

Low Carbon Workspaces: Grant Terms and Conditions

Low Carbon Workspaces offers capital grant funding to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises to implement projects that will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

It is designed to assist SMEs in the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley, Hertfordshire, South East Midlands, and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership areas.

The programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and delivered by Ngage Solutions Ltd, part of the Buckinghamshire Business First Group.

Who can receive a grant?

- Grants are available to organisations that:
 - Meet the European Commission definition of Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME)
 - Charities and social enterprises are eligible if more than 50% of their annual income is from traded activities (rather than donations or other funding).
 - Are not from a sector ineligible to receive ERDF funding – see below for ineligible sectors.
 - Will be installing a project that will be based at commercial premises in an eligible location
 - Have not received over €200,000 of de minimis aid in the last three years.
 - An organisation is eligible for a grant if it can be identified as being in financial health prior to 31st December 2019.

Definition of a Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME)

- The European Commission definition of an SME, and guidance to check if you meet it, can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en
- An SME is defined as an organisation that:
 - Employs less than 250 people, on a full-time equivalent basis.
 - Has an annual turnover not exceeding €50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million.
- Parent and subsidiary organisations need to be considered. In general, if an organisation is:
 - Between 25% and 50% owned by another organisation, the respective percentage of the parent organisation's turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees must be included.
 - Over 50% owned by another organisation, the total turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees of the parent organisation must be included.
- Franchises are not eligible to receive a grant.
- Organisations established to deliver public services, whether funded by the public sector or not, are not eligible to receive a grant.

Sectors ineligible to receive ERDF funding

- ERDF rules prohibit some sectors from receiving grant funding, including:
 - Banking and insurance (including insurance broking).
 - Coal, steel, shipbuilding, or synthetic fibre production.
 - Agriculture and aquaculture.
 - Generalised (school-age) education (including independent schools).

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- The public sector (defined as any organisation that either directly or indirectly receives over 50% of their main funding from EU, central or local government).

Location eligibility

- Applications are accepted for projects to be installed at commercial premises:
 - In the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley, Hertfordshire, South East Midlands, and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas.
 - In a London borough or a LEP area (excluding London LEP) that neighbours one of the above four LEP areas, where there is not an existing ERDF funded resource efficiency grant scheme.
 - In other areas where there is not an existing ERDF funded resource efficiency grant scheme, if the applicant is either legally constituted and/or has its head office in one of the above four LEP areas.
- For projects that involve changes to the fabric, fixtures, or fittings of a building, you must either own the property or hold a lease of at least 12 months.
- If requested, you must provide evidence of building ownership or a signed letter of approval for the project you propose to install from the property owner.

De minimis aid

- Low Carbon Workspaces grants are provided as de minimis aid, under the [Commission Regulation \(EU\) no. 1407/2013](#).
- In line with European Commission rules, an organisation cannot receive a grant, if on receipt, it will have received more than €200,000 de minimis aid over a three-year period.
- Following the payment of the grant you will be sent a letter stating the amount of de minimis aid your organisation has received. This letter must be retained for three years and produced on request by UK public authorities, agencies acting on their behalf or the European Commission.
- Any de minimis aid granted over the €200,000 limit may be subject to repayment with interest.

De minimis aid

European Union rules are designed to ensure that when public resource (i.e. state aid) is used to provide financial support or other assistance to an organisation, it will not distort fair competition and disadvantage other organisations.

Under the rules, SMEs are able to receive up to €200,000 of publicly funded support over any three-year period, known as de minimis aid, as it has been deemed that this amount will not affect competition.

Potentially any assistance from or funded by a public body might have been granted as de minimis aid. It could take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Any government COVID-19 support.
- Grant funding (including some National Lottery funding).
- A loan at a favourable rate or a loan guarantee.
- The purchase of land or property at less than market rate.
- Training or consultancy advice provided either free or at a reduced rate.
- Differential tax benefits.

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- Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due, e.g. deferral of rent.

If you are in doubt whether you have received de minimis aid, contact the organisation that provided it. If you are still uncertain, assume that it was de minimis aid.

The text of Commission Regulation (EU) no. 1407/2013 can be accessed at:

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf

How much is the grant?

Grant amount

- Capital grant funding of between £1,000 and £5,000 is available per organisation to cover up to one third of eligible project costs.
- The minimum total cost of a project is £3,000 excl. VAT, where an applicant is VAT registered. Businesses not registered for VAT may include this within their total eligible costs.
- Should a grant of less than £4,000 be awarded in the first application, the applicant is eligible to apply for a second grant under the scheme, to a combined maximum grant offering of £5,000. For example, an applicant awarded £3,000 towards a lighting project would still be eligible for a further £2,000 of funding.

