Green Roots Fund

Grantee Handbook

Contents

Introduction

This handbook seeks to provide helpful information and guidance for organisations delivering projects that receive grants through the Green Roots Fund (GRF). It will be updated as required to reflect any changes to the programme.

Inevitably it cannot provide guidance on every issue or question that will arise, so in this instance grantees are asked to contact their GLA Grant Manager (GM). Your Grant Manger will provide support throughout your project.

Delivery lifecycle and relationship

The GLA will monitor projects that receive grants through the GRF to ensure that projects are progressing as expected. Each project will have a dedicated GLA GM who will be responsible for monitoring progress and will be your day-to-day main contact. Your GM is here to support and guide you so that your project has the best chance of success. Your GM's role is to work in partnership with you and support you with any challenges or changes you may need to make. The GLA and your GM wants your project to succeed so that you can achieve outcomes for Londoners.

The information below explains the different stages of the monitoring cycle and the processes that will be used to monitor projects, from the point of signing the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) through to project closure:

Delivery and monitoring lifecycle

Start

- GFA signed by both parties
- Introduction meeting – grantee and GLA GM
- Initial grant payment of 50 per cent of the grant (minus tree aftercare, if applicable) upon signing of the GFA and completion of project specific conditions.

Ongoing

- Monitoring review meeting(s) – held at least 6-monthly (could be more frequent)
- Payment monitoring review meeting – interim grant payment of 40 per cent of the grant (minus tree aftercare) and progress meeting
- Ad-hoc review meeting(s) – Regular informal review meeting(s)
- Project changes – as required throughout the delivery lifecycle.

Closure

- Closure review meeting – final grant payment of 10 per cent, plus tree aftercare, if applicable, and final progress meeting.

Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) and introductory meeting

The GFA is the legal agreement between the grantee and the GLA which sets out the agreed funding, project activities and conditions for the grant award. Once the agreement is signed by both parties, it marks the start of the relationship, which continues until project closure.

The GM is responsible for the monitoring progress of the project throughout its lifetime. Once you are notified of being successful, your allocated GM will be in touch to introduce themselves and arrange an introductory meeting. The introductory meeting provides an opportunity for your GM to understand the project and for grantees to clarify any questions. Grantees do not need to prepare any documentation in advance of the meeting. The GM will prepare an agenda and share this in advance.

Grant payments

Grant payments will be made in three stages:

1. Initial payment of 50 per cent (minus tree aftercare, if applicable) upon both parties signing the GFA and completion of any project specific conditions, if applicable.
2. Interim payment of 40 per cent once 40 per cent of the total grant (minus tree aftercare, if applicable) can be evidenced as spent, and completion of applicable agreed milestones. The date in which grantees anticipate they will require the interim payment was selected by grantees at the application stage. If adjustments to this date need to be made, this should be discussed with your GM. Further details on what grantees will be expected to provide are set out in the payment monitoring review section.

3. Final payment of 10 per cent when you have finished your project and the GLA has received project completion documentation.

If your project includes tree aftercare costs, we will pay this with the final 10 per cent subject to receiving the required information for the two-year maintenance.

Monitoring process

Throughout the duration of the project, GMs will meet regularly with grantees and project progress updates will be required. Your GM can support you with submitting your monitoring form on the GMS. If you have any questions or require further support, and online or in person meeting can be arranged. The monitoring process consists of four main types of meetings:

1. **Monitoring review meeting**

   Grantees must report on project progress at least every six months. The Grant Management System (GMS) automatically sets the date for each monitoring review form to be complete.

   Grantees are expected to report on:

   - progress
   - project milestones
   - outputs
   - risks
   - compliance
   - project changes

   Grantees are expected to upload before and after photos for the activity undertaken to show progress against project delivery. A due date will be included in the GMS and GMs will remind grantees to submit the monitoring form prior to this date. Once the form has been submitted, the GM will review the information and arrange a meeting to discuss progress. This meeting can take place virtually or in person, if grantees prefer.

2. **Payment monitoring review meeting – financial review**

   Grantees will need to complete the monitoring review form following the process above and provide financial information in addition to this.

   Grantees will receive a further 40 per cent of their overall grant value for the interim payment. The initial and interim grant payments equate to 90 per cent of the grant value overall, minus tree aftercare, if applicable. To be eligible to receive the interim payment, grantees must evidence they have spent 40 per cent of the overall grant, minus tree aftercare. The below provides a practical example:

   - Total Grant Value: £50,000.00 (includes £5,000 in tree aftercare)
   - Initial grant payment (50% of grant, minus tree aftercare): £22,500.00
   - Interim grant payment (40% of grant, minus tree aftercare). Evidence that 40% of the total grant, minus tree aftercare, has been spent e.g. £18,000 spent to date: £18,000.00

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- Final grant payment (final 10% + tree aftercare): £4,500.00 + £5,000.00 for tree aftercare

Grantees must use the transaction list template (GM's will send this template by email) as supporting evidence for the interim and final payments. Full guidance on how to complete transaction list correctly can be found on the template itself. Please ensure the guidance is followed carefully and you are aware of what evidence is required. Failure to complete the transaction list correctly and upload it to GMS will result in delays in processing the payments. It is important to note that grantees can only include spend that is eligible and has been paid either by the grantee or by one of its delivery partners.

