



Foundation

Co-op Carbon Innovation fund

About this funding

We're offering funding of between £75,000 - £100,000 to support work in the food and farming sector which reduces the emissions of greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. We're looking for innovative projects, movements, or inventions which not only deliver an environmental good, but contribute to real systems change, and can demonstrate a positive impact for people and communities too.

We can fund work in the areas outlined below (we know some projects may cover more than one of these):

- Farming and food production practices
- Initiatives around regenerative agriculture/agroecology
- Community supported agriculture initiatives
- Supporting diversity, resilience and learning amongst key players in the food & farming sector
- Behaviour change (amongst consumers or producers)

In most cases, we will offer the funding as a grant, but in some circumstances, we may offer funding as an interest-free loan or equity investment. You will be able to indicate when you apply if this kind of funding would be appropriate for your organisation.

Where has the funding come from?

This fund is a new partnership between the Co-op and the Co-op Foundation. The majority of the funding has been donated by the Co-op from the sale of compostable carrier bags in the UK. The remainder comes from the [Co-op Foundation's own funds](#).

How many applications can we fund?

In the first year of the Innovation Fund, we expect to be able to offer funding to approximately ten organisations.

Who can apply?

We can fund:

- Registered charities
- Social enterprises
- Voluntary and community organisations

Co-op Foundation is a working name of Co-operative Community Investment Foundation, a charity registered in England & Wales (1093028) and Scotland (SC048102). Registered office: 1 Angel Square, Manchester, M60 0AG.

- Co-operatives
- Companies
- Partnerships
- Local, regional and national government

Your organisation must be legally constituted, have a bank account in the organisation's legal name, and at least two unconnected people on the board or management committee (by unconnected, we mean people who are not related or married).

We welcome applications from around the world, although we do expect to fund the majority of projects in the UK. Within the UK, we aim to fund proportionally across the four nations.

If your organisation is not a registered charity, you must be able to show how the work funded through the Innovation Fund is in line with the [Co-op Foundation's charitable purposes](#).

We welcome applications from organisations working in partnership, including projects joining up with statutory organisations and involving voluntary, public, and private sectors. One organisation must act as the lead applicant and legal recipient of the grant.

Purpose of the fund

The purpose of this funding is to support work that reduces greenhouse gas emissions in the food and farming sector. We also want to fund projects that create benefits for the wider community and can demonstrate how the work will support those most affected by climate change.

What we're looking for

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (essential)

You must have a clear plan for the funding that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the food and farming sector.

You must be able to explain how you will know that your proposed project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. You may do this by:

- Referencing existing research that demonstrates how the activity in your proposed project reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Referencing existing research that demonstrates how similar activities reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Referencing an existing project (which is similar to your own), that publicly evidences a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- Referring to your own, or third-party commissioned research which verifies how your project reduces greenhouse gas emissions. If this is the case, please also share an overview of the methodology used for verification.

Innovation (essential)

You must be able to demonstrate why your project is innovative. By innovative, we mean either:

- Something completely new to your sector, region, country, or the world
- Something that is not new, but is different to the mainstream or status quo (this may include ancient, traditional or indigenous practices)
- A new or different method of delivering something which already exists

Co-operation (desirable)

You can demonstrate how you will co-operate with others. This could be at any stage of your project, from designing and delivering the project, to sharing the learnings and benefits with others. For example, this may involve co-producing your project with the local community or working together with organisations.

Nb: This does not mean that you need to need to formally deliver your project in partnership with others.

Wider environmental benefit (desirable)

You can demonstrate further environmental benefits beyond a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, for example reducing pollution, increased biodiversity, reducing food waste or restoring our oceans.

Community benefit (desirable)

You can demonstrate how your project brings benefit to people and communities beyond the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that will benefit us all.

Addressing Inequality (desirable)

You can demonstrate how your project will particularly benefit those who are most affected by climate change.

What can the funding be spent on?

Can include but are not limited to:

- Staff costs
- Training costs
- Research and development
- Costs of equipment and materials
- Support costs related to your project, such as utilities, transport costs etc.
- Land or building projects
- Project evaluation

Funding from the Co-op Foundation could cover the whole cost of your project or could make up part of a larger funding package.

Co-op Foundation is a working name of Co-operative Community Investment Foundation, a charity registered in England & Wales (1093028) and Scotland (SC048102). Registered office: 1 Angel Square, Manchester, M60 0AG.

