



# Community Radio Fund

**Guidance Notes**

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## Section 1

# Community Radio Fund (“the Fund”)

## The Fund Guidance Notes

### 1.1 Background

Ofcom has been tasked by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (“DCMS”) with administering the Fund. The legislation that provides for this delegation is the Communications Act 2003 section 359, which states ‘*Ofcom may make such grants as they consider appropriate to the provider of any [community radio service]*’. DCMS is providing up to £500,000 per annum for the Fund (at present confirmed until 2010/11). A consultation was undertaken by Ofcom in January 2005 and a policy statement published in May 2005. The Community Radio Fund Panel (“the Panel”) was appointed in September 2005 and reports directly to the Ofcom Board. For further details of Panel members and for information about Community Radio and the Fund, please refer to Ofcom’s website [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun\\_radio/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun_radio/)

### 1.2 What is the Fund for?

The Fund has been established to help fund the core costs of running a community radio station. These not-for-profit radio stations have a social purpose, and work to involve their target community in running the service. While some of the activities undertaken by a station such as training, may attract funding more easily than other types of activity, it is recognised that the essential core work involved in running a station is the most difficult for which to find funding. This is what the Community Radio Fund has been set up to provide help for. These core functions might include, for example:

- fundraising to support the station (e.g. grants, commercial funding)
- management
- administration
- financial management & reporting
- community outreach
- volunteer organisation and support

The Panel considers promoting long-term sustainability a critical, core activity, and will take special note of innovative proposals that have this aim, such as those focussing on business development and fund-raising. The Panel also believes there is scope for more collaborative working or joint applications from stations. A list of items that the Fund will not support is included as Annex A at the end of this document.

### 1.3 Eligibility to apply for funding

- Grants can only be made to community radio licensees (“Licensee”) which are broadcasting under a community radio licence (and not an RSL, for example)

- If awarded funding, the Licensee has to undertake that it will commence using the Grant within a reasonable time after receipt.
- There will be two rounds of grant awards in each (financial) year. Normally<sup>\*</sup>, if a Licensee has received a grant (or grants) in one funding round, it will not be considered for a further grant in the same financial year. Such a Licensee can apply in the next year and subsequent years (although they will not be given priority, see below).
- Priority will be given to Licensees that have **NOT** been awarded a grant in previous funding rounds.
- Joint applications may be submitted by two or more Licensees, for example to co-fund a shared post.
- An application may be submitted which sets out for consideration grants for more than one purpose, but details should be included on the same form. If more than one grant purpose is identified, Licensees should indicate the priority of each one by listing them in order of importance. However, the relative priority that the Panel may wish to attach to any purpose is entirely at the Panel's discretion. The Panel may consider making a grant to an applicant to fund more than one purpose.
- A grant from the Fund should not breach the statutory requirement that no more than 50% of a station's annual income comes from one source. Licensees should check their funding position in relation to this legislative requirement.
- Licensees that receive a grant will be required to report back to the Panel about how the grant has been spent. Without a satisfactory report back, the Panel will not normally consider making a further grant to a Licensee.
- If funding awarded has not been spent according to the agreed purpose of the award without prior agreement with the Panel, until this matter is resolved then no further applications will be considered. Failure to comply with the conditions of funding may also result in the suspension of future funding or the return of funding already released.

Important note regarding station launch date:

It is a requirement of Ofcom's funding agreement with DCMS that all grants are paid to stations in the financial year in which the award is made, and payment can only be made when a station has launched (and becomes an Ofcom licensee). Ofcom's 2005 statement on its Community Radio Fund policy said that the fund should be operated with the minimum of resources needed, commensurate with ensuring relevant targeting, efficiency and appropriate oversight. In order to avoid an excessive administrative burden, all stations awarded a grant must be on air by the time that the Panel meets to consider applications for the second round of funding in each financial year. This meeting is usually held in January (the exact date is published on the Ofcom website). This means that successful applicants in the first grant round each year must be on air by the time that the Panel meets for the second round or its grant will not be paid. The monies from any grant offers that are withdrawn as a result will be reallocated to other applicants, at the discretion of the Panel. This is to avoid any funding being lost to the sector (any unallocated funding is not guaranteed to be carried over to the Fund for the following financial year). Applications in the second round will not be considered unless

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<sup>\*</sup> During the course of the financial year 2006/07 an additional sum was made available to the Fund and therefore the Panel decided to accept applications in the second round from successful applicants in the first round. The Panel does not expect that this situation will arise again.

the applicant is on air by the time the Panel meets to consider second round applications.

#### **1.4 How much can be applied for?**

There is no limit to how much can be applied for. However, the Panel asks applicants to take note of previous grant awards for an indication of realistic award figures. Grants will be made as a single 'lump sum'.

