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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) Round 3

## Information if you want to apply



**Easy read booklet**  
February 2023

# Who we are and what this booklet tells you about



We are **Arts Council England**.



We help artists and arts organisations be creative and make art and culture.



We work with libraries to help them **develop**. **Develop** means grow and get better.

**LIF**  
**Round 3**



This booklet tells you about the **Libraries Improvement Fund** (called **LIF** for short). It tells you how to apply for money from the third part of the fund, called **Round 3**.



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

We worked with the **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport** (called **DCMS** for short) to make the rules for the LIF.



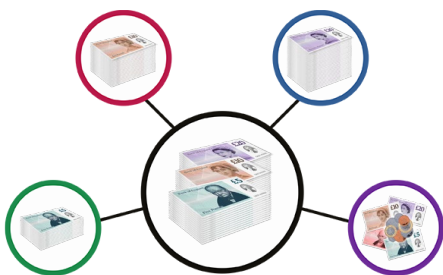
The DCMS is part of the UK **Government**. The **Government** is in charge of running our country.



The DCMS do work to make people's lives better. They are in charge of checking how good library services are in England.



The DCMS gives the money for the LIF.



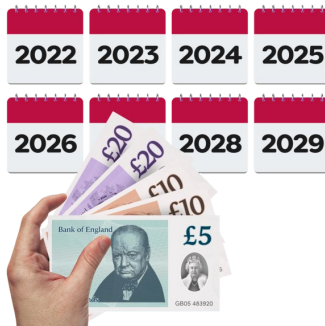
We do the work to give out the money from the LIF.

# About the LIF

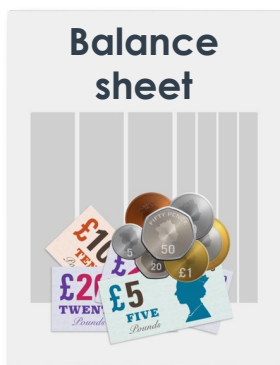


The LIF is money for library services to do projects that will **improve** library buildings and equipment. This is called **capital expenditure**.

**Improve** means make better.



**Capital expenditure** is money spent on things that will last a long time. It must be shown on your **balance sheet**.



Your **balance sheet** shows how much money your organisation is worth. It shows what you own and how much money you owe.



When you get money from the LIF, it's called a **capital grant**.



We have £10.5 million to give out in Round 3. We want to support lots of different types of projects.



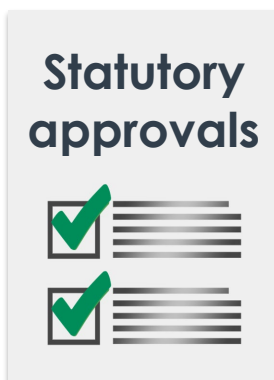
If you get a LIF capital grant in Round 3, you must

- start your project between 1 April 2024 and 1 July 2024.
- finish your project before 31 March 2027.



## Building projects

A **building project** is a project that has to follow certain rules before it can happen. The rules are called **statutory approvals**.



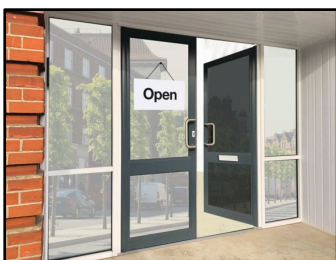
The main **statutory approvals** are

- building regulations.
- planning permission.



If your project is a building project, you need to send extra information when you apply. We tell you what you need to send in this booklet.

# Aims of the LIF



The aims of the LIF are to improve library buildings and equipment so

- libraries are ready for the future and will last a long time.
- more people use libraries.
- lots of different types of people use libraries.
- people have a better time when they use libraries.
- people understand more about the good things libraries do.
- **communities** know about and use library services more. **Communities** are local places and the people who live there.
- online library services are better, and people know they can use them.
- libraries work more with other local organisations.
- libraries have more computers people can use.
- library systems are better.
- libraries are open for longer.

