

New Expression of Interest form

Q: How is the new Expression of Interest form different from the old one?

A: We have sought to make improvements to the Expression of Interest (EOI) form in order to improve applicant experience and to cut the time taken for the applicant to get a result. The new EOI has been simplified to give applicants a result within minutes, meaning that they will be able to see whether their project could be suitable for COF much quicker than before.

Applicants that are not suitable for the fund will be informed immediately after submitting their EOI. All other applicants will receive an email within minutes confirming that they may be suitable for COF. In some circumstances, where an applicant's answers indicate that they are likely to be suitable but are at risk of not meeting all the requirements at full application, the email will contain further guidance. This will include advice on any issues that they must address before completing a full application.

Just as before, the EOI form and the answers within it will be used by our Development Support Provider to direct applicants to relevant information and guidance, and to determine whether they should be prioritised for in-depth support with their COF application.

Q: The form is now automated – I have been found ineligible, but my project is complicated and nuanced, is this new system quality assured?

A: Every two weeks we pass the EOI data over to our Development Support Provider so that they can identify those applicants who might be prioritised for in-depth support. When we undertake this data transfer, we conduct a quality assurance exercise to ensure that no unsuccessful results have been provided to applicants due to a failure in the automated programme.

The EOI form has always sought to be a light touch assessment of the basic eligibility criteria of the fund and takes a broad look at the key factors which could mean that a project is ineligible to apply to the fund. It is important to note that some applicants may be told that they are suitable to apply to the fund at the EOI stage but may then be found ineligible at full assessment since more nuanced detail on their project is available and may show that they are in fact ineligible.

If your EOI result says that you are not suitable to apply to the fund, but you believe that this is incorrect, please refer back to the eligibility criteria which can be found in the prospectus before submitting a new EOI application.

Q: Will there be a cut off for EOI applications in a full application window like there has been previously? Can I submit an EOI, get an outcome and then submit a full application all in the same bidding window?

A: Yes, it would be possible for an applicant to submit an expression of interest, receive their outcome and submit a full application all in the same bidding window, however we would strongly advise applicants against doing this. The strongest applications to the fund are those who have taken the time necessary to study the guidance we have provided on gov.uk, as well as the guidance provided by our development support provider on the [MyCommunity website](#), before submitting a detailed and considered application to the fund. Applicants must meet our published minimum scoring criteria in order to be considered for funding.

Q: Why am I being asked to submit another EOI when I already received a successful outcome?

A: Round 4 is the final round of the fund and we have launched this new EOI form alongside it. To enable the move to the new system, EOIs submitted prior to February 2024 will no longer be valid. We ask that all prospective applicants, including those that have submitted a successful EOI form previously, submit a new EOI on the updated system if they have an interest in applying in the final round of the fund. Only applicants who submitted an EOI in the new system will be informed when a bidding window is about to open and will receive the link needed to apply to COF. The new EOI form contains some restructured questions to better prepare applicants for full application, typically takes only 20-30 minutes to complete, and you will receive your result within minutes. We therefore do not believe that this ask will place any undue burden on applicants.

Q: I'm being supported by the Development Support Provider; do I need to submit a new EOI?

A: Yes – any prospective applicant that wishes to submit an application in Round 4 will need to submit a new EOI. If you are being supported by the Development Support Provider, it is essential that you inform them of your new unique EOI reference number so that they are able to track your full application to the fund.

Q: Will I need to submit a new EOI for every bidding window?

A: No, you do not need to submit another EOI, if you are found successful in the new EOI form (EOIs issued after February 2024) you will receive a link to the full application form for all future windows.

Q: Will we be informed when the bidding window opens to full applications?

A: Applicants who have submitted an EOI form and have received a successful outcome will be informed 2 weeks before any bidding window opens and on the day of its opening.

Q: Can I reapply as many times as I like?

A: There are no limits on how many times you can submit an EOI, however if your project is ineligible, you should not submit a new EOI unless the circumstances have changed, and you now think your project will be eligible for the Fund.

Q: Why have I now been told that I do not meet the requirements for COF, even though I passed my previous EOI?

A: The new EOI form has clarified some of the fund's eligibility criteria. If you previously received a positive outcome to the EOI but have now been told that you do not meet the requirements for COF, you should first check that the information you submitted has not changed, as this may have been responsible for the change in result. If the information you have submitted has not changed and you still believe that your project should be eligible to apply for the fund, please re-read the eligibility criteria in the prospectus before resubmitting an EOI application.

Q: What if I have a successful result at EOI but am found ineligible at full application?

A: The EOI form has always sought to be a light touch assessment of the basic eligibility criteria of the fund and takes a broad look at the key factors which could mean that a project is ineligible to apply to the fund. It is important to note that some applicants may be told that

they are suitable to apply to the fund at the EOI stage but may then be found ineligible at full assessment since more nuanced detail on their project is available and may show that they are in fact ineligible.

Q: I haven't received an outcome from the EOI I submitted

A: Applicants that are not suitable for COF will be informed immediately after submitting their EOI. All other applicants will receive an email confirming the outcome of their EOI. If you cannot find this email, please check the junk folder of the email address you used when registering for the EOI form, as it may appear there.

Q: If I submitted a successful EOI but the asset I want to save/my project has changed significantly, do I need to submit a new application?

A: Yes – just as with the previous EOI system, applicants must resubmit an EOI form if the asset they are saving has changed or their project is markedly different than when they originally submitted. Your new project may be ineligible for COF funding and so it is essential that you resubmit an EOI form in case you are later found to be ineligible at full application.