

Workforce Equality Fund 20/21 & Women Returners Programme 20/21 Frequently Asked Questions

Questions About Applying

Q1. Can the same organisation apply to both funds?

Yes. An organisation can apply to both funds but each application needs to be for a distinct project with no duplication of activity or costs. Core organisational costs, if claimed e.g. staff, overheads, etc. should be apportioned between projects appropriately.

Q2. Can any size of charitable organisation apply?

WEF: Yes. Any size can apply.

Q3. Can an organisation apply for projects within their own organisation or do they have to work with a partner?

WEF: An organisation cannot apply for projects within their own organisation. A partner needs to be worked with for an application to be considered.

Q4. Can social enterprises apply?

WEF: To be eligible to apply, organisations need to be a body (including a charity) which is established for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes' as defined in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. If a social enterprise fits within that description then that is fine.

Social Enterprises are eligible to apply to the Women Returners Programme.

Q5. Can new-start companies apply?

WEF & WRP: Yes they can, but a due diligence process will be done to ensure there is no risk to Scottish Government and to gain reassurance that the project outcomes can be achieved.

Q6. Is a partner organisation required to apply to Women Returner Fund?

No. Organisations can apply on their own. They are expected to work with other partners/employers in delivery of the activity such as work placements.

Questions about Project Delivery Periods

Q7. Can we change partners after submitting an application?

WEF: This would not be recommended. All applications will be appraised on the information contained in the application from received to ensure a fair process. We acknowledge the short timescale available to get partners or employers on board but expect partners to be in place at point of application. Any changes to applications who are successful in achieving funding can be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Q8. When do the successful projects need to be completed by?

WEF & WRP: Successful projects need to be completed by 31st March 2021. The delivery period is between 1 Jan 2021 and 31 March 2021.

Q9. Can the first phase of a longer programme be funded within the three month delivery period with the assumption that further funding would be available to allow future phases to be delivered?

WRP: No. At this point It is not possible for us to commit to any future funding beyond the current financial year (up to 31 March 2021). It would not be appropriate or best value to fund the first phase of a project that may not be able to continue into future phases if funding was not available. Projects could consider reworking phase 1 so that it has its own measurable outcomes and can be delivered independently from future phases.

Questions about the Application Form

Q10. The application asks about fair work practices. Are these the practices of the applicant organisation delivering the work or are they the practices of the participating employer?

WEF: The reference to fair work practices in the application refer to the organisation submitting the application. That said, we hope partner employers have Fair Work practices or are willing to work towards them.

Q11. Regarding the due diligence process, if applications were to be successful, what would this process entail?

WEF & WRP: Due diligence is followed to mitigate risks to Scottish Government. This will be especially relevant for new businesses or organisation that are applying to Scottish Government for the first time. At point of considering approval we will undertake a due diligence process to ensure that the organisation has appropriate legal status, is financially viable, is legally set up to be able to deliver activity proposed, whether state aid applies. In cases of new organisations we will also contact the referee stated on the application form to ensure we have confidence that new organisation have the ability to deliver the project and achieve outcomes.

Q12. If you have recently completed a project via the previous fund can you work with the same employer again?

WEF: Yes, although not on the exact same activity. But it is possible to work on a project that focuses on different equality groups with same employer.

Q13. Regarding state aid, which regulation is this delivered under and how do we identify previous state aid received?

WEF & WRP: State aid applies when public money is given to an organisation that operates in a competitive market, no matter how small that market will be. For example, offering subsidised training when there are other training providers who charge for a similar service, public money in that instance could distort that market. Given the sums involved we expect the de minimis regulation will provide appropriate state aid cover where necessary. Any awards of grant received from public funds should have stated in the grant offer what state aid regulation the funding was issued under. To ensure the de minimis ceiling is not breached, please provide details of any public funding you have had in the current and previous two financial years.

Q14. Are the public monies received to be declared only for the activity we are seeking funding for?

No, you are required to declare all public monies received regardless of the activity being delivered. This is required in order to ensure funding is within the De Minimis ceiling of 200,000 euros. For undertakings active in the agricultural sector, namely primary agricultural production, the processing of agricultural products and the marketing of agricultural products, the ceiling is 20,000 euros and for undertakings active in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, the ceiling is 30,000 euros.

You should not need to include funding received via a public procurement exercise unless they state that any part of the funding is deemed to be state aid.

For information on whether state aid applies to your organisation or the services you will provide to other organisations under this fund please visit <https://www.gov.scot/publications/state-aid-guidance/>

Questions about the Women Returners Programme

Q15. Can projects focus on building general and transferable skills such as confidence building, management, leadership, one to one mentoring to support, employability skills and professional training and accreditation and not focus on work experience?

Yes. Projects can offer all of these activities as long as they are justified on the basis of supporting client's needs. We would encourage all projects to offer work experience as this program is primarily to get women who have not had work experience in a while to get back up to speed to enter the workforce.

Q16. Can the one company be involved in more than one project under the programme?

Yes. however, due the limited resources available we would encourage projects to work with different companies to allow for wider impact.

Q17. Can we help clients from a particular disadvantaged group return to a range of industries/sectors, or do we need to focus on sector?

Both apply. It is up to the project to justify sector or sectors chosen

Q18. Do clients require to be paid in the placement given it may just be a short taster?

WRP: Yes, we would always look for clients to be paid and to make sure their expenses are covered and there is no negative impact on their income. Employer incentives to take on a returner are considered. It is up to projects to justify costs included in delivery of the project.

WEF: We expect charities to work with private businesses or public bodies. It would be expected that the staff within the private businesses or public bodies are already receiving a salary.

Q19. Would the creation of a report on Women in specific industrial sectors be a viable project for the fund? This could investigate pay gaps in remote areas, number of women working in the sector, maternity leave policies etc.?

No. the Women Returners Fund is specifically to support individual women to return to the workplace, not for research. The activity may be eligible for the Workplace Equality Fund while taking account of research already available and justifying that the proposed research is filling a gap in knowledge.

Q20. Could you please give some more information on what is required in the effective voice statement section of the WRF application. I am referring to a non-unionised environment.

In a non-unionised organisation, we would expect an appropriate employee-representative group, e.g. a staff association, workers' committee, worker information and consultation representative/s to provide a short statement. The statement should confirm that workers have been involved in influencing the organisation's fair work priorities in relation to the Fair Work First criteria.

Questions about the Workplace Equality Fund

Q21. Can a charity be part of two applications for Workplace Equality Fund? It would be a lead in one but only a minor deliverer in the other. Would not be duplication.

In that scenario, yes that's possible.

Q22. What's the expected role of a private company in the Equality Fund?

The expectation is for a partnership that is jointly working to achieve real change for the target equality groups. Charities are partnering with private businesses/public organisations to effect meaningful change within that organisation, or wider sector/industry.

Q23. In regards to Fair Work practices is there an expectation information about non applicants Fair Work practices needs to be included in the application?

No, we are only looking for information in relation to the charity leading on and submitting the application.

Q24. For the Workplace Fund is it possible to work with a number of private companies rather than one?

Yes, you can work with several private companies.