

An aerial photograph of a large school building with a flat roof covered in solar panels. The building has multiple stories with many windows. The solar panels are arranged in neat rows across the roof. The building is surrounded by some greenery and a paved area.

SCHOOL SOLAR ENABLING FUND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE NET ZERO HUB

SCHOOL SOLAR ENABLING FUND – NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE NET ZERO HUB

THE NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE NET ZERO HUB

The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub (NEY) is at the centre of the region's ambitious efforts to drive a low-carbon, clean-growth future.

Funded by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the NEY Net Zero Hub is one of five across the country, all focusing on helping the UK reach Net-Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Our Net Zero Hub combines six Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the region, bringing local authorities, businesses, organisations and communities together to help us achieve our goals.

A Net Zero Hub Manager and small core team are based in Tees Valley Combined Authority with a Net Zero Hub funded Energy Project Manager based in each of our six LEP areas. The LEPs are driving the transition to a zero carbon economy with ambitious energy strategy and innovative project delivery.

THE SCHOOL SOLAR ENABLING FUND

The School Solar Enabling Fund is a £150,000 investment scheme providing capital grants to schools and education providers within the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub's geography to fund a viability gap preventing the delivery of solar energy projects. The NEY Net Zero Hub geography covers the North East, Tees Valley, York and North Yorkshire, Hull and East Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and South Yorkshire.

Grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 are available to eligible schools and learning providers. These funds have been provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to deliver enabling works and meet viability funding gaps to leverage investment for school's solar projects across the North East and Yorkshire region. The School Solar Enabling Fund will be live from August 2022 until March 2023, with all funding to be committed by successful applicants, and all projects delivered, by March 2023.

Applicants will be required to provide a statement of UK Subsidy Control compliance.



FUNDING CONDITIONS

The investment of all grant funding and associated outputs must be within the NEY Net Zero Hub's geography.

Before continuing with your application, it is important to note the following:

- If work on a project has already begun (including if items have been ordered) then it is not eligible for financial support. Grant funding should be claimed for work undertaken after an application has been submitted, a written offer has been made, and a funding agreement is in place. Grant funding will not be awarded to finance any work completed or equipment purchased before a funding agreement is in place.
- In exceptional circumstances work on the project may commence at the applicant's own risk and with the approval of the NEY Net Zero Hub and their Accountable Body Tees Valley Combined Authority once receipt of the full application, with all supporting information, has been acknowledged and a clear rationale has been provided for starting at risk.
- Successful applicants will receive grant funding in arrears against evidence of spend and at the intervention rate approved.

ELIGIBILITY

The following organisations are eligible to apply:

- Local Authority Schools
- Education Trusts
- FE and HE Colleges
- Universities
- Other learning providers subject to business case and UK Subsidy Control.

Please note the following:

- All applicants must provide a technical report from an appropriately qualified assessor or assessment tool supporting their application. This report must include the following:
 - A supported recommendation to install solar PV, including quantity, specification
 - Scope of works required, including any ancillary works required
 - Cost estimates

If possible, the report should also include:

- Expected CO2 savings following installation of solar panels
- Expected Financial savings following installation of solar panels
- The investment and associated outputs must be within the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub's geography.
- All funding to be paid to successful applicants by March 2023 subject to signed funding agreement.
- Projects should be fully delivered by 31st March 2023. Significant concerns around delivery may result in the funding offer being withdrawn.

PROJECT COSTS

Eligible project costs can include:

- Ancillary building works (Roof works or groundworks that are recommended within a supporting report to allow solar panels to be installed)
- Funding to plug an identified and evidenced viability gap to allow a financial/business case to be approved.

The following costs are not eligible under the School Solar Enabling Fund:

- Feasibility studies and surveys (funds available to support the implementation of recommendations from studies and surveys)
- Marketing, promotion, and sales

- Retrospective or prior start activity
- School and college curriculum delivery or trips
- General IT software such as Microsoft Office packages and renewal of software licenses
- VAT

If in doubt about whether your project or costs would be eligible, please contact Abbie Raynes at enquiries@NEYnetzerohub.com.

