

Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Fund



Applicant Guidance

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition (ARIA) Fund. The fund replaces previous EU rural development fund LEADER and forms part of the Scottish Government's Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme. It involves similar bottom-up decision making to Ayrshire LEADER, delivered by representatives from the local area: the Local Action Group (LAG).

Fund Structure, 22/23

Body	Role
ARIA Fund LAG	Fund leads, decide on all aspects of fund including grant allocation.
South Ayrshire Council	Lead Partner, administering funds/managing staff on behalf of LAG.
Ayrshire (VASA)/The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT)/ Arran Council of Voluntary Service (CVS)	Support for fund through Project/Claims Officer role.

This document provides guidance to the application process and **should be read carefully before applying**. Applicants should also **engage with the ARIA Fund staff before applying** to discuss projects and fit with the fund. Applications from applicants who have not committed to this step **will not be accepted**.

Applicants will be encouraged to submit a **draft application** to the staff team **before the closing date** for review. One round of review will be permitted per application. **Reviews will not be available after the closing date**.

2. Contact Details

Email: info@ariafund.org Telephone: 01292 616 444

3. Key Dates for 22/23

- **WC 29-8-22**, launch of fund. Applications open.
- **7-10-22, midnight**, applications close.
- **Late Oct/early Nov 22** - applications assessed.
- **Nov 22** – grant award letters issued.
- **28-2-23** – final date for project/claims completion.
- **1-9-22** – date project spend permitted from*

*See point 4, section 4.

4. Grant Specifications

1. Grant size - **£5k to £50k**.
2. Grant requests of **up to 90% of total eligible project costs** will be accepted (meaning the project will require at least 10% match funding).
3. **Match funding** should:
 - Account for at least 10% of total eligible project costs.
 - Be in 'cash', not 'in-kind'.
 - Be in place at time of application.
4. Eligible expenditure is allowed from **1-9-22**, despite the grant award date of Nov 22. This however should:
 - Not exceed 25% of the grant request. This should be evidenced at time of application.*

- Be evidenced as to how your organisation have funded the project so far without the ARIA Fund grant, and how it would have delivered the project without the ARIA Fund grant.

5. Grant Payments

- **Community/third sector organisations:** grant will be paid as a maximum of 50% upfront, with two payments of approximately 25% in arrears. The final 25% will be paid when all valid cost evidence is provided.
- **Businesses:** grant will be paid in arrears, with the final 25% paid when all valid cost evidence is provided.

In both cases, payment of the final 25% is further dependent upon a successful monitoring visit and fulfilment of all reporting requirements.

5. Assessment

Applications will be considered by the ARIA Fund staff for fit with fund priorities, eligibility criteria and simplicity to allow delivery within the timescales. Applications with best fit will be presented to the LAG for assessment.

6. Eligibility

Eligible Area

The eligible area is rural and islands (Arran and Cumbrae) Ayrshire defined by the [eligible area map](#).

Please use the finder tool at the top right of the map to check that your **project falls within the eligible area**.

Fund Priorities

Projects must demonstrate fit with at least one of the **ARIA Fund priorities for 22/23**, demonstrate they advance **inclusion, equality and diversity**, and they must cross check with at least **one of the top Scottish Government priorities for 22/23**:

ARIA Fund Priorities 22/23
Community Wealth Building (CWB)
Support for organisations in the rural/islands area to participate, develop and grow. Support for rural/islands communities to develop land/assets acquired through CWB.
Reducing Inequalities
With a specific focus on green/digital skills development.
Just Transition to Net Zero
May include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency/retrofit/renewables. • Improvement of the digital offer/digital skills development. • Green skills development. • Strengthening of local/green supply chains. • Circular economy - re-use/upcycle/repair, or the circular economy in production/manufacture.
Sustainable Tourism

Support to encourage visitor numbers balanced with protection for infrastructure/nature-based assets. May include farm diversification.

Overarching Scottish Government Goal
Advancing inclusion, equality and diversity.

Top Scottish Government Priorities 22/23
Reducing poverty – especially child/fuel poverty.
Net Zero and the Climate Emergency.
Community Wealth Building.
The National Islands Plan.

Eligible Organisations

- Community groups/third sector organisations with a constitution/incorporation. Those without may be able to apply through a parent/sponsor organisation who are constituted/incorporated. Bank facilities of this parent/sponsor organisation would also be eligible.
- Businesses
- Farms
- Individuals
- Public bodies, where:
 - The project does not form part of statutory duties.
 - The applicant has wider community/third sector/public partnership representation and is only led by the public body.
- Organisations of up to 249 employees. Large organisations of 250/over are ineligible.

Eligible Activity

Revenue spend must form at least 70% of the **overall fund 22/23** (not individual projects), with capital spend constituting a maximum of 30%. This highlights a need for revenue based projects, though capital project are eligible. Costs for new or continuing projects (where need/demand is demonstrated) will be eligible.

Eligible Revenue Spend - Examples

- Technical Studies or feasibility studies to facilitate a future project, **where the destination of the study is fully determined/specified.**
- Training – **specific to the ARIA Fund/listed Scottish Government priorities**, not forming part of primary/secondary/tertiary education programmes.
- Staff costs – salaries/National Insurance/pension costs **where amounts are fixed each month.** Staff costs should be **specific** to the project described in the application.
- Running costs – where **specific** to the project described and are **over and above normal running costs.**
- Costs for events.

Eligible Capital Spend - Examples

For 22/23:

- Improvement to/expansion of existing buildings/facilities including:
 - Purchase of equipment, fixtures and fittings linked to eligible project activity.
 - Improving land, eg: landscaping works, playgrounds etc.
 - Altering, refurbishing or extending a building already owned/leased.

or

- Part of existing build project.

Capital spend will be permitted where **statutory regulatory requirements** eg: Planning/building warrant/listed buildings consent **are already in place** or are **demonstrated as not needed**.

Ineligible Activity

Expenditure committed prior to 1-9-22.

Statutory duties.

Delivery of courses which form part of primary/secondary/tertiary (eg: colleges, university) education programmes.

Staff not directly attributable to the ARIA Fund delivery.

Staffing maternity/paternity/adoption pay/statutory sick pay.

Payments for unfunded pensions.

Bonus or commission payments.

Gifts and hospitality.

Primary production of food.

VAT reclaimable by the applicant.

Financial charges– bank/credit card/loan charges/foreign exchange commission/loses etc.

Costs involved in winding up a company/organisation.

More than 20% of total project cost spend on professional fees.

7. Supporting Documents

The following applicable supporting documentation should be supplied with your application.

Document
Constitution/governing document**.
Incorporation document**.
Accounts**: Community/third sector organisations: latest year of accounts (audited/examined if thresholds reached). Businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latest year of accounts (audited/examined according to regulator thresholds). • Management accounts to bridge gap between date of above/present. • Business plan in certain circumstances.
3 months' bank statement** , as close to the date of application as possible.
Evidence that match funding is in place**.
VAT no. where applicable, evidence not needed where not**.
3 quotes for eligible costs >£500
Evidence that eligible costs between 1st Sept and mid-Nov 22 are within 25% of the grant requested.

Capital projects: Valid lease/title deeds in place at least 5 years post project completion.
Evidence Statutory Regulatory Requirements eg: planning/building warrant/event licence in place/not needed.
Supporting documentation for:
a. Need/demand of project – maximum 2 documents.
b. Local support

**From parent/sponsor organisation where a smaller organisation applies through this route.