



## Connect Fund – Building Infrastructure Fund – Funding Guidance

The Connect Fund will provide further support to voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, representing sectors or places, through continuity of our funding initiative, the Building Infrastructure Fund (BIF). The objective of the BIF is to develop and embed enterprise development solutions and explore new methods to engage VCSEs with social investment.

The Fund seeks to build a more enterprising, collaborative and diverse social investment market that prioritises impact and works for smaller to medium-sized charities and social enterprises.

The BIF is initially open to existing Connect Fund grantees that have completed, or are near completion of, their original funded project.

After September 2019, the Fund will be open to new applicants.

### What funding is available?

From January 2019:

- 1) Existing Connect Fund grantees may apply for grants of up to £30,000** to build on the learning from their Connect Fund project to develop sustainable methods to engage VCSEs with social investment in England and address gaps in the market.

From September 2019:

- 2) New applicants from Infrastructure Organisations in England can apply for grants up to £60,000** to explore new initiatives to engage VCSEs with social investment in England and address gaps in the market.

The BIF currently has a limited pot of funding and will initially run for one year from January 2019. After this time, we will evaluate the effectiveness of the BIF grants and work with our partner Access – the Foundation for Social Investment to determine next steps.

### Who Can Apply?

The Building Infrastructure Fund is designed to support voluntary sector infrastructure organisations in England. These are local CVS organisations, networks, or other membership or representative bodies supporting places or sectors to engage with social investment.

We also encourage collaboration and will look for applications from organisations that can demonstrate that they are actively working in partnership. We would like to advance projects that can achieve sustainability and align with the strategic priorities of the Access Foundation.

Please note, the Fund does **not fund** frontline charities or social enterprises involved in direct service delivery. You should consult [Good Finance](#) if you have questions about social investment.

## Eligibility Criteria

- Your organisation is a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation; membership body; umbrella organisation; sector, place-based, or equalities network; or a community foundation.
- Your organisation is incorporated and registered as a charity or social enterprise.
- You want to build on existing learning to develop new initiatives to engage VCSEs with social investment or address gaps in the market, ideally in partnership with other social investment organisations.

## What are we looking for?

The BIF will support high impact initiatives seek to achieve the one or more of the following:

- **Develop a sustainable model** for service provision
- **Increase engagement with social investment** through Access Reach Fund access points and/or place-based investment
- **Embed knowledge and skills** for VCSEs taking on social investment
- **Address barriers** to social investment
- **Increase diversity** in the social investment sector
- **Work collaboratively** with social investment intermediaries and market networks

## Overview of the Process

### 1) Existing Grantees – Up to £30,000

1. Expression of Interest (EOI)	a. Submit a short online form outlining how you propose to develop your Connect Fund project using additional funding. c. We can provide initial advice if required by phone or email.
2. Initial Phone Assessment	a. We will discuss your EOI submission by phone and follow up with further questions. b. We will review the outputs and outcomes from your initial grant to determine next steps.
3. Full Online Application	a. If you progress, we will ask you to complete a full online application. b. You will also submit supporting financial and legal documents.
4. Full Assessment	a. We will carry out due diligence. b. We may meet with you onsite to review your proposal.
5. Decision	a. We will present our full assessment for decision. b. We will get back to you with a decision and/or feedback. c. If successful, we will send you a grant offer letter and payment schedule for your agreement.
6. Reporting	a. You will complete online reporting, every 6 months, depending on project length.

## 2) New applicants (from September 2019) – Up to £60,000

1. Expression of Interest (EOI)	a. Check that you meet the eligibility requirements b. Submit a short online form outlining your idea c. We can provide initial advice if required by phone or email
2. Initial Assessment	a. We will review EOIs and respond to applicants. b. We may discuss your EOI submission by phone and follow up with further questions.
3. Full Online Application	a. If you progress, we will ask you to complete a full online application form. b. You will submit further financial and legal documents.
4. Face-to-Face Assessment	a. We will meet with you onsite to review your grant application. b. We will carry out due diligence.
5. Decision	a. We will present our full assessment for decision. If you are invited to make a full application, the assessment and decision process may take up to four months. b. We will get back to you with a decision and/or feedback. c. If successful, we will send you a grant offer letter and payment schedule for your agreement.
6. Reporting	a. You will complete online reporting every 6 months, depending on project length.

### Further Questions

If you have further questions, please contact Alex Padilha to schedule a time to speak with us:

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