

EDIBLE ASSETS

Securing money for your food initiative



Food funding: A brief summary

Local Action on Food is a network of people and projects from across the UK working towards a strong, healthy and sustainable food system. It is coordinated by Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming. As well as conferences and events, one of the services provided to Local Action on Food members is news and information about funding. This brief paper summarises some of the current funding opportunities for local food projects, giving an overview of some of the key funds available that may suit local food projects, and also some sources where funding information can be found.

Types of funders

The remit and motivation of food projects can be very wide, addressing (for example) food access, health, community engagement, arts, education and the environment. Potential funders are also varied, and have their own wide range of aims and objectives. Food projects around the UK report that they have successfully gained financial and other support from charitable trusts, local authorities, primary care trusts (PCTs), European funding and foundations. Such funders may be seeking to improve health, the local environment, opportunities for young people or old people, or a host of other reasons for supporting local action on food. Whenever applying for funding it is essential to consider what the funder is expecting and how closely your project fits with what they want without compromising your own project objectives. Grants have been described by some projects as a poison chalice where precious time is spent reporting to funders and has restrained projects and compromised their aim. Before applying for funding be sure that this is the best route for you to go down.

Types of grants

- **Small grants:** Short application form and light bureaucratic procedures; often run by local councils, primary care trusts or charitable trusts in your area that support local community projects; generally offer grants in the region of £500 to £1,000.
- **Medium grants:** Grants up to £20,000; application forms and procedures are a bit more complex than small grants; need good plan and accountability for the local project.
- **Large grants:** Grants from £20,000 up to £300,000 or more. Time (we suggest around six months) and effort is required for partnership-building, application forms and procedures; funders will prefer to give the grants to experienced projects with a good track record.

National funding opportunities

The following summarises some of the most popular sources of funds for local food projects.

The **Big Lottery** (www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding-uk) has information about various funds available for community-led activities, which can include work on food. Recently they have funded a tranche of food-related projects via the **Ecominds, Local Food and Access to Nature** funds, although these are now closed to new applications.

The Big Lottery also runs the **Awards for All** programme (www.awardsforall.org.uk) which makes smaller amounts of money easily accessible to community groups. The system works differently in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England. Reaching Communities run by the Big Lottery - which I got funding for, for the Community Fruit and Veg Project

The **Tudor Trust** (www.tudortrust.org.uk) is an independent grant-making trust which supports organisations working across the UK. They support work which addresses the social, emotional and financial needs of people at the margins of society, and are particularly interested in helping smaller, under-resourced organisations which offer direct services and which involve the people they work with in their planning.

The **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** (www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/food.html) has a Food Strand which aims to promote an understanding of the role of food in enhancing quality of life. It will prioritise the enjoyment and experience of food rather than its production and we seek to enable as many people in the UK as possible to access, prepare and eat nutritious, sustainable food.

The **Plunkett Foundation** (www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo) provides funding and support for rural communities looking to set up and run a community-owned shop.

The **Community Builders Fund** (www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk) supports organisations at the heart of your community with finance, training and resources. Funds are available, for example, for feasibility studies and development purposes.

Community Matters (www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk) is a giving initiative from the supermarket Waitrose. Each trading month, each store has £1,000 to divide between three local organisations, such as welfare organisations, community groups, schools or local divisions of national charities. Ask your local store for a nomination form if you wish your project or organisation to be considered.

The **Sheila McKechnie Foundation** (www.smk.org.uk) runs an annual award scheme for individuals who are new to campaigning or operating with few resources and who show passion, tenacity and the potential to create change – locally, nationally or globally. Two community food initiatives are chosen every year to receive £15,000 (£5,000 a year) over a three-year period. The awards are available to any community food initiative in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Food Vision (www.foodvision.gov.uk) provides a wide range of food related information including some links to funders (www.foodvision.gov.uk/pages/funding).

Information about grants available for local projects addressing physical activity and nutrition in Wales are available from the **Physical Activity and Nutrition Network Wales**, at: www.physicalactivityandnutrition.wales.org.uk/page.cfm?orgid=740&pid=27821

Community Food and Health (Scotland) has an annual small grants scheme available (www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/funding/smallgrants.php) for groups and agencies in Scotland who wish to improve access to, and take up of a healthy, varied and balanced diet. Grants from £500 to £4,000 are available and grant recipients are expected to spend their grant money within one year.

European funding opportunities

European funding can be a substantial source of support, however applications are complex and often very lengthy, and probably suited only to larger or more established food projects, or those working in partnership. A first port of call could be to do some initial research on the type of grant you want to apply for and then discuss what you are considering with your authority's European Funding team. A factsheet produced by FunderFinder www.funderfinder.org.uk/pack/european%20funding.pdf explains in some more detail about the different sources of funding. Some other sources of information are as follows:

- Information about how to apply for European grants is at: ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/index_en.htm
- Much European funding has been managed by the **Regional Development Agencies** (whose future is currently uncertain), but current information is listed here: ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm?pay=117&list=no
- **The European Social Fund** (www.esf.gov.uk) encourages employment and skills.
- **Leader +** (www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rdpe/leader.htm) distributed by Local Action Groups and has gone to quite a lot of rural food projects.

Regional funding opportunities

Try your local council for voluntary service (or CVS as many are called) for information about funding opportunities and help writing bids or for development support for your group.

Information on regional grants is available on the Duport website:

- www.duport.co.uk/advisor/financial/grants/english-regional-grants.php
- www.duport.co.uk/advisor/financial/grants/welsh-regional-grants.php
- www.duport.co.uk/advisor/financial/grants/northern-ireland-grants.php
- www.duport.co.uk/advisor/financial/grants/nationwide-grants.php

Other useful sources of information

Grant information is available via the Government Funding portal and Funding Central:

- www.governmentfunding.org.uk
- www.fundingcentral.org.uk

Directory of Social Change publishes various guides and websites with funding and contract information, see: www.dsc.org.uk.

The Food Standards Agency has published **Sources of Funding for Food Related Initiatives**: (www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/enfe08040guidance.pdf).

National bodies such as NCVO www.ncvo-vol.org.uk offer advice and information about new funding opportunities.

The Local Action on Food website has information on funding opportunities and webportals where you can search for suitable grants www.sustainweb.org/localactiononfood/local_food_funding/

Join the Local Action on Food network! It costs between £20 and £100, depending on your organisation's size and type. What you get:

- A regular round-up of the latest funding news.
- A discount on the events we are organising
- A monthly e-newsletter packed with national, regional and local food information
- Events, conferences and networking opportunities
- Promotion of member projects via our website and newsletters
- quarterly printed copy of our publication *Rhubarb*
- Information about Sustain's work with regular updates and actions