



THE PRINCE'S  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND

## **Funding policy and criteria for eligibility**

The Prince's Countryside Fund ("the Fund") will provide funding towards projects operating in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland that clearly contribute towards one or more of its charitable objects and fit within the focus areas set out below.

### **Charitable objects**

The charitable objects of the Fund are:

- 1.1 the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in farming and/or rural areas;
- 1.2 the advancement of education in all matters relating to farming and/or rural areas;
- 1.3 the prevention or relief of poverty in farming and/or rural areas;
- 1.4 the advancement of health in farming and/or rural areas;
- 1.5 the promotion, for the benefit of the public, of any charitable purposes and in particular charitable purposes connected with rural regeneration in areas of social and economic deprivation throughout the UK by all or any of the following means:
  - (a) the relief of financial hardship;
  - (b) the advancement of education, training or retraining, particularly among unemployed people, and providing unemployed people with work experience; and
  - (c) the provision of financial assistance to promote employment opportunities in farming and/or rural areas.

## **Focus areas**

### **Projects to improve the sustainability of British farming in areas of deprivation**

The Fund will support projects that can make the difference between farmers who are suffering from financial hardship, staying in business or leaving the industry, through helping to make these farmers' businesses more sustainable. The particular areas of focus are:

- Support for farmers in financial hardship to help them improve efficiency and/or add value to their business through the provision of on-farm business advice, assistance with complying with bureaucratic processes, and diversification
- Provision of technology and training to educate farmers who are in financial hardship about improved management of on-farm enterprises
- Retention of traditional skills to benefit financially deprived rural/farming areas
- Provision of opportunities for continued education for farmers and other rural workers
- Inspiring and enabling new entrants, particularly young people, through education about farming, to consider a career in farming
- Facilitation of knowledge transfer for continuous improvement of agricultural business in poor rural areas
- Collaborative farmer led initiatives aimed at adding value, reducing costs, sharing information and shortening supply chains in farming/rural areas suffering from financial hardship.

### **Projects to improve the sustainability of rural communities**

The Fund will support projects that help to keep rural communities experiencing deprivation alive and thriving. These projects will focus on:

- Job creation, including through support for start-up firms to promote employment in farming/rural areas
- Shared transport provision or improving access to transport to relieve financial hardship and improve quality of life
- Education programmes that improve understanding of and engagement with the countryside
- Brokering business support for community ventures which support the Fund's charitable objects
- Community environmental initiatives where added benefits to the community can be demonstrated and which support the Fund's charitable objects
- Initiatives to enable young people who would not otherwise be financially secure to remain in rural communities

### **Projects to reconnect people with the countryside**

The Fund will support initiatives aimed at reconnecting current and future consumers with the natural environment through education about farming/rural areas, particularly:

- Education about the origins of food in rural areas, the connection between fresh, locally produced food and healthy eating and how agriculture helps to maintain the landscape and the environment.
- Education about the importance of rural sustainability
- Education about the benefits of British food, local and regional sourcing.
- Education about how our landscape has been created and the wider benefits of farming.

Particular time-bound tranches of funding may focus on specific elements of these objectives, at the discretion of the Fund's Trustees, or in response to an emerging need.

## **Criteria**

### **Type of funding**

Applications for capital, project and resource funding will be considered.

### **Type of applicant**

Applications will be accepted from organisations, but not from individuals. Applicants can be, but do not need to be, charities. All applicants must however be able to clearly demonstrate a significant level of public benefit arising from their activities (which fulfil the Fund's charitable objects). Any private benefit arising must be incidental.

### **Amount of funding**

The total amount of funding available in each application round will vary, and will be made clear on the Fund's website. Minimum and maximum levels of funding available, where applicable in a funding tranche, will be made clear in the application documentation.

The Fund can pay for a portion or the entirety of the costs of a project, as either a one-off grant or as ongoing support. The Fund will consider applications for match funding in order to support a bid for other grants that meet the Fund's objectives. The Fund will not support projects wholly dependent on its funding for over 3 years.

Where an applicant is requesting at least £25,000 from the Fund, or where the sum applied for is 50% or more of the overall cost of a project, the project team must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board of Trustees that they have investigated alternative sources of funding to meet their needs (and that this alternative funding is not available).

### **Demonstration of impact**

Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate how the funding will be used to reach one or more of the Fund's objectives in a clear and measurable way, based on outcomes achieved and supported by quantifiable evidence.

## **Sharing results**

We expect applicants to explain how they will share the results and lessons learned from their work to others, so that successful projects may be replicated elsewhere. These results will also be communicated by the Fund, to demonstrate the impacts that the charitable funding has had and to maximise its effectiveness.

## **Track record and community support**

We expect those submitting the application to be able to demonstrate the support of the community which will benefit from the project, and show evidence of consulting that community. Applicants that can demonstrate a track record of successful project management will also be favoured.

## **Duration of funding**

Requests for funding of up to a maximum of 3 years will be considered although extensions will be considered based on results (at an agreed point in the project's lifespan) and the current priorities of the Fund. Funding will be made by means of a single payment except in the case of more substantial grants which may be made in a number of instalments.

## **What will not be funded**

There are certain types of work and organisations that cannot be funded. These are:

- Statutory bodies, such as local authorities, NHS bodies, or work where there is statutory responsibility to provide funding.
- Religious bodies where the funding will be for religious purposes.
- Political organisations where the funding will be used for political purposes.
- Projects where the work has begun in anticipation of receiving funding
- Projects where the funding would displace existing funding streams, such as Entry Level Stewardship schemes.
- Projects which do not demonstrate sufficient public benefit and in which private benefit is more than incidental.
- Projects which are aimed at generating commercial benefits beyond the relief of financial hardship in farming/rural areas.

## **Funding decisions**

Applications for funding must be made in the form provided on the Fund's website. Funding will be conditional upon the recipient agreeing to the Fund's grant conditions as amended from time to time. These will include a requirement for the applicant to provide information every quarter throughout the duration of the funding about their activities and finances to enable the Fund to monitor how effectively grants are being used. In the case of funding to be received by the applicant in a number of tranches, the Fund will set targets which the applicant must meet before additional tranches of funding will be provided.

Applicants will also be required to provide a clear business plan which outlines their intended activities and projected financial situation over the duration of the project.

Funding will not be provided if doing so would damage the name or reputation of the Fund or if the trustees have other good grounds for refusing funding.

**In summary, successful applicants will:**

- Bid for funding that covers one or more of the objectives set out above. Preference will be given to projects meeting more than one objective.
- Be part of an organisation – funding will not be given to individuals.
- Present a clear business plan for the duration of the project that shows how the project will meet its objectives (within budget), and in doing so, those of The Prince's Countryside Fund. The business plan must also clearly demonstrate the projected financial position of the applicant over the funding period.
- Be able to demonstrate a track record of successful project management /community engagement.
- Be able to demonstrate support for the project by the local community/intended beneficiaries.
- Be able to demonstrate that alternative sources of funding have been explored (and cannot be accessed).
- Explain how they intend to share the learning from their project more widely.
- Explain how administration costs will be kept to an absolute minimum to maximise results.
- Bid for funding for a maximum of 3 years (although extensions will be considered based on results at an agreed point in the project's lifespan).
- Be able to demonstrate significant public benefit arising from their project