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Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund: Large Projects Fund

Application guidance

Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund Guidance: Large Project Fund

This guidance is for the Large Project Fund, for applications with a value of over £1,000.

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Introduction

What is the Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund?

The [SSEN Argyll and Kintyre 275kV strategy](#) is an electricity transmission infrastructure reinforcement project in Argyll and Bute. The local fund has been established by SSEN Transmission as the community benefit funding associated with this infrastructure. The Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund follows the UK Government Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's guidance on [Community Funds for Transmission Infrastructure](#).

The aim of the funding is to bring positive benefits and a long-lasting legacy to communities along the project route for the Argyll and Kintyre 275kV transmission infrastructure.

The total value of the Argyll and Kintyre Local Fund is £3,268,000 over five years. Based on feedback from our community consultation, there will be two strands to the fund – a Large Project Fund which has a total value of £2,968,000 and a microgrants fund delivered by our local partners, with a total value of £300,000. This guidance is for the Large Projects Fund. Further details on the microgrant scheme will be available on our website when it launches.

The fund is made up of community benefit funding from the following transmission infrastructure:

- Dalmally to Creag Dhubh overhead line
- Creag Dhubh to Inveraray overhead line
- Inveraray to Crossaig overhead line
- An Suidhe substation
- Crarae substation
- Craig Murrail substation

Further information about the projects can be found on the [SSEN Transmission website](#).

How were the structure and priorities of the fund decided?

The structure and priorities of the fund, as set out in this guidance, have been agreed with communities close to the infrastructure, following a consultation during September and October 2025.

The consultation consisted of seven in-person events, two online events and a survey that was available in various formats. 116 people participated in the consultation through the online and in-person events. In addition, 26 people completed the survey and seven people responded with specific email feedback. In December 2026, SSEN published its [Community Consultation Report](#) and its [Local Fund Proposal](#) for the Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund.

About the fund

Who can apply?

The Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund can support projects delivering significant positive impacts in the area of benefit, made up of the community council areas of:

- Glenorchy & Innishail, Inverary, Furnace, West Loch Fyne, Lochgilphead, Ardrishaig, Dunadd, Tarbert & Skipness, East Kintyre and West Kintyre.

You don't have to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution and not be set up for individual profit.

The reason that we ask applicants to have a constitution is that it sets out the purpose, rules and regulations of your organisation. If you need support to write a constitution or set up your group, there is support available through the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) and through your local Third Sector Interface.

A list of ineligible projects is provided in the FAQ section of this guidance.

What is the fund value and timescale?

£653,600 is available per year through the Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund. £593,600 is available through this Large Project Fund and the remaining £60,000 per year will be distributed locally through microgrants.

For the Large Project Fund, funding is available from £1,000 up to a maximum grant value of £220,000 and we expect to see a range of grant amounts being awarded. As a flexible funder, SSEN is open to raising the upper limit of £220,000 for exceptional projects, at the discretion of the funding panel. Applicants who wish to apply for more than £220,000 are encouraged to contact the Community Investment Manager at an early stage to discuss.

The timescale for 2026 is shown below. In future years, the fund will open at approximately the same time every year for five years. If demand is high in 2026, we may decide to open the fund more than once per year.

- **Applications open:** Tuesday 12 May 2026
- **Application deadline:** Noon on Tuesday 4 August 2026
- **Awards made:** By end of October 2026

Multi-year funding is available, with a maximum term of **three years**. There is no minimum term.

What are the aims of the fund?

Based on the feedback from the community consultation, this fund will support projects that fall within the following themes:

1. **Addressing the root causes of depopulation** (for instance, by enhancing infrastructure such as affordable housing, transport, broadband; providing education, skills and training opportunities; establishing or supporting community services and facilities).
2. **Improving connectivity** (for instance, by providing activities for groups experiencing social isolation including younger people, older people and marginalised groups; improving access to transport including community transport).
3. **Tackling the climate and biodiversity crises** (for instance, through sustainability initiatives; nature restoration projects; improving access to nature and active travel).

How we make decisions

Who is responsible for decision-making?

Decisions on applications are made by the Argyll Local Fund independent panel, based on the fund criteria. The panel will be made up of people resident in Argyll, representing both the communities covered by this fund and the wider Argyll area.

This panel is in the process of being selected through a competitive recruitment process, to ensure that members have the relevant expertise and knowledge of the area. The membership of the panel will be published once the recruitment process is complete.

How will applications to the fund be assessed?

Applications will be assessed based on the following:

Fit with themes

How well the project fits with one or more of the three fund themes outlined above.

Legacy

Evidence that the project will improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community and deliver benefits that endure over the long term.

How close the project is to the transmission infrastructure

The assessment process for applications will look at how close the project is to the physical transmission infrastructure (the overhead lines and substations named on page one of this guidance) and whether the project delivers significant positive impacts for the area of benefit outlined above. A map of the infrastructure can be found on the [Argyll and Kintyre 275kV web page](#).

Value for money

Evidence that the project has a high impact for the amount invested. Projects should clearly demonstrate what outcomes they wish to achieve (both qualitative and quantitative).

Community involvement

Evidence that the relevant community or communities and stakeholders have been engaged in the design of a project. Some of the ways you could demonstrate this include: Community Action Plans or Local Place Plans, surveys, service user involvement, community consultations, open days or letters of support.

Evidence of need

Evidence that there is a gap that this project will fill. What research or community engagement have you undertaken to show that there is demand for the project or service? You can also tell us what would happen if you didn't get the grant or your project didn't happen.

