

# LCW 10: Grant Guidance and Terms and Conditions

Low Carbon Workspaces offers small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) grants to cover up to a third of the cost of projects to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It has been designed to assist SMEs in the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley, Hertfordshire and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. Applications from SMEs outside these areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The programme is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and delivered by Ngage Solutions Ltd, a not-for-profit company.

Ngage Solutions Ltd's registered company number is 4025356 and registered office at West Wing, High Wycombe Campus, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2GZ.

For any questions about the Low Carbon Workspaces programme, these terms and conditions or the grant application process please contact the Low Carbon Workspaces team:

**Telephone:** 01494 927131

**Email:** [info@lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk](mailto:info@lowcarbonworkspaces.co.uk)

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## Who can receive a grant?

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Grants are available to organisations that:

- Qualify under the EU definition as a Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME).
- Generate over 51% of their annual income from trading activities (as opposed to grants or donations for example)
- Are not from a sector ineligible to receive ERDF funding
- Have not received over €200,000 of de minimis state aid in the last three years

### **Small and Medium Sized Enterprises**

An SME is defined as an organisation that, all subsidiaries included:

- Employs less than 250 people, on a full time equivalent basis
- Has a turnover not exceeding €50 million per year or a balance sheet total not exceeding €43 million per year
- Is not more than 25% owned by another organisation that falls outside of the definition of an SME
- Is not more than 50% owned by any individual who owns more than 50% of another organisation in the same or adjacent market that falls outside of the definition of an SME

To help you decide whether or not you meet the criteria visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard>

### **Sectors ineligible to receive ERDF funding**

Organisations from the following sectors cannot receive a grant:

- Public sector (defined as any organisation that either directly or indirectly receives over 50% of their main funding from EU, central or local government)
- School-age educational establishments
- Primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products (including fishery and aquaculture)
- Coal, steel, shipbuilding or synthetic fibre production
- Banking and insurance (including insurance brokers)

## Location Eligibility

- The Low Carbon Workspaces programme has been designed to assist eligible SMEs in the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley, Hertfordshire and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. SMEs outside these areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis based on location criteria.
- You must provide answers to all questions in the 'Location Eligibility' section of the application form. If the answers provided result in a total score of 15 or more your grant application will be considered. If the total score is under 15 your grant application will be rejected.
- If it is deemed by the Grant Panel that incorrect answers have been given in the 'Location Eligibility' section your grant application may be rejected or you will be asked to submit a new grant application.

## De minimis state aid

- The Low Carbon Workspaces grant constitutes State Aid as defined under Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty of Rome and is being granted as 'de minimis' aid under Commission Regulation EC 1998/2006 (the "de minimis" aid regulation).
- European Commission rules prohibit any organisation from receiving more than €200,000 de minimis state aid over any rolling 3 year period.
- You must declare in your application details of any de minimis state aid that you:
  - Have received in the past 3 rolling years
  - Are expecting to receive
  - Have applied for and are awaiting a decision upon
- Following the payment of the grant you will be sent a letter stating the amount of de minimis state aid you have received. You must retain this letter for 3 years and produce it on request by UK public authorities, agencies acting on their behalf or the European Commission.
- Any de minimis state aid granted over the €200,000 limit may be subject to repayment with interest.

## State 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 a rolling three 3 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 state aid. It could take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Grant funding
- A loan at a favourable rate or a loan guarantee
- 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
- Waiving or deferral of fees or interest normally due, e.g. deferral of rent
- Monopoly licences or guarantees of market share
- Advertising via a public channel such as a tourist board or state owned television

**If you are in doubt whether you have received de minimis state aid, contact the organisation that provided it. If you are still uncertain, assume that it was de minimis state aid. Please note that National Lottery funding can constitute de minimis state aid.**

**For further information and details, click on the links below:**

- [http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state\\_aid/overview](http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview)
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/state-aid>

## How much is the grant?

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### Grant amount

- Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 are available to eligible SMEs to cover up to one third of eligible project costs. The maximum grant available for eligible Buckinghamshire SMEs is £2,500.
- The minimum project cost must be £3,000 (to receive a £1,000 grant).
- The total project cost is not limited to £15,000.

### VAT

- The total project cost towards which you are applying for a grant can include any VAT that you will be unable to reclaim from HMRC.
- 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.

### Other funding

- Other sources of EU funding cannot be used towards the total cost of the project where 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 the deposit or repayments of a hire purchase agreement for example.
- Organisations are only eligible to receive one Low Carbon Workspaces grant.

## What type of projects are eligible for a grant?

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Grants are available towards projects involving physical improvements that will quantifiably contribute to the reduction of your organisation's greenhouse gas emissions. This may include:

- Energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies
- Battery storage systems [where the power being stored in the batteries comes exclusively from onsite renewable electricity generation source(s)]
- Electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles of all weights and electric hybrid vehicles over 7.5 tonnes
- Building and fleet management systems
- Water efficiency measures and waste reduction measures

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Greenhouse gas emissions should be calculated in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent) using conversion factors published by the government and available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting>

Greenhouse gas emissions savings resulting from the activities of sub-contractors or partners will not be considered.

### **Renewable energy technologies**

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

### **Property ownership / leasehold**

- 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.