Your GM can support you with any question you have relating to the transaction list. An online or in person meeting can be arranged to support you.

Sample testing

GMs will carry out sample testing of expenditure and outputs reported with the payment monitoring review form. GMs will select a minimum of one line from each budget category in the transaction list to sample test. GMs will also sample check at least one output from each indicator submitted. The GM can request further indicators for sampling if they wish.

Transaction list tips:

Full details of eligible and ineligible expenditure can be found in this handbook. Please ensure the transaction list meets the following requirements:

- all columns have been completed
- the agreed budget categories have been used
- only eligible costs have been included
- the dates paid are after the project start date, but before the payment monitoring review date
- include a description that explains how the staff costs were calculated and what the costs relate to
- include the pay date as the invoice date for staff costs
- If a payment has been made for an expenditure item via a credit card, the purchase date on the credit card statement should be used as the paid date
- Include details of the percentage claimed if 100 per cent is not claimed.

The GM has the right to query amounts or lines within the transaction list and ask for further information.

3. Ad hoc review meeting

It is expected that GMs and grantees will meet informally more frequently than the formal six-month monitoring review or the payment review points. The frequency can be decided by both parties, but it is recommended that regular informal meetings are held. The purpose of these meetings is to give both parties the opportunity to clarify anything relating to delivery of the project and to ensure that the project is progressing as expected. These meetings will also help to aid with the submission of monitoring review forms and payment

monitoring review forms. Your GM can provide support and guidance on the completion of monitoring review forms.

4. **Closure review meeting**

A final payment monitoring review will be undertaken for the closure review meeting. The monitoring review form and the transaction list must be submitted by the grantee on GMS. As per the payment monitoring review process above, grantees will be expected to report on progress and declare the value of project spend. Grantees should refer to the payment monitoring review section for further guidance. The remaining 10 per cent of grant will be paid to the grantee once satisfactory completion is agreed with the GM. This is usually within 30 days of the closure review form submission. If your project includes tree aftercare, you will receive 100 per cent of this grant value at this stage too.

Further information on the closure of a GRF project will be provided in this section in due course.

Project Variations

A project variation is the formal process that grantees must follow to make changes to their project. Grantees can request changes to the:

- Scope – Changes to the objectives or activities of the project
- Deliverables – Changes to the outputs and indicators
- Budget – Changes to the budget and match funding
- Timeline – Changes to the project duration

Grantees should describe what the changes are and provide a rationale. Variations will be reviewed and agreed on the GMS.

It is strongly recommended that grantees discuss any project changes as early as possible with their GM. Not all changes will need to be agreed through the variation process. GMs can support grantees and provide advice as to whether a variation is likely to be agreed.

Eligible expenditure and match funding

Eligible budget categories include the following (for which further guidance can be found later in this section):

- materials
- plants
- small items of equipment
- staff costs – for lead organisation, delivery partner(s) procured staff costs and agency staff (including basic pay, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions, if these can be evidenced upon request)
- travel and subsistence
- contractors and consultants
- marketing and publicity

- grants provided to end beneficiaries
- events costs
- volunteer expenses
- volunteer time
- tree care (only eligible in projects that include tree planting)
- tree after care (only eligible in projects that include at least 20 trees planted). This is the cost for tree care for 2-years post the project end date and 100 per cent will be paid at the end of the project.
- monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Only costs incurred that relate directly to initiating and implementing the agreed project activities are eligible.

Staff costs

This includes paid staff roles working, either full-time or part-time, directly on the project. Staff may be employed directly or contracted by the grantee or delivery partner(s). Costs for contracted staff will be referred to as 'external staff costs' in this section.

Eligible staff costs are the basic salary; the employer's national insurance and pension contributions; and any contractual benefits. The grantee must account for any expected increases in salary for the project staff over the lifetime of the project.

If staff costs relate to monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the costs should be claimed under that budget category.

The staff role relating to the Individual on maternity, paternity/parental or long-term sick leave, can also be claimed if a replacement is allocated to that staff role, at the agreed percentage of time on the project.

External staff costs (not employed directly by the grantee or delivery partner)

Where external staff costs are included in the budget, the grantee must ensure that these external staff costs: can be clearly identified as staffing costs in the contract and/or invoice of the subcontractor; and are separate to any other costs on the invoice and/or contract. The invoice for that month and/or quarter will be the actual cost that can be claimed.

