Public Engagement Fund 2025

Community Application Form Guidance

This guidance provides information for those interested in applying to the community ‘Public Engagement Fund.’ This is a pilot to test interest from community organisations and evaluate the impact of enabling communities to engage with data in a way that works for them.

We are offering a **minimum of £1,000** up to a **maximum of £10,000** of funding for one community project to test if this is an effective funding method that we can continue to grow in future. However, we are open to informal discussions with anyone interested in applications less than £1,000.

Applications close at **5pm** on **Monday 14th October**.

Please read the below information, which will support you in completing your application

# What’s the purpose of the Public Engagement Fund?

In 2022 – 2023, [Research Data Scotland](https://www.researchdata.scot/) funded eight [projects](https://www.researchdata.scot/our-work/shaping-our-services/public-engagement/public-engagement-fund/). The work funded had a great impact, reaching over 2,700 participants including people who had not engaged with data science before. For many projects, the effect of the fund is still ongoing, through continuing partnerships and additional funding from other organisations for future work.

However, most applications came from academic and research industry professionals. Whilst the original Public Engagement Fund concept will continue, we want to ensure communities are enabled to apply, and are provided with the support they need to make can happen. We’ve chosen to do this because we know that some of the best people to engage communities in data are those who are working with them on a daily basis.

This fund will offer a **minimum of £1,000** up to a **maximum of £10,000** of funding for one community project to test if this is an effective funding method we can continue to grow in future. However, we are open to informal discussions with anyone interested in applications less than £1,000. Applications close at **5pm** on **Monday 14th October**.

This fund aims to:

* Help communicate the importance of data research by highlighting its impact on society, groups, and / or individuals.
* Showcase cutting-edge data research to communities in ways they can understand and get involved.
* Involve and engage members of the public who may not usually interact with science.
* Create new partnerships by bringing together researchers and the community to shape data research approaches.

We recognise that community groups may not have experience of engaging with people about data. Due to this, if your application is approved, you will have access to support throughout the project from Research Data Scotland Public Engagement professionals. From this, we also hope to learn from your community organisation, and establish long-term and effective ways of working with the community.

# Application Guidelines

The guide below provides further information to support each section of the application form. Please read each section to ensure you have answered the application questions in a way that will help us understand how you meet the funding criteria.

## Contact information

Please complete this section with the details of the main person who will be responsible for the project. We will use these details to let you know whether your application has been successful. If successful, this person will be the contact we keep in touch with throughout the project, unless we are told otherwise.

## About your organisation

This information will be used to identify your organisation and help our panel understand a little bit more about your community group and what you do. Please provide the registered organisation name, as well as the registered charity number, if this is applicable. Whether you are a charity or not will not impact your success.

In the organisation description, we’re looking to understand a bit more about your community group and why it was set up. We are not looking for an in-depth history, so about one paragraph should be enough.

To help you answer this question, you may wish to consider:

* What does your organisation aim to achieve?
* How many people work or volunteer for your organisation?
* What community work have you been involved with?
* What is the impact of your work?

## Finance

In this section, we want to know how you will spend the funding if your application is successful. This will help us understand where the money will be spent and how it will be used throughout the project.

### **Total Amount and Budget Overview**

You will be asked how much you need for your project and a breakdown of how this will be spent. The details of how the funding will be spent do not have to be exact at this stage. However, we would like a clear idea of how the requested amount will be spent. Items you may wish to include in your budget could include:

* Staff and freelancer pay
* Activity development
* Rental or event space
* Expenses – such as food, travel, and accommodation
* Equipment
* Participant payments - You can align to [Scottish Government guidance](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2024/02/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/documents/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time/govscot%3Adocument/guidance-paying-participant-expenses-compensating-time.pdf) or use your own guidelines if you have them

All items budgeted for must support the engagement activity. Successful applicants will receive 100% of the funding they apply for.

We would also like to know about funding covered by your own organisation or other funding that will be used to support this engagement activity. This will help us check the feasibility of your project.

### Bank account, insurance, and policy

Due to the nature of how funding is provided, we require any successful applicant to have an organisational bank account. If successful, evidence of this will be requested.

We will also require the successful applicant to have:

* [Public liability insurance](https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/choosing-the-right-insurance/business-insurance/liability-insurance/public-liability-insurance/)
* [Employer’s liability insurance](https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/choosing-the-right-insurance/business-insurance/liability-insurance/employers-liability-insurance/)
* [Safeguarding policy](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/steps-safer-organisation/policies-and-procedures/#safeguarding-policy)
* [Governing document](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/setting-up/a-charitys-governing-document-what-it-should-include/#:~:text=Your%20governing%20document%20sets%20out,listed%20in%20the%20Charities%20Act) or equivalent

You can click the links to find out more about these types of documentation. If they are not in place at the time of applying, you must have a plan in place to have them before funding is provided. If you say you have these documents, we will require evidence of them if you have been awarded funding.

### Other funding

It is important for us to understand if this project is reliant upon funding from elsewhere and whether this is already in place. We also need to know who is providing the funding to ensure there is no conflict of interest. Please do not include any other funding your organisation receives, or expects to receive, outside the proposed project.

