



Grant Making Guidelines

Introduction

Founded in 2007, by descendants of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions in the early part of the 20th century, the Shackleton Foundation is a small grant making foundation investing in early-stage social entrepreneurs helping disadvantaged and socially marginalised young people. Shackleton helped others to overcome their doubts and fears in the face of true adversity. We are looking for individuals who display those same characteristics of courage and resilience, who have a big idea to help others (we call it your 'Antarctic') and are prepared to take the risk to turn it into reality.

The early stage of launching a social venture is likely to be the hardest (the first mile) – critically underfunded, often unsupported and isolating. Other funders often shy away from unproven leaders or untested models leaving transformative ideas stranded before they can make a difference. The Shackleton Foundation backs individuals (we call them Leaders) who exemplify the spirit of Shackleton (leadership, innovation, enterprise, ambition) with seed-funding to help them start their venture.

Successful applicants can expect to receive assistance with the practical aspects of starting up a social venture. These include:

- Seed-funding
- Access to a Leader Partner
- Access to quarterly advice surgeries and an annual Leaders Forum
- Awareness building for your venture
- Introductions to potential second stage funders

General Information

Funding is generally made by means of a single grant or loan of up to £15,000 to provide the funding needed to get an idea started – the first mile.

Eligibility criteria:

- We only accept applications from individuals setting up new organisations or organisations no more than 12 months old (from the date of registration). We do not accept new projects out of existing organisations.
- Your project must solely benefit **disadvantaged** children and young people (0-25 years) based in the UK (100% of beneficiaries).
- We only accept applications where the funding request (up to £15,000) is at least 25% or more of the total annual project cost.

For the purposes of your application to the Shackleton Foundation, a young person, under 25 may be considered disadvantaged if they face one or more barriers that limit their access to opportunities, resources, or outcomes compared to their peers.

These barriers to education, employment, training, health, or wider life opportunities may include (but are not limited to):

1. Living in a low-income household or experiencing financial hardship
2. Being eligible for Free School Meals, Pupil Premium, or means-tested benefits

3. Being not in education, employment or training (NEET)
4. Experiencing housing insecurity, homelessness, or unstable accommodation
5. Being care-experienced, a care leaver, or a young carer
6. Having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
7. Experiencing mental health challenges or poor emotional wellbeing
8. Living in an area of high deprivation
9. Experiencing barriers linked to discrimination or inequality

The young people (beneficiaries) do not need to meet all of these criteria. We recognise that disadvantage can be complex, overlapping, and change over time. However these should be barriers that have had, or continue to have, a material impact on the young person's access to opportunities.

Trustees are looking for:

- Projects that are innovative and fresh
- Fulfil a clear need and demand
- Have a real social impact
- Have well-defined outputs and goals
- Have the potential for real growth and sustainability

Leadership qualities sought by Trustees include:

- Purpose
- Endurance
- Lived Experience
- Adaptability
- Courage

Particular aspects that the Trustees will want to understand about the project include:

- How will the Shackleton Award enable you to deliver the project?
- How will disadvantaged young people benefit? And how many?
- Where do you see your idea, in five years time?
- How will you measure success/know that you are succeeding?

As a rule, the Shackleton Foundation does not involve itself in directly financing projects for which substantial government funding is available.

Grant-making Procedure

Having completed the eligibility quiz, applicants must submit a completed application form online via the Shackleton Foundation website. We review applications quarterly and the deadline dates are available on the website. We reserve the right to close for applications at any time prior to the deadline if we have reached the maximum number we can fairly review. We may explore using AI over the coming months to help us to carry out some processing tasks more efficiently and effectively.

Stage 1: Applicants will receive a confirmation email on safe receipt of their application.

Stage 2: Applications are screened to check they meet all eligibility criteria and funding requirements. Applications that do not meet these essential requirements will be rejected at this stage.

Stage 3: All eligible applications are independently reviewed by Trustees and receive the fullest and most careful consideration and are judged on merit and substance, without bias. Clarity of presentation and the provision of detailed factual information are of the utmost importance to the Trustees. We do not use AI technologies in carrying out the assessment, or decision-making on eligible applications.

Stage 4: All applicants will be notified of a decision once the Trustees have reviewed all applications. A very small percentage of applicants will then be shortlisted for interview.

Shortlisted Applicants

The Trustees review all funding applications and invite the most outstanding potential Leaders to present to them (virtually via Zoom/ Teams). These meetings are held quarterly. If you are invited to present to the Trustees, you will be provided with interview guidelines.

The Shackleton Foundation takes the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults very seriously. For this reason, we require shortlisted applicants to have in place an up-to-date safeguarding policy that is relevant to their beneficiaries. This will be requested at the point of shortlisting. Advice on writing a safeguarding policy that is suitable for your organisation can be found on the NSPCC website [here](#).

Unsuccessful applicants

The decision of the Foundation is final, and it is not able to enter into further communication with unsuccessful applicants. It will endeavour to provide some feedback if considered constructive. The Foundation does not restrict subsequent applications (for the same organisation) but would expect there to be significant improvements made to the original submission.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be asked to prepare a Shackleton Leaders' Agreement (SLA), which outlines the key way in which the project will be managed and what Leaders will share with the Shackleton Foundation in exchange for their Award (a draft SLA is available for successful applicants).

Applicants will be required to undertake the following:

- Attend the annual Shackleton Leaders Forum in the first two years of your award and try to attend additional forums thereafter.
- Speak at a Shackleton Leaders Forum, if asked
- Take part in our Leader Partner programme. Each new Shackleton Leader will be paired with a Leader leaving the programme in their 3rd year. The seasoned Leader will arrange a one-off partner session lasting 60 minutes where they will share insights and experiences and answer any questions. Three years after your award you will be paired with a new Leader and agree to offer the same session.
- Attend at least two of the three Leaders Information and Advice Surgeries in the first year of your award (approx. 45-60 mins per event)

Guidelines on Grant or Loan

The Shackleton Foundation will issue a grant Award to social enterprises whose legal structure falls into categories A, B, C, or D below.

The Shackleton Foundation will issue a loan Award to social enterprises whose legal structure falls into categories E, F, G, or H below. The loan facility would be interest-free with no fixed term. The main condition is that when your organisation becomes profitable, it would repay the loan before distributing to shareholders. Information on the terms of the loan will be available to successful applicants.

We only consider applications from private companies that can clearly demonstrate a commitment to lasting public benefit. To be eligible, applicants must either:

- Have an asset lock or equivalent legal safeguard to ensure profits and assets are used for the company's stated social purpose, or
- Have a clear mission statement showing how their work supports our charitable aims.

This ensures our funding supports organisations that share our values. Applicants must supply evidence of the asset lock (e.g., a copy of the relevant governing document) or a copy of their mission statement as part of the application process.

Legal Structures.

- A Registered charity (limited by guarantee)
- B Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee (CIC-CLG)
- C Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- D Unincorporated Association
- E Community Interest Company Limited by Shares (CIC-CLS)
- F Company (limited by guarantee)
- G Company (limited by shares)
- H Other