If a Low Carbon Workspaces grant is awarded, the organisation will need to have sufficient money to pay for the project once the work has been completed, the grant money cannot be claimed until the project has been paid for in full.

VAT

- If an SME is registered for VAT, the project cost must exclude any VAT charged by the supplier(s).
- If an SME is not VAT registered, then the project cost should include any VAT charged by the supplier(s).
- If your VAT status changes following a grant award, so that you will be able to reclaim VAT incurred on project expenditure, you must inform us immediately. This may affect the availability or value of the grant you have been awarded.

Projects already installed or paid for

- Projects that have already been installed or paid for, in part or in whole, before the grant has been awarded, are not eligible for funding. This includes the payment of any deposit. No retrospective application or claims can be made.

Other funding and sources of finance

- Other sources of EU funding cannot be used towards any part of the cost of a project towards which a Low Carbon Workspaces grant is being provided (e.g. a different ERDF grant scheme).
- You must pay for the project outright. A grant cannot be provided to pay for just a deposit or if an asset has been financed on a hire purchase agreement for example.
- An item cannot be purchased and financed through a hire purchase agreement. Please see "Paying Suppliers" section at the end of this document.

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What type of projects are eligible for a grant?

- Grants are available towards capital projects that will result in a quantifiable reduction of your organisation's greenhouse gas emissions. This may include:
 - Energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies.
 - Battery storage systems connected to an onsite renewable energy system.
 - Building and fleet management systems.
 - Water efficiency and waste reduction measures.
- Examples of projects that are not eligible for funding include:
 - Replacement laptop or desktop computers, tablets or mobile phones.
 - Consultancy or behavioural change projects.
 - Projects that will increase on-site fossil fuel consumption, even if there is a net greenhouse gas emissions reduction (e.g. replacing electric heating with gas heating).
 - All mobile items purchased with the support of this grant with a cost over £999.99 are declared to be fully and exclusively for the designated use of the specified project.

Renewable heat technologies

You will not be able to receive the Renewable Heat Incentive for renewable heat generated by a technology towards which you have received a Low Carbon Workspaces or other publicly funded grant.

How do I apply for a grant?

- To apply for a grant, you must submit:
 - A completed Grant Application Form (LCW10). There is no need to sign the application form (once checked it will be returned for electronic signature, along with this document - (LCW08)).
 - Evidence of procurement for your project (e.g. quotations or tender responses).
 - 12 months' utility or fuel bills relevant to your project (e.g. gas bills for a boiler upgrade).
- Other documents may also be requested by the Grant Panel.
- A member of the Low Carbon Workspaces team will contact you to complete a Green Diagnostic; to understand wider energy and resource usage by your organisation and to calculate potential resource and greenhouse gas emissions savings from your project.
- Greenhouse gas emissions are calculated in tonnes of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) using conversion factors published by the government and available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting
- Within five working days of receipt of your application you will be contacted to confirm if your application has been passed to the Grant Panel, or if further information is required.
- Once passed to the Grant Panel, you will receive a decision within five working days.
- A grant cannot be applied for retrospectively. An application must be approved by the Grant Panel before any part of the project has been installed or paid for, otherwise the grant will not be paid.

Evidence of procurement

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- All projects must be procured in line with the National Rules outlined in the ESIF National Procurement Requirements, available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-procurement-documents (page 36 onwards).
- For expenditure with any one supplier under £25,000 at least one quotation must be provided.
- For small items of expenditure, a screenshot or print-out from a supplier's website may be accepted as a quotation - the printout must include website address/logo and be clearly identifiable.
- All quotations must include contact details such as the supplier name, address, contact number, email address, website, and if VAT registered, their VAT number.
- For expenditure on supplies costing more than £25,000 at least three written quotations must be provided, sought against the same, clear specification, and a justification that a reasonable decision has been made based on the quotations received.
- For expenditure on works or services over £25,000 an open tender process must be undertaken, with the opportunity advertised for at least 10 days on your own website and/or a recognised tender portal. The advert must incorporate or direct any interested party to:
 - Details of the opportunity.
 - Details on how to apply.
 - Selection and award criteria.
 - The deadline for tender responses.