Financial sustainability

Evidence that a project is sustainable beyond the end of the funding period through either income generation or new funding - or that it can be responsibly wound down when the funding ends.

Deliverability

Evidence that the project has been clearly thought through, that the required resources will be available to deliver the project (for example, through bringing in match-funding or loan finance) and that any partners needed to deliver the project are already committed to being involved. Contingency costs can also be included in your application.

If you have any questions about costing the project, please contact: community.benefit@sse.com

Where appropriate, we encourage partnership working between different groups or organisations as this can demonstrate wider support and help deliver impact across an extended area.

How to apply

An application is made through our online funding portal. Before you begin an application, it is important that you have thoroughly read all the guidance.

To assist you in preparing your application, we have provided a document that outlines all the questions you will be asked in the online application process. We encourage applicants to familiarise themselves with the questions and prepare answers in advance to ensure a smooth and efficient application experience. You can access the document [here](#) to review the questions and begin your preparation. [Application form](#).

From 12 May 2026, you will then be able to click 'Apply Now' which will take you to the SSE Community Investment Portal. The portal allows you to save drafts and come back.

If you have any questions about how to complete the application, you can contact the Community Investment Manager for this fund, Lindsay Chalmers at community.benefit@sse.com.

When will we hear about our application?

All applicants will be contacted by the end of October 2026 to advise whether your application has been successful. You will also be able to track the status of your application on the Community Investment Portal.

FAQs

Q. Is funding available for revenue and capital costs?

A. Yes, funding is available for both revenue and capital costs. Salary costs can be covered, as long as they are associated with a specific project and are not considered 'core' work. SSEN Transmission is a Real Living Wage funder, meaning that any salary costs applied for must be at the Real Living Wage as a minimum.

Q. Can we use full cost recovery costings?

A. SSEN is a full cost recovery funder. If you are considering applying for multi-year funding, please ensure that any uplifts in salary costs, due to inflation, are included.

Q. Can I see the questions in the application form in advance?

A. Yes, you can access a copy of the questions [here](#).

Q. How was the value of the Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Local Fund calculated?

A. Our fund values are calculated based on the infrastructure values provided within UK Government Guidance on delivery of Community Benefit Funding for Transmission Infrastructure.

If the community benefit for these projects is over £1,100,000 in total value: 50% of this total funding is allocated to the Regional Fund and the remaining 50% is used to form a Local Fund. The total fund value for this project is £6,536,000. This ensures that the funding available continues to have a wider strategic impact across the north of Scotland, whilst also supporting local needs. Organisations in Argyll and Bute can also apply for the [Regional Fund](#) if they have projects with strategic, transformational impact, with a reach that is wider than one community, or have the potential for wider future impact through replication.

This means that the total lifetime value for the Local Fund is £3,268,000

Q. Can we apply for funding if we are based outside the area of benefit?

A. Yes, as long as you provide evidence that the project provides significant benefits to those living in the area of benefit

Q. Does our project need to meet all three themes?

A. No, your project will be assessed against the theme it meets most closely. Projects that deliver one theme well are likely to do better than projects that are spread thinly across two or three themes.

Q. What is ineligible for funding?

A. You don't have to be a registered charity to apply, but your organisation must have a constitution, good governance and not be set up for individual profit. Your Board or Committee must also have at least three unrelated people serving on the management committee/board. Your project must also fit the identified themes on page one, show evidence that it is community-led and fit the other fund assessment criteria.

Applications will not be considered if they fall under the following categories:

- The advancement of religion or politics (including requests to support the core activities of religious or political groups)
- Feasibility studies, unless part of a larger project. Feasibility studies on their own will not be funded
- Projects where the main impact is outside the area of benefit
- Direct costs of energy consumption
- The repayment of loans or payment of debts
- Trips abroad
- Costs already incurred or activities which will take place before a funding decision has been made (retrospective funding)
- Payments towards areas generally understood to be the primary responsibility of a statutory authority

Statutory bodies, such as local authorities, are only eligible to apply for the fund if they do so in partnership with community organisation(s) and the community organisation must be the lead applicant. Funding is not available for any projects that are generally understood to be the primary responsibility of statutory authorities, so these partnership projects must show clear additional outcomes and impact.

Q. Can you apply for this fund if you have already applied for an SSE Renewables, other SSEN Transmission, or other SSE Community Benefit Funds?

A. Yes – all funds are separate. You can still apply for this fund if you have previously applied for, or are currently in the process of applying for, any other Community Benefit Fund.

Q. What do you mean by qualitative and quantitative outcomes?

A. When we ask for outcomes, we are looking for a specific change that will happen as a result of the funded project. You can tell us what will be different as a result of the funding, for whom it will be different and why the difference is important. A quantitative change would be something that you could easily measure, such as numbers of volunteers or service users, whereas a qualitative change is something that you could more easily describe through stories and testimonials.

Q. Do I need to get quotes for capital items?

A. For larger capital items (e.g. building work, vehicles, equipment) of more than £2,500 in value we expect you to have sought at least two quotations, for such items of more than £10,000 in value we

expect you to have sought at least three quotations. Please upload any quotations you have received. If for some reason, it is not possible to get this number of quotes, please get in touch with us.

Q. What if I have questions about the Fund or how to apply?

If you have questions about the fund, please contact Linsay Chalmers, Community Investment Manager at community.benefit@sse.com