal application. Invites to Stage 2 may also be affected by delivery timescales and availability of funding.

All proposals must be consistent with the aim of the fund, to “accelerate progress towards 2025 waste and recycling targets and Scotland’s net-zero carbon commitment, by strengthening and improving local authority recycling infrastructure resulting in increased consistency of collection, improvements to the quality and quantity of material collected, and wider environmental and carbon benefits”. It is recognised that no project is expected to meet all the objectives, significant alignment with these will act as an early guide to the suitability of any Expression of Interest. This guidance document briefly explains the background and aims of the Recycling Improvement Fund (“the Fund”), who is eligible to apply and what types of projects are within the scope of the Fund.

1. Background, Aim and Objectives

In developing the circular economy, Scottish Government recognise an estimated 80% of our global climate emissions are currently linked to the production, consumption and waste of products and resources. Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-2021 included a commitment to launch a £70 million Recycling Improvement Fund, as part of our transition to a fully circular economy. This fund has been established to accelerate progress towards 2025 waste and recycling targets¹ and Scotland’s net-zero carbon commitment, by strengthening and improving local authority recycling infrastructure resulting in increased consistency of collection, improvements to the quality and quantity of material collected, and wider environmental and carbon benefits.

The Fund is being developed and delivered in partnership between the Scottish Government and Local Government, with oversight from the Scottish Government/Local Government Strategic Steering Group on Circular Economy and Waste (which includes representation from COSLA, SOLACE, Zero Waste Scotland, Director of Finance group and the Local Authority Waste Managers Officer’s network).

The objectives of the fund are to:

- Develop infrastructure projects at a scale which will improve the quality of recycling at both collection and treatment level
- Work with Local Authorities to identify and explore the projects that have the greatest potential to increase recycling performance through infrastructure changes and adopt innovative new approaches and low carbon technologies
- Support initiatives that tackle our throwaway culture and encourage a circular economy; providing the enhanced opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle as vital to our green recovery and tackling Scotland’s contribution to climate change

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021>

- Support Local Authorities with aligning collections to the revised Code of Practice under the Household Recycling Charter (once complete), funding service design changes that maximise yield and delivery of high quality materials
- Support strategic projects that prepare Local Authorities longer-term for the introduction of the Food Waste Action Plan, Circular Economy Action Plan and changes resulting from the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility and Deposit Return Scheme
- Promote the collection of problematic materials in addition to identified high carbon impact materials including garden waste, food waste, plastics, and textiles etc.
- Support projects which generate further progress either in terms of replicating best practice or innovation within existing systems
- Maximise the value of awards by working with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure projects are coordinated across all available and relevant funding streams.

2. Who can apply?

This funding programme is open to:

- Individual Local Authorities
- Groups of Local Authorities
- Local Authority led partnerships involving other organisations e.g. Third Sector/Private Sector

3. What are the eligibility requirements of this grant fund?

To be eligible to apply for a grant you must:

- Request capital investment for equipment/assets and clearly demonstrates how it will meet at least one of the fund objectives
- Outline the broad financial implications of proposals in the medium to longer term
- Additional desirable criteria include: -
 - Facilitate alignment with other Scottish Government & Local Government Policies
 - Creation of jobs and/or enhancing skills
 - Innovative solutions in addressing household waste, including collaborative partnerships
 - Maximise value of funding awards by working across stakeholders to ensure projects are funded appropriately from all available sources
- Have incurred expenditure on or after 1st April 2021, up to the closing date of fund.