### **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.

## How do I apply for a grant?

To apply for a grant you must submit:

- A completed and signed Grant Application Form (LCW10)
- A signed copy of these Terms and Conditions (LCW08)
- Evidence of resource use relevant to your proposed project (e.g. energy, water, waste and/or transport fuel invoices or receipts)

- Evidence of procurement for your proposed project (e.g. quotations or tender responses)
- Within 5 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.

***A suitably detailed green diagnostic has to be completed as part of your application. This can be facilitated by the Low Carbon Workspaces team - please contact us to find out more.***

## **Evidence of procurement**

- All quotations / tender responses must provide:
  - Details of the products / services to be provided, including quantity, make and model
  - A clear breakdown of capital and labour costs
  - Whether VAT is included in the price quoted
- Ideally, quotations / tender responses should also provide projected energy and greenhouse gas emissions savings.

## **Procurement for projects under £25,000**

- For projects which cost under £25,000 you must provide a quotation from each supplier or contractor you wish to engage.
- For small expenditure items, a screen-shot or print-out from a supplier's website may be accepted as a quotation.
- The Grant Panel may request further information if quotations chosen are incomplete or do not appear competitive with current market rates.

### **Procurement best practice**

We recommend that you:

- Obtain at least three quotations
- Check that suppliers have experience completing similar projects
- Ask suppliers to provide evidence of their qualifications and membership to professional bodies.

Adopting a robust approach to procuring goods and services can help you avoid issues such as: paying uncompetitive prices; not achieving anticipated savings or performance improvements; unnecessary disruptions to operation; failures to comply with legislation and/or regulations and negative environmental, social, and/or economic impacts.

## Procurement for projects over £25,000

For services and/or work costing more than £25,000:

- The opportunity must be advertised for at least 10 days on an open tender basis.
- The level of advertising must be sufficient to allow for competition, potentially from other EU member states, and include publication on your own website and/or a recognised portal such as [www.mytenders.org](http://www.mytenders.org).
- 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

Supplies costing more than £25,000 requires the provision of:

- Three written quotes or prices from relevant suppliers against a clear specification
- Justifications that a reasonable decision has been made on the basis of the quotes/prices.

***We highly recommend that you contact us to confirm what is classed as supplies, works or services and discuss what the procurement requirements are for any projects over £25,000.***

## How are grants awarded?

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- Grant applications will be 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
  - Project monitoring requirements
  - Any additional terms and conditions
- Grant recipients may be required to display an ERDF blue plaque in the building where the installation has taken place, which will be supplied by the project.

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## Project monitoring requirements

- Project monitoring requirements may require grant applicants to:
  - Record regular energy or water meter readings
  - Provide copies of utility (e.g. electricity, gas, water, waste) invoices/bills
  - Provide copies of vehicle fuel receipts and mileage
  - Provide a letter of authority to allow representatives of Low Carbon Workspaces/Ngage Solutions Ltd to access utility consumption data directly from your supplier
  - Install monitoring / metering equipment (provided by Ngage Solutions Ltd)
  - Record any events or changes to normal operations that affect resource use

## 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.

## How do I claim the grant?

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To claim the grant, you must provide:

- A completed and signed Claim Form and Asset Register (LCW12)
- The invoice from the supplier for the measure installed
- A redacted business bank statement or credit card statement showing payment of the invoice
- You will have 90 days from the date of your Grant Offer Letter to claim the grant, unless given special permission by Ngage Solutions Ltd.
- You can claim your grant in instalments as long as:
  - The first claim is for a minimum £1,000 (towards at least £3,000 expenditure)
  - The measures that the claim relates to have been installed and paid for in full
- The grant will only be paid towards measures approved by Ngage Solutions Ltd at the award of the grant or following a grant change request. Grant funding will not be paid towards any additional measures.

- If requested, grant recipients will facilitate Ngage Solutions Ltd access to their premises and documentation to undertake checks to verify / validate claims made by the grant recipients.
- You must retain assets purchased with a grant for at least 3 years. If an asset is disposed of within 3 years of receiving the grant, you will be obliged to repay the grant.

### **Payment methods**

- Payment of supplier invoices must be made from a business bank account or by a business credit card.
- If a purchase is made using a credit card, a redacted 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, cheque or contra arrangements.

### **Payment terms**

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

## How is my information used and stored?

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Ngage Solutions 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 ([bbf.uk.com/privacy-policy](http://bbf.uk.com/privacy-policy)) which describes how we use and look after your data. If you apply for a Low Carbon Workspaces grant we will store your information and share it with the project funders.

By providing us with your email address you agree to receive emails from Ngage Solutions and the BBF Group of Companies. You may unsubscribe at any time.

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**As part of your grant application, please either:**

- Sign a hardcopy of these terms and conditions with a wet ink signature and return it to Low Carbon Workspaces, Ngage Solutions, West Wing, High Wycombe Campus, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2GZ

**OR,**

- Use the electronic/digital signature service provided by Low Carbon Workspaces to sign these terms and conditions (please contact a member of the team to find out more)

### 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:

Date:

Print Name:

Organisation name:

### Audit

We advise applicants to keep all correspondence relating to the grant until at least 2030, as ERDF reserve the right to audit all grants until the end of that year.