Quotes for all project costs are required to evidence the total eligible cost and calculate the eligible grant. To ensure that value for money is being obtained, ideally three quotes should be obtained for major purchases. It is not always necessary for the chosen supplier to be the cheapest if a higher quote can be demonstrated to provide better value for money.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

One of the following is a priority target and must be achieved by your proposed project by 31st March 2023:

- Installed solar PV panels

OR

- Completed ancillary works to enable the installation of solar PV panels

GRANT PARAMETERS

The minimum grant value that you can apply for is £5,000, whilst the maximum grant value is £10,000. All applicants will be required to provide a statement from a suitably qualified legal advisor to demonstrate UK Subsidy Control compliance. All funding must be committed by successful applicants by 31st March 2023. Delivery of all projects and agreed outputs must be complete by 31st March 2023.

CASE STUDY REQUIREMENT

If your application is successful, the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub will require you to provide a detailed case study of your project, describing how the funds were used and the impact they had. A template for this case study will be provided. This case study will help the Net Zero Hub to assess the successes of the grant, showcase the carbon reduction and community benefit work in the region, and compile lessons 'learnt' which can be used to benefit future projects.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Successful applicants will be expected to:

- Recognise the financial contribution of the NEY Net Zero Hub in all published materials and publicity
- Not engage in any media activity around the project without first consulting with the NEY Net Zero Hub and shall support the Hub in its own associated media activity
- Allow the final report to be published by the NEY Net Zero Hub on its website
- Provide a final Case Study upon completion of their project, on a template to be provided by the NEY Net Zero Hub

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

When completing your application form, please refer back to this guidance document. All of the information requested within the application form is key to the consideration of your application, and in completing the application you should be as thorough and comprehensive as possible.

Please pay particular attention to ensuring the following sections are completed fully and accurately:

- Total Project Costings
 - The values you provide should be based on the total cost of your submitted quotations. Please do not estimate or round the total amount as your grant will be calculated against actual quotations submitted.
- Value of Grant Requested
 - Grant value requests must fall between £5,000 and £10,000. Please be aware, if your application is successful, in some exceptional circumstances, we may not award the full requested grant amount.
- Funding Options
 - The School Solar Enabling Fund is intended to fill a gap in funding and therefore it is important that you show you have already explored other options and/or that a grant is required to incentivise investment by your governing structure before requesting a grant.
- Total Project Value and Identified Funding Sources
 - You will need to show that all the remaining funds needed to undertake your project are confirmed from appropriate sources.
- Project Outputs and Outcomes
 - You must clearly state the outputs and outcomes of your project following the installation of the solar panels. This information must match the values provided in your supporting report from an appropriately qualified assessor or assessment tool.
- Previous Funding Awards
 - You must provide details of all previous public funding awards that you have received within the last 3 years.

- Relevant Permissions
 - This may also include things like land and building ownership/tenure, planning permission, environmental permits, etc. As previously noted, projects must be ready to deliver and there is a strong expectation that permissions will have been sought (and preferably acquired) before a funding application is submitted. Because of this, associated costs are not eligible for funding and should be covered by the applicant.
- Quotations for Works
 - Ideally three for each significant purchase. Quotations are required to verify your project costs. If supplying more than one quote for a single item, please indicate clearly within the supporting information if you have a preferred supplier. Likewise, if a quote provides costs for multiple options, please indicate clearly which the preferred option is. If this is not the cheapest quote, then you should also indicate why this choice has been made.
- Declaration
 - Please ensure that you have read and understood the declaration within the application form. The application is not complete until you have agreed to the declaration and provided all relevant supporting information/documentation.

Once you have submitted the application you will receive a confirmation of receipt and may be contacted again for further information or clarifications once an appraisal of the application is underway. The Application Form and associated documentation will be treated with the strictest of confidence. If you need assistance in completing the Application Form or have any questions, please contact enquiries@NEYnetzerohub.com.