## About your project

We really want to hear about what you have in mind for your project. Why does it matter, and why should we fund it? This is your chance to sell your project.

### Type of project and title

We would like to know whether your project is a one-off activity, part of a programme of work, a test (pilot) for future work, or something else. This gives our reviewers an idea of how it will sit with the rest of your work and alongside other projects.

The project title does not have to be the exact name of your project going forward; it is to help us identify each application we’re scoring.

### What would you like your project to do?

Use this space to briefly explain what you want your project to do. Here you might want to include:

* How long you expect the project to run for
* An outline of your activity plan, including aims and any partner/collaborator organisations you plan to work with.
* What are the steps you will need to take from start to finish?

This should show us clearly and simply what you expect to carry out using any funding provided to you for this project. One paragraph should be enough to clearly explain what you hope to do.

### Who will benefit from your project?

This is where we would like you to briefly outline the audience that your project aims to reach and who will ultimately benefit once it's complete. Your response should be no more than a sentence or two. Your audience could include:

* People living in a certain area in Scotland
* Specific age groups
* People with a health condition e.g. Dementia, Cancer
* People with disabilities

This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully gives you an idea of who you may wish to reach. Who you choose will not affect your application, but it should be justified in later sections. However, please note, we will be making sure a diverse range of audiences are covered across our public engagement and community funded projects.

### What difference do you think your project will make?

Now that you have defined your audience, we want to know how your project will make a difference for them. If your project will also help a wider community beyond your audience, you can talk about it here. Some other questions which may help you answer include:

* Will your project improve community understanding of data? How will this understanding help the community you’re trying to reach?
* Will your project involve members of the public in data research or development? How will their involvement make a difference?
* What difference do you think your project will make outside the intended audience?
* Is there previous work you have done that you can use as evidence to support the impact you think your project will have?

Your response should be no more than roughly two short paragraphs.

### How will you check if your project has achieved what it planned to do?

In the previous section, you will have explained the difference you hope to make. Here, we want to know how you will be able to check that you have made that difference. To help answer this question you should consider how you will:

* Calculate attendee figures
* Know you’ve reached the right audience
* Determine audience understanding over time
* Gather thoughts, opinions, and feedback from your attendees
* Record changes to the way you or any partner/collaborator organisations work due to the engagement

Your response should be no more than roughly two short paragraphs.

### How do you plan to share your work once it is complete?

When you have finished your project with us, we don’t want it to be forgotten. Here, we’d like to know how your project will be shared more widely to help others, and hopefully help you do further great work in future. In this section, you may wish to consider:

* Partners/collaborators you would like to reach out to and ask to share the work you have done
* Websites, social media, local community platforms you might use
* The impact sharing your work will have

Your response should be no more than roughly two short paragraphs.

### Please include the name, job title, and role of employees and any volunteers who will be responsible for the project management or activities.

This will help our reviewers understand who is managing the activity and how the project will run. Please structure this section as follows:

Name
Job Title
Role in the project, including any supporting information you wish to share such as relevant past experience.

There is no limit to how long this section can be, as we are aware project and activity leads will vary across applications. However, we encourage you to please only complete this section for the purpose described above and to be clear in your response.

## Help and Support

We’re aware that many community organisations have never come across data research before and may not have the capacity to rent certain spaces, therefore we would like to offer our support where we can. In this section, please outline any extra support you feel you may need to make sure your project is a success. This could include:

* Extra support to deliver the activity on the day
* Access to data and other expertise
* Equipment needs that we may be able to provide
* Event space
* Help with administrative work, such as making sure you have the appropriate documents in place

There is no limit to how long your response may be, though it should be clear about exactly what your needs are, so that we can make sure we have the right support in place if your application is successful. Your answer will not be scored, but we will check for feasibility of the request.

## Additional information

It is not essential for you to complete this section. However, this will help us improve the fund in future.

### Is there anything else you would like to let us know about your project?

Please use this space to tell us any important information that you think we should consider in support of your application. You should include anything that you feel you could not answer in earlier questions. Please note, it will not be scored but may provide further context for our Application Manager. There is no word limit in this section.

### How did you hear about the Public Engagement Fund?

This is not a compulsory question, but your response will help us understand where we are and are not reaching people. Your response will help us improve how we let people know about the fund in future.

### Do you have any feedback for us, so that we may improve the application process in future?

How did you find the application process with us? We’d like to hear any and all feedback, so that we can improve in future. Some things to consider could include:

* Ability to find our website / the funding page
* Clarity of this guidance
* Ease of completing the application and budget request form.

Your feedback will not affect whether your application is successful but can help us improve our process if we run this fund in future.

# Final notes

Please complete the [online form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xnaQA_ygOkWZxKlibkIhci_Sk5u8eX1Br_YFM2XIii5UMEFGWDlXRkZaSEZHUDBTNzBLVUxBNUU5Qi4u) here. If you have any queries, please email Engage@researchdata.scot.

If you would like to hear more about the latest Research Data Scotland updates, sign up to our [newsletter](https://www.researchdata.scot/newsletter/).