Agency staff costs, including fees

Agency staff costs can be claimed, included the fee to the agency. However, finders fees are ineligible.

Apportioning staff costs

Staff working full-time on the project

Grantees can include 100 per cent of their annual basic pay and contractual benefits, and the employer's national insurance and pension contributions.

Staff working part-time on the project

Grantees can claim staff working part-time on the project through percentage of time working on the project.

Salary costs for staff who spend part of their time working on a project can be calculated using a percentage (see example below). There is an understanding that the percentage may vary from one month to another. Staff costs should be claimed as it relates to the organisation's payroll (monthly pay, 4-weekly pay) within the transaction list. Grantees should provide a brief description of the activity delivered by the staff directly on the project within the transaction list. This should support the percentage being claimed.

Example of how to calculate a percentage:

A. Monthly employment costs (basic salary; employer's national insurance and pension contributions; contractual benefits) = £2,500
B. Percentage of time staff member will spend working on the project = 40 per cent
C. Total cost = £2,500 x 40 per cent (A x B) = £1,000

There is no requirement for pay rolled staff to record the hours spent working on the project on a timesheet.

Tree care and tree aftercare

These costs are only eligible for tree planting projects. To be eligible to include tree aftercare, projects must plant at least 20 standard or similar trees. A plan for how the tree aftercare grant will be spent must be submitted as part of the monitoring review form. 100 per cent of the tree aftercare grant will be paid at the end of the project.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

In the GRF prospectus, we recommended that project application budgets included 3 to 5 per cent to cover the monitoring processes. This was captured in the project budget as 'monitoring, evaluation and reporting'. This is because throughout the duration of the project, GMs will meet regularly with grantees and project progress updates will be required.

Other direct costs

We expect non-staff costs to be directly attributable to the project. However, we understand there may be instances where the project costs cannot be itemised on an invoice. For example, the grantee may want to use existing contracts. It may prove difficult to get the supplier to itemise the project costs on an invoice. As a result, direct costs can be apportioned, but the methodology used must be agreed with your allocated GM in advance of expenditure being claimed.

Overheads

If you need to claim overheads, these must be detailed on your transaction list and must be applied using the following flat rate methodology.

A maximum of fifteen per cent can be applied to eligible staff costs. For example:

£3,000 (monthly salary + on-costs of a Project Manager)
15% flat rate = £450
Total claimable = £3,450

Other overhead methodologies will not be accepted on the Green Roots Fund.

Ineligible costs

- expenditure incurred prior to notification of award, or after the project end date. Please note that spend is at the organisation's own risk until a grant funding agreement has been signed by both parties.
- loan and current account interest, or any other financial charges
- staff time or consultancy fees related to time spent working on the application form or other application documents
- purchase of buildings or rental fees for leased premises
- cost of interest payments or service charge payments for finance leases
- expenditure not related to the project
- statutory training that employers must provide under health and safety legislation
- bank charges or legal fees (see below)
- aid for lobbying, entertaining, petitioning or challenging decisions, which means using the grant to lobby (via an external firm or in-house staff) in order to undertake activities intended to influence, or attempt to influence, Parliament, government or political activity (including the receipt of other funding); or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action
- payments for activities of a party-political or exclusively religious nature
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC
- gifts, or payments for gifts or donations
- statutory fines, criminal fines or penalties
- payments for works or activities that the lead local authority, project deliverer, end beneficiary, or any member of their partnership has a statutory duty to undertake, or that are fully funded by other sources
- contingencies and contingent liabilities
- dividends
- costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors
- costs involved in winding up a company
- legal expenses in respect of litigation
- costs incurred by individuals in setting up and contributing towards private pension schemes
- payments that breach or are contrary to the funding agreement or UK legislation

Match funding

A minimum of 10 per cent match funding is required, either in cash or in kind. This information should be included in the monitoring form in the GMS and on the transaction list template.

Signed match funding letters must be provided prior to the first grant payment.

Volunteer time

The value of volunteer should be calculated using the London Living Wage. This is currently £13.85 for 2025-26, but increases each year, so the latest rate should be used. This should be evidenced using a timesheet. The volunteer should record the time they spent working on the project and this should be retained as evidence.

Communications and branding

These requirements relate to all communications materials and public facing documents relating to funded activity – including print and publications, through to digital and electronic materials. This includes any preparatory activity linked to the GRF.

Logos

SUPPORTED BY

MAYOR OF LONDON

Supported by Mayor of London

Projects are required to use the 'Supported by Mayor of London' logo on all external communication materials, including the project website, if applicable. For guidelines for use of the 'Supported by' logo, please visit Supported by Mayor of London guidelines. Grantees should share external communication materials with 'Supported by Mayor of London' logo on with their allocated GM for approval before publication.

