

abrdn Charitable Foundation

Innovation Fund – Funding Guide – 2024–2025

A Scottish registered charity (SC042597)

abrdn Charitable Foundation Overview:

Through the abrdn Charitable Foundation we direct funding to charitable organisations around the globe. We aim to create fair and impactful partnerships which are aligned to our strategy and engage colleagues to use their skills to benefit society.

We focus our strategy through the theme of 'Tomorrow's Generation', which means engaging young people between the ages of 16–25. This is then distilled through two main categories: 'People' and 'Planet'. Under 'People,' our aim is to help to break down barriers to education, employment, and financial wellness, with a key focus on Social Mobility. Under 'Planet,' we are looking to work with organisations who are protecting nature and addressing the impacts of climate change. A key feature of our approach is to support a small number of Powerful Partnerships, typically significant multi-year grants to organisations and projects where aCF support can have a transformative impact. If you want to find out more about this fund, please view our Powerful Partnership funding guide.

Through our giving strategy we are making significant social and environmental impacts within local communities and across the globe. We recognise that our charitable giving is a key part of our overall sustainability strategy, and the Innovation Fund helps us reach more charitable organisations and support projects that other funders might not.

The aCF Board of Directors is governed through a diverse Board which includes two prominent Independent Directors.

Innovation Fund Overview:

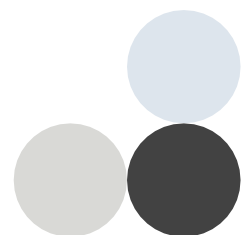
The Innovation Fund (the Fund) is a new approach to funding for the aCF and was launched in 2024 to help ensure the aCF is able to support more charitable organisations, especially those not necessarily registered in the UK.

It is hoped the Fund will deliver significant impact through its support of small to medium sized projects that could potentially become Powerful Partnership of the future.

The Innovation Fund enables the aCF to support more projects across the regions – Americas, Asia and EMEA including the UK. Expanding beyond UK-registered organisations will help diversify the type of work and the communities the Foundation serves.

This approach also provides charitable organisations with the much-needed resources to pilot projects linked to technology and innovation across all themes under People and Planet.

The Fund is seeking projects that are innovative, practical, collaborative, and systemic – so they provide learning that can be applied widely to deliver lasting impact.



Frequently Asked Questions:

The following section is intended to provide potential applicants to the Innovation Fund answers to common questions and is intended to help organisations decide if they are eligible to apply. It is aligned to our approach to strive to be an equitable and thoughtful grant maker.

Who can apply?

Registered charities, social enterprises, and other nonprofit organisations that align with our values and stated mission, and that engage young people between the ages of 16–25. Charity or business registration does not have to be with the UK Charity Commission or UK Companies House but can be with the relevant regulator in the area of the world where your organisation is headquartered. Charities must have an annual turnover of no more than £3million, or local currency equivalent.

How much can we apply for?

A maximum of £50,000 or local currency equivalent to fund a specific project. Ideally, we are looking to fund projects that support new innovations or enable your organisation to develop a new approach or understanding that will significantly help further your mission.

Can our project last multiple years?

We are looking to support projects that would typically be delivered within 12–18 months of the grant being approved, when impact measurement forms would be shared so the aCF can capture and understand the outcomes and impact that the funding has achieved.

What is the application process?

Applicants are requested to complete an online application form which can be found on our website, which has been designed to try and capture the necessary information so we can understand more about your organisation and the project and not put undue pressure on the finite resources of organisations that chose to apply.

What is the deadline for applications?

Applications will close on 1st November.

When will we receive a decision?

All applications will be reviewed and scored by the aCF team using an established scoring matrix. Successful applicants will be informed in a timely manner and the timescale will be clearly communicated on receipt of an application. Application windows will typically be in Q2 and Q4 of any given calendar year and will be launched on our website and via abrdn social media.

Are any organisations restricted from applying?

Yes. The aCF does not fund political organisations and organisations that promote a single religious faith. We are also not able to fund for profit companies or individuals.

We are not a registered charity; can we still apply?

Yes. The aCF Innovation Fund is open to registered charities governed by the relevant regulator in your geography, social enterprises, community interest companies (CIC), charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), or other similar nonprofit organisations.

Can we apply for funding towards core costs and capital developments?

No. The Innovation Fund is not positioned to support core running costs such as staff time or office costs. The Fund is also not positioned to fund capital, such as the build of a new facility or building linked to your social mission.

Can we apply for funding for research?

Yes. The aCF would consider discreet research projects that align to our mission and enable the applying organisation to uncover new and innovative insights that will significantly enable you to extend or enhance your field of activity. This can include funding for an external agency that would be sub-contacted by the applicant organisation with direct oversight and contracts held by the applying organisation to complete the research on their behalf.

If we have applied or been funded by the aCF before, can we apply again?

Yes. Although priority will be given to charitable organisations that have previously not been funded as we are looking to reach new organisations through the Fund. Organisations who have applied and have been unsuccessful are welcome to apply again.

If we are not successful, will we receive feedback on our application?

Yes. The aCF will endeavour to provide succinct feedback to shortlisted applicants as part of our commitment to being an equitable and thoughtful funder. However, the aCF has limited resources and so if the volume of applicants is significant in any given period, providing individual feedback might not always be possible. This will be communicated to the applying organisation.

Can employees of abrdn recommend charities so they can apply?

Yes. We encourage colleagues from within abrdn to share the details of the Innovation Fund with charitable organisations where they have a personal knowledge or connection. These applications will be considered alongside other applicants.

Are joint applications between organisations allowed?

Yes. We welcome collaboration and wish to help foster joint working within the nonprofit sector in the UK and overseas. When completing the application form, please clearly state that your project is a joint enterprise. One organisation will need to be a lead applicant, although any funding that was awarded can be allocated as is required to successfully complete the project.

If funding in my region has been agreed, will additional grants be made later in the year?

No. One Innovation Fund grant will be allocated in each region each year. The funding window for the Innovation Fund will be advertised on our website or via abrdn social media, the online application will only be open during the agreed period.

Will the project be monitored and what feedback will the charity be asked to share?

Yes. The aCF uses a monitoring and evaluation form that has been developed using expert external resource. It is intended to provide a straightforward platform to enable the successful organisation to capture the outcomes and impact of the project in a format that does not put additional pressure on finite resources.

Will all Innovation Fund grant recipients be immediately eligible for Powerful Partnership grants?

Not necessarily. The aim of the Innovation Fund is to support a new or innovative individual project. If the outcomes align with the strategic aims of the Powerful Partnership and the current focus area of the grant, Innovation Fund charities might be invited to apply. However, there is no guarantee of continued funding beyond the one-time grant.



Contact information for further information

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For more information visit abrdn.com

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