# Who can apply



The organisation that applies must be a **local authority**.



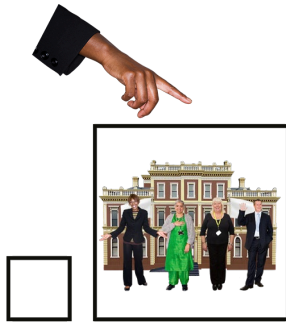
**Local authorities** are in charge of running local services, including libraries.



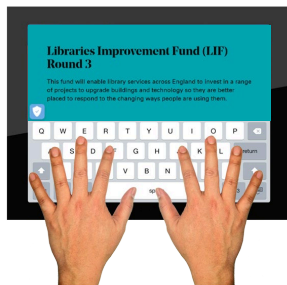
Organisations can work together to apply. This is called a **partnership**.



Partnerships must be officially agreed and written down in a **partnership agreement**.  
[Click this link to find out more.](#)

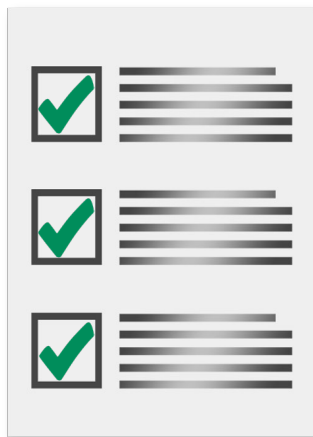


The local authority are called the **lead organisation**.



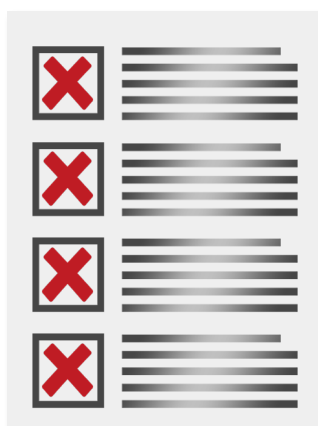
If you are a local authority, you must

- apply for a library service you are in charge of.
- send the application.



You can apply for

- ✓ 1 library that is not part of a bigger service.
- ✓ a group of libraries in different places that are part of a library service.
- ✓ a whole library service.



You cannot apply for

- ✗ 1 library that is part of a bigger library service.
- ✗ libraries that are not open to the public.
- ✗ libraries that are in schools, colleges or universities.
- ✗ libraries that are not looked after by a local authority.



# How much money you can apply for



You can apply for between **£50,000** and **£499,999**.



You do not have to get **partnership funding**, but it is a good idea. It might mean you are more likely to get a LIF capital grant.



**Partnership funding** means you get some money for your project from other places, like

- other grants.
- fundraising.
- loans.
- **in-kind support**. **In-kind support** means things you don't pay for, like volunteers or items a business gives you for free.





You can apply for money from other Arts Council programmes, but not for the same capital expenditure as you apply for from the LIF.



## If you got a LIF capital grant in Round 1 or Round 2

If you decide to apply for Round 3 as well, you'll need to show you can look after more than one capital grant at the same time.



For Round 3, we might want to support projects that

- haven't had money before.
- are in places we've supported less.

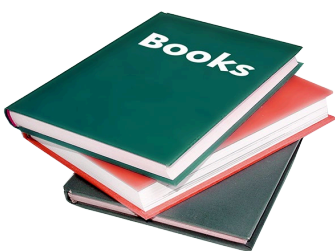
# What LIF capital grants can be used for



LIF capital grants can be used for

- ✓ building projects that make library buildings better or bigger.
- ✓ paying for things that improve library services, like furniture, equipment or vehicles.
- ✓ costs to improve computers and online systems.
- ✓ costs to make libraries more
  - **inclusive**. **Inclusive** means everyone is included.
  - **environmentally friendly**. **Environmentally friendly** means helping to look after our planet.
  - **accessible**. **Accessible** means something can be used or understood by everyone.
- ✓ paying **professionals**. **Professionals** are people with skills you might need for your project.
- ✓ paying **VAT** you cannot get back from the Government.  
**VAT** is a tax on things you buy.