Expected timescales

We are flexible about the timeline of your project, but you must have started work within six months of being awarded a grant.

Things we can't fund

- Retrospective funding, for activities that have already happened
- Projects not in line with the Co-op Foundation's charitable purposes
- Individuals or sole traders
- Projects which fall outside of the food and farming sector

What can you expect when you apply?

Ahead of launch, we will be holding a pre-launch webinar to talk through the Fund and answer any questions on **Wednesday 17th November**, from 11am-12pm. If you would like to attend, please click [here](#) to register.

First stage applications will open on 22nd November and close at **12pm (midday) on Friday 10th December**.

We will let you know the outcome of your first stage application by 17th January 2022.

If you are successful at this stage, we will ask you to submit a more detailed project plan and budget by the end of January 2022. We will also invite you to an interview so that we can get to know you better. Interviews will take place between 21st February and 11th March 2022

Funding recommendations made by our grants panel will go to our Trustees for a decision in late April. Applicants approved by our Trustees will then undergo our due diligence process which involves checking that your organisation is financially stable and has appropriate policies in place. We will let you know if you have been successful by mid-May. Grants will be awarded in early June.

Fund timeline

Date	Stage in funding process
8th November	Guidance notes and questions shared publicly
17th November	Pre-launch webinar (register here)
22nd November	Stage one applications open
10th December	Stage one applications close
17th January	Outcome of stage one applications shared; shortlisted applicants invited to stage two
7th February	Stage two applications close

21st February- 11th March	Interviews with shortlisted applicants
w/c 28th March	Funding panel
w/c 25th April	Co-op Foundation Trustee meeting for funding approvals
Early May	Due diligence checks
Mid-May	Funding decisions shared with applicants
June	Grants awarded to successful applicants and publicly announced

If you have any questions about this funding, you can [get in touch](#).

How to apply

If this fund sounds like it's a good fit for your organisation, you can apply [here](#) (this link will go live on the 22nd November).

Co-op Carbon Innovation Fund: Application Questions

To be considered, all applications must be submitted through our [online form](#), which will open on 22nd November.

Please note that mandatory questions below are marked with an asterisk ().*

About your organisation

1. Tell us about your organisation's overall aims, mission and vision.* (150 words)
2. What is the legal structure of your organisation? (i.e company/charity/CIC)
3. If you're applying as a partnership, tell us who the other partners are and how you will work together to deliver this project (150 words)

About your project

4. Sum up your proposed project in one sentence. * (30 words)
5. Please tick which of the following best describes your proposed project *(choose as many as are relevant):
 - Farming/food production practice
 - Initiatives around regenerative agriculture/agro-ecology
 - Community supported agriculture initiatives
 - Supporting diversity, resilience and/or learning amongst key players in the food & farming sector
 - Behaviour change (amongst consumers or producers)

6. How do you plan to use the grant?*(if you are successful after this stage, there will be the opportunity to send us a more detailed project plan) (250 words)
7. Over what timeframe do you expect to deliver your project?*(Projects must start within 6 months of funding being awarded) (50 words)
8. Tell us how your project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as any evidence for this.* *(this could be evidence from a credible source, a similar project, or from your own/contracted verification methods)* (250 words)
9. What makes your proposed project innovative?*(250 words)
10. Beyond greenhouse gas reduction, what other environmental benefits would your project create? (150 words)
11. What wider social or community benefits would your proposal create, and where (local, regional, national or international)? (150 words)
12. How would your proposed project support people who are most impacted by the effects of climate change? (150 words)
13. How would you co-operate with others to plan, deliver and/or share any benefits of your project? (150 words)
14. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your project at this stage? (150 words)

Budget

15. How much money are you applying for?*(between £75,000 - £100,000)
16. Provide a brief overview of how you would spend the grant* (Please present this as a list. We need to know the main items or activities in your project and how much they will cost. if you are successful after this stage, we'll ask for a more detailed budget). (150 words)
17. If our funding would make up part of a larger funding package, what is the total estimated cost of your project, and what is the status of other contributions? (150 words)
18. In some circumstances we may offer this funding as an interest-free loan rather than a grant. Is this something that you would be open to? Yes/no

Final questions

19. Where did you hear about this fund?*
20. Are you a current Co-op supplier?*

*NB: This is just for our information. Current Co-op suppliers will **not** have an advantage over other applicants.*

21. How was your experience of applying for this fund?*