Please read the guidance above carefully. During grant projects we often receive a high number of applications that do not meet our grant guidance. We understand that your time is precious, so to ensure you do not waste time on an application that is not eligible for funding, we strongly recommend that you read the grant guidance and application form before deciding to apply. If you are in any doubt that your project would be eligible under the grant guidance, or you have queries then please do contact us for a discussion and we will do our best to help.

APPRAISAL PROCESS

1. For your project to be considered for a grant award, it must comply with the eligibility criteria as well as UK Subsidy Control Rules. Meeting both of these criteria alone does not automatically result in a grant award, your application then needs to be appraised.
2. Once submitted, your application will undergo a high level eligibility check. Applications that pass the eligibility threshold will be subject to a full appraisal and may be subject to a due diligence check and/or finance and legal checks. If undertaken this will normally be as part of the appraisal process but in some circumstances may take place after the appraisal process and before a funding agreement is awarded. These checks will be completed by TVCA as the host authority for the Net Zero Hub.
3. Projects offering the most value to the programme will be prioritised for funding, though selection will also consider location to achieve optimum geographical spread. The Net Zero Hub Board will receive the appraisers' recommendations and agree the final funding allocations..

Funding will be awarded at the discretion of the Net Zero Hub and TVCA and is subject to the availability of funds and the terms of the offer.

TIMESCALES

1. The School Solar Enabling Fund will be open for applications from 22nd August 2022.
2. This fund will close for applications on 30th September 2022.
3. The appraisal process, as explained above, will take place between 1st October 2022 and 16th October 2022.
4. Recommended projects will be presented to the Hub Board via written procedure.
5. Successful applicants will be notified by no later than 1st November 2022.

FUNDING AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTING

Following the funding award a funding agreement, including an opening offer letter, will be sent to the successful applicant that clearly sets out the conditions of the offer.

Successful applicants will have 14 days from receipt of the funding agreement and offer letter to contract or risk losing their award. The maximum amount payable for the support of the project will be fixed in the Offer Letter.

Once the funding agreement has been signed and returned, it will be countersigned by TVCA. Once the agreement has been signed by both parties, a member of the TVCA Claims and Monitoring team will be assigned to the project who will process grant claims and monitor the progress of the project. The Claims and Monitoring representative will schedule a meeting to ensure that the implications of accepting the fund are fully understood and acknowledged. They will also provide a claims form to be used throughout the claims process and will provide a demonstration of how this should be completed. During this meeting, applicants will be informed of the evidence they need to retain and provide to support their claims.

Any significant changes to the project will require approval from the NEY Net Zero Hub.

MAKING A CLAIM

Grants are paid in arrears against evidence of spend and at the approved intervention rate. Applicants must ensure that they have sufficient cash flow to make purchases in full ahead of drawing down the grant. Grants can be claimed in stages against expenditure incurred to date. It is not necessary to complete the entire investment before submitting a claim, however, all claims must be received before 31st March 2023. Any claims received after this date may not be paid.

Grant Claims will need to be accompanied by invoices and evidence of payment (for example bank statements). This should be provided in electronic format with original copies held by the beneficiary. This evidence may be verified by a monitoring visit.

The total amount of grant payable will be either the maximum sum specified in the Funding Agreement, or (if less) the value of the eligible expenditure.

No payments will be made unless all funding conditions have been complied with and no expenditure incurred before the start date indicated in the offer letter will be eligible for funding.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The milestones that have been agreed within the funding agreement will be regularly reviewed to check whether there are any changes, risks or issues that will affect the delivery of the proposed project.

Progress reports will be required from the applicant on an ad-hoc basis if required. The completion of these progress updates is a conditional element of the funding and failure to supply them could result in a grant offer being revoked.

Funding recipients must keep a record of all eligible expenditure (receipts, invoices etc.), quotes, tenders and procurement practices and all financial contributions made towards the Project. The NEY Net Zero Hub and TVCA will require evidence of outputs.

Recipients of the Schools Solar Enabling Fund are required to support any evaluation of the programme by supplying a final case study and by participating in evaluation research as required.