# What LIF capital grants cannot be used for



LIF capital grants cannot be used for

- ✗ capital expenditure not shown on your balance sheet.
- ✗ activities, items or services that were started, ordered or agreed before you got the money.
- ✗ day to day repairs to buildings.
- ✗ building projects where you don't own the land or buildings.
- ✗ costs normally paid for by other money.
- ✗ **research. Research** is work done to find out about a subject.
- ✗ building plans that are not at the level called **RIBA Work Stage 3**.
- ✗ general costs to run your organisation, like paying for staff or advertising.
- ✗ buying new land or buildings.
- ✗ paying for books.

# Rules to follow



## Contingency

You should include a **contingency** in the **budget** for your project.



A **contingency** is an amount of money you can use for your project if it costs more than you planned for. We cannot give you more money than we agree with you.



Your **budget** is a plan that shows how you will spend the LIF capital grant if you get it. It shows how much your project will cost.



## Inflation

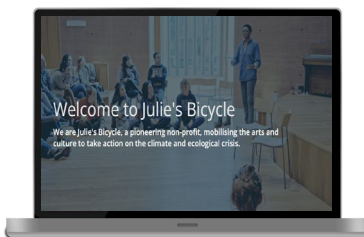
You should include **inflation** in your budget. **Inflation** means how much the cost of goods and services goes up over time.



## The environment

Your project should be environmentally friendly. You can

- use environmentally friendly materials.
- use environmentally friendly ways of building.
- think about how your buildings will affect the environment over time.
- use less energy and water.
- do more recycling.
- make a **policy** about the environment. A **policy** is a set of rules for your organisation.



The **Julie's Bicycle** website has information about how to include the environment in projects.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)



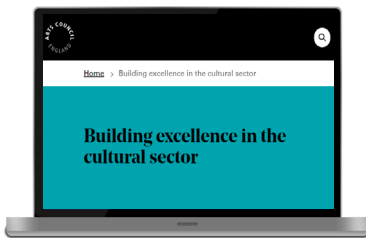
## Contracts

You should have **contracts** with the professionals you use for your project, like builders. **Contracts** are official agreements.



## Good design and building

**Design** means plans you make or draw for your project that show what it will look like and how it will work.



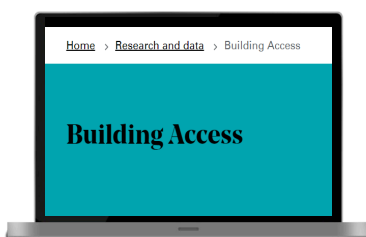
Your project should have good design and follow the right rules for building.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)



## Access audit

If your project is a building project, you must get an **access audit**, and send it with your application.



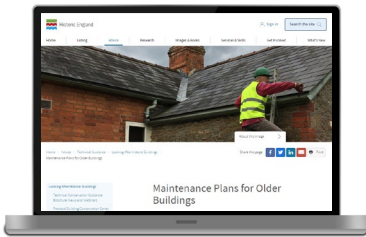
An **access audit** is a report from a professional about how accessible your building will be.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)



## Your project over time

You should have plans to look after your project for 5 to 10 years after the date we agree to give you a LIF capital grant.



The **Historic England** website has information about this.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)



## Land and buildings

You must be able to show

- you own the land or the buildings where your project will happen.
- it's ok for your project to happen on the land or the buildings.

For

- **building projects**, you must be able to use the land or buildings for your project for 10 years.
- **non-building projects**, you must be able to use the land or buildings for your project for 5 years.







## Procurement

**Procurement** means everything to do with buying goods or services for an organisation. You must find the best price when you buy goods or services.



