



NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

Just Growth is a new funding programme designed to encourage community based food and farming projects. Our aim is to support social enterprises that are producing food in an environmentally and socially just way – hence Just Growth.

We are looking for projects that farm in a way that nurtures and protects the environment and that help people take control of their food and enable more people to eat better food.

A key aim of the programme is to encourage community ownership and we will be looking for organisations that are owned and run by their community or that have strong co-operative principles embedded in their structure.

What sorts of projects are we looking for?

- A start up community based farming project with a strong plan
- An existing community farming project that is looking to expand
- An existing community farming project that wants to develop a new aspect to its business
- Other food/farming projects that can show that their work is strengthening the community farming sector

The programme will be looking for up to 14 projects to fund and support over an 18 month period to December 2016. The projects must be based in England, Scotland or Wales.



NOTES FOR APPLICANTS

How will we assess the projects?

Below are some of the key criteria that we will be using to assess the applications:

- **How is the project supporting enlightened agriculture?¹**
- **Is its legal structure based on co-operative principles?**
- **Does it have community support?²**
- **How robust is the project planning?**
- **Do the numbers stack up? Will the project be able to repay the loan?**
- **How resilient is the project in terms of governance/leadership/track record?**
- **How dependent is the project on grant funding?**
- **How replicable is the project?**

What support will be available?

Up to 8 projects will receive a funding package made up of loan financing from CCF and grant funding from Esmée Fairbairn. The remaining third of the funding has to be raised by the project itself from its community either through crowdfunding or community shares. The release of the loan and the grant is contingent on the projects raising the necessary community finance.

Key aspects of the funding package

- The minimum loan amount is £15k
- The minimum grant amount is £15k
- A minimum of £15k will need to be raised from the community
- The grant element of the package is capped at £20k, but the loan and community finance element can exceed £20k
- Applications for grant funding between £15k and £20k must be matched with an equivalent amount in loan financing and community financing
- For applications where the loan and community finance elements are each above £20k, these two elements of the funding package do not need to match and can be for differing amounts but the community finance needs to reach at least £20k.

¹ See <http://www.campaignforreal farming.org/about/> for more about enlightened agriculture

² A community may be a community of interest or a geographic community



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Below are some examples of possible funding packages:

Scenario A (minimum application)

Loan: £15k
Grant: £15k
Community finance: £15K

Scenario B1

Loan: £18k
Grant: £18k
Community finance: £18K

Scenario B2

Loan: £20k
Grant: £20k
Community finance: £20k

Scenario C1

Loan: £20k
Grant: £20k
Community finance: £30k

Scenario C2

Loan: £30k
Grant: £20k
Com finance: £30K

Scenario C3

Loan: £50k
Grant: £20k
Com finance: £20k

Terms of the loan

- Loans can be unsecured, but there will be a charge made over the assets of the organisation
- Interest on the loan is set at 8% (or 4% above the base rate whichever is the higher)
- Repayment schedules will be agreed with CCF on a case by case basis. Where substantial assets are available that can be secured against the loan it may be possible for a slightly lower interest rate to be agreed
- A short capital holiday at the start of the loan (ie when only interest and not capital will be paid) may be possible subject to agreement with CCF
- Where applicants do not own the land that they are farming they will need to show that any lease arrangements they have will cover the period of the loan



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Mentoring and business support

Successful projects after detailed assessment will receive up to 3 days of specialist advice to support their work.

The remaining projects will receive 1.5 days of expert support to help them develop their plans and bring them closer to being ready for investment.

Co-operative & Community Finance offer ongoing support to borrowers throughout the term of the loan as part of the funding package.

Timetable

13th July to 30th Sept 2015

Application window open

1st to 9th October 2015

Projects selected for detailed assessment

1st October to 30th November 2015

Assessments carried out

1st October 2015 to 29th February 2016

*Projects are assessed/approved for the loan and grant
Projects receive business support/advice*

October 2015 to July 2016

Community finance raised

By 30th September 2016

All loans and grant funding is drawn down

1st October to 31st December 2016

Evaluation and reporting on the programme

31st December, 2016

Programme ends.



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NB: projects will be moved onto the next level of the above timeline as soon as they have completed the previous level ie projects will not have to wait until the end of the relevant period before moving on.

If you are successful, we will expect you to:

- Raise your community finance in the time period agreed
- Have in place a robust plan for the repayment of the loan
- Have a detailed plan of how the Just Growth funding package will be used
- Submit short quarterly reports during the programme
- Submit a more detailed report at the end of the programme (October 2016)
- Attend two networking and learning events (travel and accommodation must be budgeted for out of the grant that you are applying for)
- Participate in the evaluation of the programme which will include at least 3 interviews and submission/collection of data
- Participate in the promotion of the programme. This may include occasional media interviews and input into written and video case studies
- Have once a month catch-ups with the programme manager. These will normally be carried out on the phone unless a face to face meeting is required in which case a mutually convenient location will be arranged

How to apply

If you would like to be considered for the Just Growth programme please complete the application form and return it to Clare Horrell at clare@feanetwork.org before 30th September 2015.

If you have any questions about the programme or about your application please contact Clare at clare@feanetwork.org