## Section 2

# The application and award process

## 2.1 Application information

Licensees have four (4) weeks to submit applications, from the date the Panel invites applications for that round of funding. The applications must be received by Ofcom before the deadline, by email and post. Licensees should ensure that they send the same information by both email and post.

The deadline for receipt of applications for each funding round is published on the Ofcom website.

The applications will be reviewed by the Community Radio Licensing Team (“the Team”) to ensure all information has been received. If the Team has any queries about the information received it will endeavour to contact the Licensee for clarification purposes. No new information can be submitted after the deadline other than that requested by the Team. The only exception is a change in the Licensee contact details.

All the applications will be reviewed by the Panel whose decisions are final.

## 2.2 How to apply

- Download the application form from Ofcom’s website. If you encounter any difficulties when downloading the information please contact Ofcom’s webmaster on [webmaster@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@ofcom.org.uk). If the query relates to the application form please contact the Team (Alex Campbell on 020 7981 3860, Elaine Woolford 020 7981 3886 or Soo Williams on 020 7783 4319).
- Complete the application form. If you intend to submit an application for funding for more than one purpose, you need to clearly set this out in the form. You need to indicate the priority of each grant purpose.
- Please be clear and concise about what the funding will be used for. Provide information on the grant purpose and objectives, and timeline for grant spend. If the funding sought is for staff, a job description(s) and a financial breakdown between salary, employer’s on costs (such as employer’s national insurance, pension, and management fee) should be provided. The Panel also needs some station budgetary and funding information to help them understand the Licensee’s needs.
- Each applicant should set out its reasons for applying for a grant under question 5. **This is a Licensee’s opportunity to argue its case for funding.**

## 2.3 Submitting applications

- Check all information is provided where applicable on the application form.
- Include details of any matched funding obligations, and supporting material relating to this.
- Ensure that the declaration is signed and dated.
- Keep a full copy of the application for your own records.
- Submit on line to [communityradio@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:communityradio@ofcom.org.uk) and send signed hard copies with any appropriate supporting documentation (supporting documentation should be kept to a minimum and applicants should note that copies may be made in black and white so information should be clearly visible in this format). Please do not include DVDs or CDs. Please submit emailed copies of the application form in either Word or RTF format, rather than PDF, if possible (Ofcom will transfer documents submitted into Braille format and it is more practical to do this in these formats). Both email and paper copies have to be received by Ofcom before the deadline. If you have any problems with email please contact the Team. (Hard copies will be accepted, however faxed copies will not.)
- Applications to the Fund will be treated as **confidential** and will not be published or disclosed during the process.
- Ensure that correspondence is clearly addressed to the Community Radio Fund Panel, Radio Licensing Team (5<sup>th</sup> Floor), Ofcom, 2A Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA.

## 2.4 Notification of award and non-award decisions

- The Team will notify Licensees of the outcome of the application award round by email. Notification will be to the contact given in the application. General feedback on the reasons for unsuccessful applications will be published by Ofcom but detailed individual feedback will not be available.
- Grant funding will be subject to the successful Licensee signing a Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement will confirm that the Licensee accepts the grant on the basis that the funding will be spent as per its grant application proposal.
- After the completed Grant Agreement has been returned to the Team, arrangements for the funding to be transferred by BACS to the bank account given in the application form will be made.
- Awards will be made public via Ofcom's website. The grant recipient, amount of award and purpose of the grant will be announced.

## 2.5 Additional information

- The Licensee will be required to report back to the Panel on how the funding has been spent. A standard report-back form is available on the community radio pages on Ofcom's website at [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun\\_radio/Communityfund/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun_radio/Communityfund/). The Panel also expects Licensees to make their community aware of activities supported by the Fund, e.g. publish a statement on their website or via on air announcements.
- The purpose and scope of grants from the Fund may vary from year to year and these guidelines will be varied accordingly. These guidelines were published in April 2008 and may be subject to change in future. Applicants are advised to check the Ofcom website for the latest version of the guidance notes and application form.
- The Panel would welcome feedback on these guidance notes, including views on what grants from the fund should be used for, and the application form (to [communityradio@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:communityradio@ofcom.org.uk)).

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## Section 3

# Annex A

### 3.1 Exclusions List

**This list is intended to provide prospective applicants with information on what grants from the Fund will not be awarded for.**

- Retrospective grants i.e. to cover expenditure already incurred
- Funding for the repayment of loans
- Research costs
- Company Directors' fees
- Vehicle costs
- Travel expenses
- Volunteer expenses
- Cost of building repairs, construction or maintenance
- Purchase of furnishings
- Programming costs
- Utility bills
- Rent due on premises and/or mortgage payments

Funding in the form of emergency grants or for capital equipment e.g. transmitter or studio equipment will not usually be considered.

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