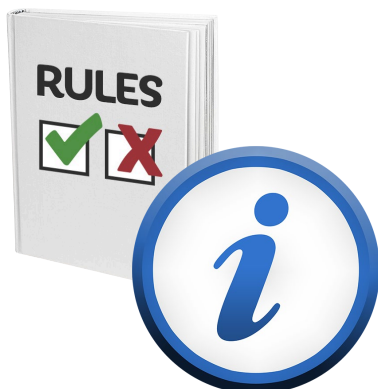
You might have to follow the law written in the **Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR)**. If you need help with this, get professional advice.



## Subsidy control rules

If you are a certain type of organisation, it might mean the money you get from the LIF is called a **subsidy**.

If it is a subsidy, you must follow the law written in the **Subsidy Control Act**.



This means you must tell us information we need to make sure your LIF capital grant follows subsidy control rules.

# Before you apply



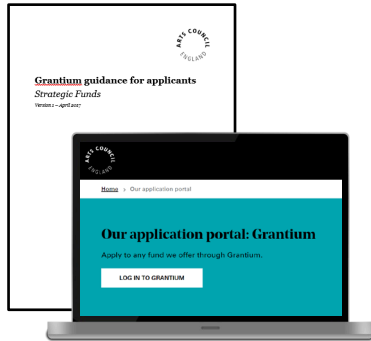
Before you apply, you should check your project is ready. Have you

- ? talked to people and communities who use the library service and included what they told you in your project plans.
- ? done research to show why your project is important and how it will help the local community.
- ? thought about **risks** for your project. **Risks** are how likely it is something bad will happen.
- ? thought about how your project will affect the library service while the work is happening and when it is done.
- ? worked out costs and how long your project will take, with help from a professional.
- ? got partnership funding if you need it, and thought about what you will do if we don't give you money.
- ? thought about what you will do if the cost of your project is more than you planned for.
- ? thought about how your project can be environmentally friendly.
- ? thought how much it will cost to keep your project going after the time the LIF capital grant is for.



# How to apply

## How to apply

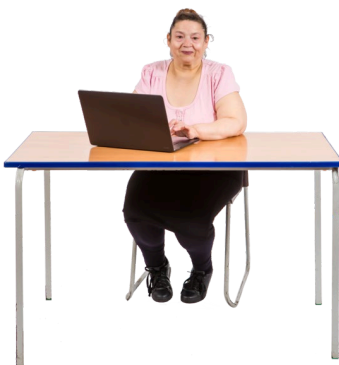


To apply for the LIF, you need to set up an online account on our system called **Grantium**.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)



Make sure you do this as soon as you can. It can take up to 2 weeks for us to finish setting up your online account.



You will do all parts of the application for the LIF in your online account.



### Expression of Interest

Before you can apply for the LIF, you need to fill out an **Expression of Interest** form (called **EOI** for short) to tell us about your project.

17 Apr

2023

19 Jun

2023

The EOI form will be on Grantium from **9am on 17 April 2023**.

You must send your EOI before **Midday on 19 June 2023**.



Your EOI must tell us

- about your organisation.
- about the libraries in your project.
- how many people visited the libraries in the last full year they were open.
- about your project.
- how your project will help the aims of the LIF.
- if your project is a building project.
- what level of RIBA your building plans are at.
- how much your project will cost.
- how much money you want to apply for.
- about partnership funding or in-kind support you will have.
- how you will look after Round 3 money if you got money in Round 1 or Round 2.

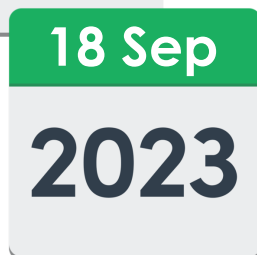
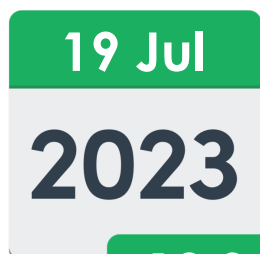


We will look at your EOI with the DCMS and decide if you can apply for the LIF. If we decide you can apply, we will **invite you to apply**.



