

Frequently asked questions

Questions about CRC's Core Funding Programme

Questions and answers for the CRC's Core Funding Programme that were asked during our programme information sessions. If you have any further questions please contact us on 028 90227500 or email Frances Dennison on fdennison@nicrc.org.uk

- General questions
- Questions about the application form and work plan
- Questions about the assessment process
- Questions about the online application portal

General Questions

1. Has the scheme budget been reduced this year?

No, the scheme is worth the same amount as last year (c£1.2 million) however CRC has a funding commitment to other organisations moving into second and third year funding cycles and so part of the annual budget is already committed to these organisations. The amount to be allocated in the funding round for 2021 – 2022 is estimated to be £700,000 (subject to confirmation from TEO).

2. Can a joint application be made with a partner organisation?

This scheme core funds organisations, not projects. One organisation needs to apply and take the lead. The lead organisation must submit the documentation required at page 10 of the application form and the partner documentation will need to be submitted separately. If you are considering making a joint/partnership bid please speak with Programme staff to discuss your particular requirements well in advance of the 13th November 2020 deadline.

3. Will the CRC small grants programme roll out at the same time as Core Funding?

The Community Relations and Cultural Diversity grant scheme (small grants) is due to open on 1st April 2021 and so, it should be in line with core funding. Please note however, this is subject to the timing of budget confirmation from the Executive Office. We would hope that the two schemes will run in tandem but cannot guarantee it at this stage.

4. What is the timing of decisions?

The NICRC Board will make final decisions on core funding in February 2021 and the contract start date will be 01 April 2021.

5. If you apply for 3 years and you do not get funded for this length of time, does that mean you won't receive any funding?

No, the Board of NICRC may decide to make an award for less than the requested period e.g. 2 years instead of 3 years. It is important to note that the

Board will not make an award for longer than has been requested by the applicant e.g. if you ask for 1 year of funding then this is the maximum period that will be considered.

6. When completing the question around match funding, does this have to be from another funder or can it come from the organisation's own resources?

Match funding can come from either another funder or from your own organisations reserves. It would be expected that your accounts would provide evidence of these reserves.

7. What are management accounts?

Management accounts will often be a one-page summary of your most recent financial position that summarises income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and your groups reserves. We expect this to be a document your organisation routinely prepares for the Board and/ or treasurer for internal management purposes. The management accounts will be used to give CRC an indication of your current financial position and do not need to be externally verified.

8. Are running costs apportioned and do you have to apply for them?

No, they are not apportioned and you do not need to apply for running costs if your organisation does not require them. Some applications are made for salaries only or salaries and associated travel costs. The particular running costs listed in the budget table are the only costs covered by this programme but you can select which ones you wish to apply for. You should also note that if you own your own building, you cannot apply for rent costs.

Questions about the application form and work plan

9. Do we need to complete all 6 Work Area templates?

No, we are asking that you complete one Work Area template per strategic work area. As a guide, we would expect to see perhaps 3 or 4 strategic work areas but we have allowed provision for a maximum of 6. The number you require will vary depending on the work of your organisation and the level of funding sought.

10. If we are applying for 3 years funding, do we need to complete a 3 year work plan?

No, every applicant needs to complete a work plan for the April 2021 – March 2022 (12 month) period. If your application is successful with a 2 – 3 year term awarded, you will be required to complete a year-on-year plan of work.

11. How do we describe our work if it fits across more than two of the core funding themes?

You can select a primary and secondary theme from the drop down list that gives an adequate reflection of your work, so for example if your work were focussing on improving relationships between interface communities whilst also addressing contentious issues such as parades or bonfires, you would select:

NICRC Core Funding Programme Theme (Primary): Shared Spaces (Interfaces & Contested Spaces both Urban and Rural) and
NICRC Core Funding Programme Theme (Secondary): Cultural Expression.

You should then refer to the outcomes section to give additional information that provides more depth to the description of your work.

12. If the outcomes provided in the drop down boxes are not applicable to our work, can we add in our own outcomes?

No, you must use one of the outcomes provided. The 12 CRC Core Outcomes are described in the Programme Guidance (at Appendix 2) and these were identified from an analysis of work supported by this programme over a long period of time. If there is something that you feel is not covered then please do speak to us and we will advise you on where your work may sit. As a general rule however, if you are struggling to fit your work into the framework that is provided, you may need to consider if this Core Funding Programme is an appropriate fund for your organisation.

13. Do the four strategic priorities/ welcome statements have a specific budget apportionment?

No, the budget hasn't been divided up in that way.

14. Under the 'Direct Engagement' part of the Work Area templates, what level of detail is required and should we list every single group we work with?

It is important that you clearly demonstrate who your beneficiaries are. You need to be able to specifically name the groups or partners you will directly engage in each work area as this shows your organisation has a clear plan and strategy in place for work next year. Applications that can clearly define this will score higher than an application that references working with the 'general public' or 'Belfast youth' for example. If you are able to identify your programme beneficiaries then you should also be able to provide their specific locations at a postcode level (for example if it is working with a particular youth club/ residents group etc.).

If you simply provide a list of all the groups/ agencies you currently work with, this will not give the assessing officer enough detail or focus on the specifics of the work you are outlining– we need you to narrow the focus onto the direct beneficiaries of this particular aspect of your work. We expect that in most cases these beneficiary details will be different for each Work Area template you complete.

15. When looking at the 'how well you did it' section and the Survey Questions provided, will you need us to ask participants this question?

No, but we do ask that you consider the survey questions provided and decide which one would best help you measure the impact of your work.

NICRC is continuing to work with funded groups and TEO on how we can work together to develop effective measurement tools that provide good quality information. If your funding application is successful, NICRC staff will continue to work with you in developing methods of measuring progress.

Questions about the assessment process

16. Will additional weighting be applied to applications meeting one or more of the strategic priorities/ welcome statement areas?

Additional weighting is not applied however under the methodology scoring we look for proposals that have a good programme remit/ strategic fit. This section carries the highest marks (60%) so applications that provide strategic, achievable and clearly articulated outcomes will score higher marks in this section than those that don't. It's important to note that strong proposals will not be penalised for working outside of the welcome statement areas.

17. How will NICRC assess value for money?

Value for money will be determined using a number of indicators that include: the overall cost of the bid; looking at the work plan and determining if it is part of a planned, wider strategic plan (rather than reactionary); that it is achievable and that the work will provide good geographical coverage in areas of need and will have sound community relations outcomes.

If you make an inflated bid (in the hope that a lesser award would actually be enough for you to deliver) you must understand that this will affect your value for money score. Inflated costs are immediately recognisable to assessing officers and asking for more than you need may have a detrimental effect on your assessment score.

Questions about the online application portal

18. Can I download a pdf of the application form?

Yes – from the Summary Page you can view or download a PDF of the application form at any stage of the application process.

19. Do you save progress at each stage or if moving from page to page or back to Summary Page?

Yes – save your progress to ensure that your work is not lost.

20. Completing the Form

You will not be able to submit your form until all of the pages are complete. The system will tell you where there are any questions unanswered by highlighting these at the top of the page and also highlighting the questions themselves in red. You will not be able to access the submit button until all of the questions have been answered and the form is 100% Complete.

The submit button will be found under the bar indicating that the form is 100% complete.