

Supporting your CCIF Application



The Customer and Communities Improvement Fund

The CrossCountry Customer & Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) is our community grant fund, specifically designed to support community projects that deliver tangible social and environmental benefits.

CCIF allows communities and stakeholders across the CrossCountry network to identify and develop local projects and schemes that can make a real difference to the communities we serve.

This document includes everything you need to know about the type of schemes we're looking for, how to apply and who to contact should you have any queries.

**Our
Values**



We care
passionately



We make the
difference



We do the
right thing

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1. What can the grant cover?

You can bid for funding for any project that addresses an environmental or social need within any community across the length and breadth of the CrossCountry network. Applications will be judged against several criteria, read on to find out how to submit a successful proposal.

We are looking to award grant funding across a wide range of schemes and activities, anything from creating opportunities, diversity and community outreach to projects removing barriers to train travel and connecting with other modes of transport.

An integral aspect of CrossCountry's Customer and Communities Investment Fund is that it is designed to support schemes that have a tangible community benefit, address an area of social need, and are not for commercial gain. **Note all projects must be completed by no later than 30 September 2027.**

CCIF applications should **support our Sustainability Strategy** (see section below) and **demonstrate how social value benefits will be measured** through monthly data reporting.

For more information on data reporting, see 'Social Value Reporting' section below.

To help you assess whether your project supports our Sustainability Strategy, the questions below can be used to determine whether it is likely to be considered for funding:

- Does the project help people from all backgrounds access jobs and training in rail?
- Does it promote safeguarding in rail?
- Will it make train services, stations, and workplaces more welcoming, supportive, and accessible for everyone — including passengers, staff, and local communities?
- Does it champion community pride, heritage or culture?
- Does the project introduce new ideas or technologies that support sustainability, improve local communities, or create education or job opportunities?
- Does your project include strategies or technologies to reduce emissions?
- Does your project mitigate or adapt to the impacts of climate change?
- Does your project aim to reduce waste, recycle more, and use sustainable materials or repurpose existing materials?
- Will it help your organisation grow sustainably?
- Does your project help improve communication and collaboration between CrossCountry and its key stakeholders?

We do not expect a single project will answer 'yes' to all the above questions. If the project can meet a few of the above, then it is likely to be considered for funding.

*** Biodiversity Projects ***

*Our dedicated **Biodiversity Improvement Projects fund** is also open for applications. If your project specifically looks to enhance or conserve biodiversity, please see crosscountrytrains.co.uk/xc-community-hub/biodiversity-improvement-projects-fund*

Our CCIF team would be happy to discuss any project and provide feedback on its likely eligibility.

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2. How to apply

All applications must be made via the official form on our website.

<https://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/customer-and-communities-improvement-fund>

The scheme will be open for 4 weeks, from 22 June 2026

3. How will applications be assessed?

After the closing date, CrossCountry will review all applications and may contact applicants if there is a need to clarify and of the details. A CCIF Review Group comprising of CrossCountry Regional Directors and other senior managers will carry out an impartial review and assessment process, to classify all schemes as follows:

1. The scheme is one of CrossCountry's preferred CCIF bids for the current year: in this case we may have some further questions which we would like you to answer relating to your application.
2. The scheme has potential; however, we have some reservations and would like you to answer some further questions before we can consider the scheme's potential for this year.
3. The scheme is unsuccessful in this year's CCIF programme, and we will be in touch as soon as possible to give you detailed feedback as to why we have not opted to progress the proposal

Following final approval of the CCIF programme of schemes, we will provide more detailed feedback on individual bids and inform successful applicants.

For successful applicants, the grants will be paid by 30 September 2026. All projects must be completed within 12 months, no later than 30 September 2027.

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4. Alignment to our Sustainability Strategy

We would love to support schemes which align to our Sustainability Strategy pillars. Projects which align to any of the focus areas within the pillars would be considered a strong application.



PEOPLE

We are a positive force for our employees, and wider society

Focus Areas

Accessibility - Enabling everyone to access travel with confidence and independence

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Supporting inclusive, fair and representative communities where everyone can thrive

Social Mobility and Safeguarding - Expanding opportunities and protecting vulnerable people to build safer, more equitable communities



PLACES

We support sustainable community growth across our four regions

Focus Areas

Air Quality - Improving air quality to support healthier environments for communities

Biodiversity - Protecting and restoring nature to enhance local environments and wellbeing

Climate Change Adaptation - Building resilience to climate impacts to protect communities and essential services

Connected Journeys - Making sustainable travel easier to access, connecting people to opportunities and services

Sense of Place - Celebrating local identity and heritage to strengthen community pride and belonging



PLANET

We reduce the environmental footprint of our operation

Focus Areas

Carbon - Reducing emissions to support a cleaner environment and a more sustainable future

Waste - Reducing waste to protect the environment and conserve resources for future generations

Water - Protecting water resources to support healthy ecosystems and communities



5. Social Value Reporting

At CrossCountry, we use the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT), designed by Loop in partnership with the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to quantify our social impact. To calculate the Social Value from a project, it is necessary to collect data on the anticipated and achieved benefits.

The Rail Social Value Tool has dedicated metrics across various topics, which can be adapted to suit each project. The types of data we require will vary depending on the project aims, however some typical metrics may include the following

- Number of stakeholders who will be positively impacted by the project
 - This means the estimated number of individuals, groups, organisations or community members who are expected to benefit from the project, either directly or indirectly.
- Number of workshops/activity sessions to be delivered
 - This means the total number of separate sessions, events or activities that will take place as part of the project.
- Length of the workshop/activity session
 - This means the expected duration of each session, usually recorded in hours or minutes.
- Number of anticipated volunteer hours (paid)
 - This means the estimated number of hours contributed by people supporting the project while being paid by their employer, for example through employer-supported volunteering.
- Number of anticipated volunteer hours (unpaid)
 - This means the estimated number of hours contributed by volunteers who are not being paid for their time.
- Number of hours to be spent making/working on the project
 - This means the estimated total time that will be spent planning, preparing, delivering or creating the project, including staff, partner or contractor time where relevant.
- Number of people who will secure employment roles because of the project
 - This means the estimated number of people who are expected to gain paid employment directly because of the support, training, opportunities or interventions provided by the project.

When completing the application form, **please only complete the metrics which are relevant to your project.**

Our CCIF team will monitor project progress by comparing achieved benefits against the anticipated benefits set out in your application form, **so please aim to be as accurate as possible.** Projects will not be penalised if anticipated benefits are not fully achieved; instead, the CCIF team will work with you to provide support and help bring the project back on track if it falls behind.



Appendix A – CrossCountry Route Map



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