If we decide you cannot apply, we will tell you. This means you are not invited to apply and your application ends.

## If we invite you to apply



Our online application form will be on Grantium from **9am on 19 July 2023**.

You must send your application form before **Midday on 18 September 2023**.



Use what we have told you in this booklet to help you fill out the application form.

On the next 4 pages of this booklet we tell you more about some parts of the application form.



## Basic details

Tell us

- about your organisation.
- about your project.
- how much money you are applying for.
- the start date and end date of your project.
- if your project is a building project.



## Personal Access Costs

Tell us about any accessibility costs for you or the people you work with. This might be things like a BSL interpreter or a support worker.



## Finance

In this part you need to do a budget for your project.



Fill out the **income** part. **Income** means money you will get for your project. Tell us about

- partnership funding.
- in-kind support.



Fill out the **expenditure** part.  
**Expenditure** means money you will spend for your project.

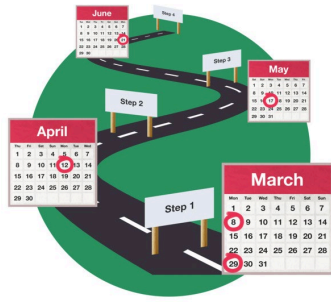


Expenditure needs to be split into parts called

- **Specialist equipment.** This means equipment you need for your project, like lighting, access equipment or things like cameras.
- **Pre-construction.** This means costs before building work starts, like surveys.
- **Construction.** This means all building costs.
- **Fees and charges.** This means official costs like legal costs or local authority fees.
- **Client costs.** This means costs for things like storage, professionals or personal access costs.
- **Contingency.**
- **Irrecoverable VAT.** This means VAT you cannot get back.







## Activity plan

Tell us about activities that will happen for your project, including

- when every part of your project will start and finish.
- information about design, procurement and other things you will pay for.
- who will be in charge of each part of your project.

For building projects, you also need to tell us

- when you will get your statutory approvals.
- the date you will own new land or buildings for your project.
- what level of RIBA your building plans are at.

## Proposal

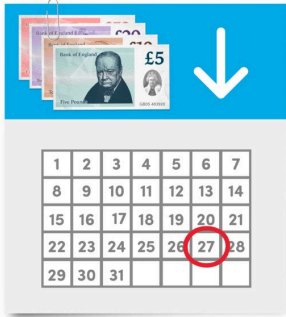
You need to fill out 3 parts called

- **Meeting the brief.**
- **Governance and management of the activity.**
- **Financial viability.**



- **Meeting the brief.** Tell us about your project. Think about what we have told you in this booklet.

This part of your proposal should be less than 1,700 words long.



- **Governance and management of the activity.** Tell us how you will manage your project, including how you will make sure
  - ✓ it is finished on time.
  - ✓ you don't spend more than your budget.

This part of your proposal should be less than 1,700 words long.



- **Financial viability.** Tell us what you have done to check your organisation has enough money for your project, including
  - ✓ all the work you have done about costs.
  - ✓ how your project will affect your organisation's money when it is happening and after it ends.

This part of your proposal should be less than 1,700 words long.



# Documents you must send with your application form



- ✓ **Cash flow.** This shows when you will get and spend money for your project. Use the **cash flow template** on our website.
- ✓ **Costed risk register.** This shows bad things that might happen during your project, and what you will do if they happen.
- ✓ **Procurement method statement.** This shows how you will buy goods and services in a fair way.

If your project is a building project, you must send these documents as well

- ✓ **Cost plan.** This shows everything about building costs for your project. A cost plan is done by a professional called a **quantity surveyor**.
- ✓ **Design drawings and specifications.** **Specifications** are all the information about the building work for your project.
- ✓ **Access audit.**

# After you send your application form



After you send your application form, we will send you an email to say we have got it.



## Assessment

We will check your application form to see if we have all the information we need. This is called **assessment**.