You must include with you grant application:

- A copy of the advertisement and tender documents.
- Copies of all tender responses received.
- A scoresheet showing how the winning bidder was selected.
- Notifications to unsuccessful tenderers advising them of the successful bidder.
- Further information may be requested if quotations or tender responses do not include sufficient details of the products and/or services to be provided or do not appear competitive with current market rates.
- A chosen supplier must not have any connection to the grant applicant in terms of shared ownership/directorship, joint shareholders, personal relationships, or employment. If so, this is deemed to be a conflict of interest and makes the project ineligible.
- If applicable, quotations or tender responses must itemise VAT.

How are grants awarded?

- Grant applications are assessed by a Grant Panel whose decision is final.
- If awarded a grant you will receive a Grant Offer Letter outlining:
 - The grant amount offered.
 - The date by which the project must be completed and paid for and the grant claimed.
 - Project monitoring requirements.
 - Any additional terms and conditions.
- You will need to sign the declaration on the Grant Offer Letter to accept the grant offer, monitoring requirements and any other conditions.

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- A visit to your premises may be required before a grant is approved.

Project changes

- You must gain approval from Low Carbon Workspaces if there are to be any changes to the project as approved by the Grant Panel before committing to making any payments, as it may affect the availability or value of the grant you have been awarded. This may include a change of supplier, equipment or materials, the project value or expected project outcomes.

Project monitoring requirements

- Project monitoring requirements may include:
 - Recording regular energy or water meter readings.
 - Providing copies of utility bills or fuel receipts.
 - Providing a letter of authority to allow Low Carbon Workspaces to access utility consumption data directly from your supplier.
 - Installing monitoring equipment (provided by Low Carbon Workspaces).

How do I claim the grant?

- To claim the grant, you must provide:
 - A completed and signed Claim Form and Asset Register.
 - The invoice from the supplier for each measure purchased/installed.
 - Receipted Invoices showing that payment has been received from the supplier. Alternatively, an email from your suppliers confirming that they have received payment for their invoices to be sent directly to info@lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk.
 - A business bank statement or credit card statement showing payment of the invoice.
- Other documents may also be requested by the Grant Panel.
- The grant can be claimed in instalments as long as the first claim is for at least £1,000 (towards at least £3,000 expenditure) and the measures that the claim relates to have been installed and paid for in full.
- The grant must be claimed by the deadline stated on the Grant Offer Letter unless special permission is granted by Low Carbon Workspaces.
- The grant will only be paid towards measures approved by Low Carbon Workspaces at the award of the grant or following a grant change request. Grant funding will not be paid towards any additional measures.
- The grant will not be paid towards measures that have been installed or paid for, in full or in part, before the date that the grant was awarded.
- A visit to your premises by a member of the Low Carbon Workspaces team may be required before a grant is paid, to verify the project has been implemented as per the application.
- You must retain assets purchased with a grant for at least five years. If an asset is disposed of within five years of receiving the grant, you may be obliged to repay the grant.
- If requested, you must supply an asset register showing items purchased with the grant.

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- Any publicity of the grant will refer to the ERDF and where possible use the ERDF logo. Grant recipients may also be required to display an ERDF blue plaque in the building where the project supported by the grant has been implemented (provided by Low Carbon Workspaces).

Paying suppliers

- Payment of supplier invoices must be made from a business bank account or credit card.
- If a purchase is made using a credit card, a business bank statement must also be provided to show that the credit has been fully cleared.
- Payment of supplier invoices cannot be made by cash or contra arrangements.

Grant payment terms

- Grant payments will be made within 30 days of receipt of a completed Claim Form and all necessary supporting documentation.

How is my information used and stored?

- Ngage Solutions Ltd is part of the Buckinghamshire Business First Group. We are committed to protecting and respecting your data and your privacy and complying with all relevant legislation. Please take a moment to read our Privacy Policy which describes how we use and look after your data. It is available at: <https://bbf.uk.com/privacy-policy>.
- If you apply for a Low Carbon Workspaces grant, we will store your information and may share it with the project partners and funders.
- By providing us with your email address you agree to receive emails from Ngage Solutions Ltd and the BBF Group of Companies. You may unsubscribe at any time.

Document retention

- Applicants must keep all correspondence (including application, quotes, invoices, bank statements and claim) relating to the grant until at least 2033, as ERDF reserve the right to audit all grant recipients until the end of that year.

Declaration

I agree and accept these terms and conditions and understand that in the event that a grant is paid, but information comes to light indicating a violation of these Terms and Conditions, Ngage Solutions Ltd reserves the right to retrieve the grant payment in full, in line with ERDF claw back procedures.

Signed:

Print name:

Organisation name:

Date:

Please complete the declaration using our digital signature platform, HelloSign. A link will be sent once your application has been reviewed.

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