Digital materials including websites and social media

Digital channels can provide a quick way to reach audiences and promote fund activities. Where details of fund activities are published on a website, a clear and prominent reference to the funding from the Mayor of London is to be included as follows:

'This project is [funded/part-funded] by the Mayor of London.'

Where possible and practical, grantees should also include a direct link to the GRF webpage.

When describing or promoting GRF activities on social media such as X (formerly Twitter), the following hashtag (#) should be used #GreenRoots. This will be re-tweetable by the GLA allowing others to follow fund activities. The 'LDN_Environment' account must be tagged on all Twitter and Bluesky social media posts.

Press Releases

Press releases must include a clear and prominent reference to the GRF. Grantees must approach their GM for a quote from the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to be included in press releases. Grantees should contact their GM at least 10-days in advance to request a quote, accompanied by the draft press release, the target audience and distribution mechanisms.

Events

The GLA are keen to attend project events or launches. Grantees should make their GM aware of planned events ensuring a GLA representative is invited, if possible. Grantees should be aware that the Mayor is unlikely to have capacity to attend project events. It is

more likely that the Deputy Mayor for Environment could attend. Therefore, event requests are encouraged to be directed to the Deputy Mayor for Environment.

Signage

Projects that relate to a site will be expected to provide signage incorporating the 'Supported by Mayor of London' logo, indicating funding support. Signage should be placed in a prominent place within the space. Branding guidance for this signage is available, grantees should speak directly to their allocated GM to discuss further. Costs associated to the signage are eligible and can be declared as part of the marketing and publicity budget category. Design of signs including the logo must be approved by the GLA prior to production.

Further information

Evidence of compliance with branding and publicity guidance should be retained for monitoring and audit purposes.

Assets and procurement

The grantee must keep a register of all assets acquired using the grant. The definition of an asset can be found in the GFA. Information related to assets must be reported in the monitoring review form in the GMS. Speak to your GM if you are unsure if your project includes assets.

Where the grantee is a both a contracting authority and non-contracting authority, they must ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Procurement Regulations 2024 when procuring any goods and services in relation to delivery of the project in-line with the published thresholds. Procurement information should be captured within the GMS. Whilst evidence regarding procurement will not be requested on a regular basis, we reserve the right to request this evidence, if required.

All procurement of works, equipment, goods and services shall be based on value for money. The following thresholds must be adhered to:

- up to £9,999.99 - value for money
- £10,000.00 and £150,000.00 – three or more written quotations
- £150,000.01 and above – an advertised competitive tender exercise (in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024 where the thresholds therein are met/exceeded).

Further information about procurement can be found within the GFA.

Indicators and outputs

The Green Roots Fund Monitoring Guidance is standalone guidance for Green Roots Fund indicators and outputs. This document provides descriptions and full details on how projects should measure and capture relevant information for their indicator and outputs. The guidance can be found Green Roots Fund prospectus | London City Hall. This document has been updated after round 1 was closed. All grantees should read the guidance and speak to their GM if changes are required to any deliverables.

The grantee should be aware that they will need to record and report equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data from training sessions delivered (individuals and organisations) and volunteers (individuals). Speak to your GM if you are unsure what information you need to capture.

If the beneficiary is an organisation, the grantee will record where 75 per cent or more of the ownership or senior management team comprises individuals from minority ethnic communities; women; or disabled people. Ethnic minorities refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

Evaluation and further information

Evaluation

Grantees should consider undertaking an evaluation. The monitoring, evaluation and reporting budget category should be used for this expenditure. An evaluation should be proportionate to the grant value and could be delivered internally by existing staff or externally by an independent third-party.

For projects over £200,000, we strongly advise that an external evaluation is undertaken. We recommend that the monitoring, evaluation and reporting budget category is increased from 3 to 5 per cent to up to 7 per cent to accommodate both evaluation and monitoring.

Delivery partners

A delivery partner is any organisation that is integral to the delivery of the project, whether through providing staff, resources, activities or access to a specific community.

The GFA is between the GLA and the grantee, it does not involve any delivery partners. The GLA will only communicate via the grantee organisation.

If delivery partners are included in the project, the grantee should consider a formal agreement between themselves and the delivery partners, such as a signed service-level agreement. The GLA will ask how this relationship has been formally agreed, if applicable, as part of the project specific conditions in the GFA.

Audit

The GLA, or any other public body undertaking an audit function, may conduct an audit, which could occur at any time during the project lifetime and up to 6-years after the end of the funding period. Further information on audits and the responsibilities of the grantee can be found in the GFA.

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Documents

The latest versions of documents can be found on the GRF webpage.

Version 1 November 2025