4. How much funding is available?

A total of £70m of grant funding has been made available over a 5 year period from 2021, there is currently no limit to the amount which can be applied for and grants may be awarded to cover all or a proportion of the proposed costs. The grant will be budgeted annually with the initial allocation noted below, this will be subject to regular review: -

- Year 1 - £16m
- Year 2 - £16m
- Year 3 - £18m
- Year 4 - £10m
- Year 5 - £10m

5. What can be funded?

Eligible costs items *may* include, but are not limited to:

- Plant, equipment, and machinery
- Collection containers and equipment
- Delivery and installation
- Buildings or compounds
- Site alterations (e.g. HWRC or improvements to communal recycling facilities or Recycling Points)
- Modifications to reception, storage, sorting, processing, and onward movement of materials (including modification or upgrades to existing plant and equipment)
- Digitalisation and automation
- Vehicles

6. Applications and decision process

Completion of an initial Expression of Interest document seeks to determine the eligibility of the project for the fund and does not constitute an application for funding.

EOI proposals must be consistent with the aims and objectives of the fund, and meet general eligibility requirements before being taken forward to Stage 2: formal application. Invites to Stage 2 may also be affected by delivery timescales and availability of funding.

EOI's will be reviewed regularly, and ZWS will provide a response to applicants following a review of their submission.

Please complete the application form electronically and send along with supporting documents to RecyclingSupport@zerowastescotland.org.uk

7. Stage 2 application

The Stage 2 process will assess detailed applications against a set of criteria as detailed in Table 1 below, and the aims and objectives of the fund as outlined in Section 1 above.

Further detail on scoring is provided within the Stage 2 guidance.

Table 1 - Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria
Prioritised: The fund shall be managed to ensure that the maximum possible benefit is realised from each intervention by supporting impactful projects designed to improve or level-up existing infrastructure, as well as a targeted needs-based approach.
Transparency: The fund shall be structured to be as open, but coordinated, as possible offering options to support transformational improvements at an individual local authority level, as well as projects that will generate impact regionally and nationally.

Improvement and Innovation Focused: The fund shall be supportive of **new ideas**, early adopters and those projects which demonstrate scale and replication of existing best practice and which are already well developed.

Accountable: The fund shall ensure projects are delivered to maximum effect, through due diligence, planning, strong project management and targeted communication of infrastructure changes. Impact will also be robustly monitored and evaluated over time against an agreed framework of impact / performance **criteria**.

Evidence-led: Proposed project is based on the best industry and sectoral knowledge and recognised good practice and addresses a demonstrated gap or improvement need.

Strategic: Proposed project shows alignment with current & future policy developments and local, regional or national priorities. The project also considers any broader impacts.

Transformational: Proposed project will support significant shifts in performance locally, regionally, or nationally in terms of recycling performance, waste prevention or reuse.

Impactful: Proposed project is focussed on high carbon impacts through increasing the capture of priority materials such as food waste, garden waste, plastics and textiles, and the adoption of new and low carbon technologies.

Additionality: The proposed project is one which, for reasons of scale, timing, or perceived risk, may not otherwise be progressed or would take significantly longer without grant funding.

Collaborative: The proposed project adopts an approach to developing and delivering projects in partnership across key stakeholders and/or across multiple authorities where opportunity allows.

Feasible: The proposed project is deliverable within the timeframes and practicable within the scope and criteria of the fund.

Acceptable: Proposed project fits within the regulatory and planning frameworks and be found acceptable to both Scottish ministers and local decision makers and stakeholders.

Once invited to Stage 2, full applications will be welcomed on a rolling basis. Assessments will be undertaken by a Funding Panel, with recommendations made to the Recycling Improvement Fund board for final approval. A list of panel meeting dates and the final date for submission for each panel will be provided to applicants upon being invited to Stage 2. Dates will also be published on the Zero Waste Scotland website.

Following a successful Stage 2 submission and approval, a grant agreement will be issued detailing key project milestones and associated payments.

Grant supported projects will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation for up to five years from start of project, and all recipients will be expected to provide the relevant data to support this.

8. Further information

For further information, please contact your designated Sector Manager or email RecyclingSupport@zerowastescotland.org.uk

 01786 433930

 zerowastescotland.org.uk

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Zero Waste Scotland is a registered company in Scotland (SC436030). Registered office: Ground Floor, Moray House, Forthside Way, Stirling FK8 1OZ