We will

- contact you if we need more information.
- check if your project meets the aims for a LIF capital grant.
- check if your project meets the rules for a LIF capital grant.
- work out how much risk your project has.
- look at any other information we have about your organisation.



We might want to have a meeting with you.



If we don't have the right information, you won't pass the assessment and your application will end.

## Programme Advisory Panel

If you pass the assessment, the **Programme Advisory Panel** will look at your application form.



The **Programme Advisory Panel** is a group of people who work for Arts Council England, the DCMS and libraries.



They will make sure lots of different types of projects are supported. To do this, they will think about

- where projects are.
- what risks projects have.
- what projects are about.
- how projects meet our **principles**.



Our **principles** are what we believe in. We wrote about our principles in our plan called **Let's Create**.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)

## Decisions



We will make the final decisions.

We will tell people our final decisions in **March 2024**.



If we decide you can have a **LIF capital grant**, we will tell you and work out a **funding agreement** with you.



A **funding agreement** officially says how much money we will give you, when you will get it and how we want you to spend it.



If we decide you cannot have a **LIF capital grant**, we will write to you and tell you why.

# Other information



## If you want to make a complaint

If you want to make a complaint, send an email to this address [complaints@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@artscouncil.org.uk) or [click this link](#).



## Your personal information

Your **personal information** means anything you tell us that lets other people know who you are, like your name or email address.



A **Privacy Notice** is a document that tells you what an organisation does with your personal information.

[Click this link to read our Privacy Notice.](#)

## Freedom of Information Act

Everyone has a right to know how we spend our money and make our decisions. We follow the law written in the **Freedom of Information Act**.

[Click this link to find out more.](#)





## Counter fraud measures

**Counter fraud measures** are ways to stop **fraud** happening. **Fraud** is when someone steals money or tries to use it in the wrong way.



We check the money we give out is looked after in the right way.

[Click this link to read our Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy.](#)



## Public sector equality duty

**Public sector equality duty** is part of a law called the **Equality Act 2010**.



It says organisations that do public services must think about how their work affects people who are protected by the Equality Act 2010.



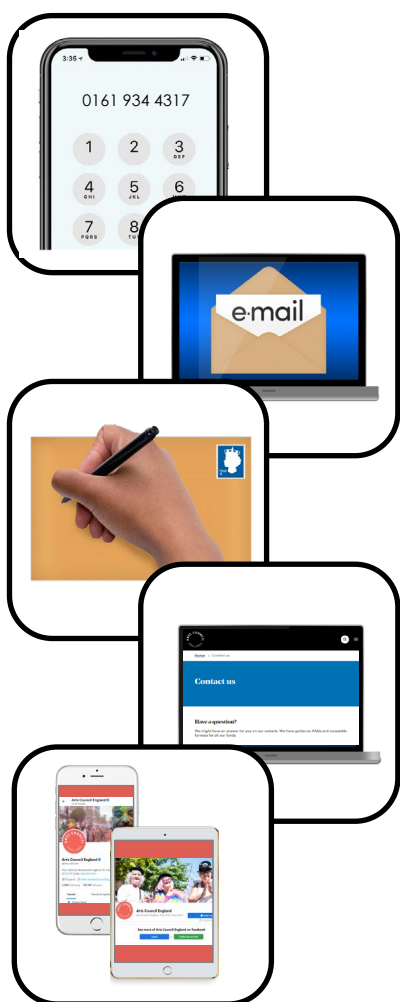
This means we check the backgrounds of people we give money to. We might send information from your application form to the Government.



# Contact us



It's a good idea to talk to us about your project before you apply. We're happy to help with any questions you have.



- Call this telephone number **0161 934 4317**.
- Send an email to this address [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk).
- Write to us at this address **Arts Council England  
The Hive  
49 Lever Street  
Manchester M1 1FN** .
- [Click this link to contact us on our website](#).
- Follow us on social media  
**Twitter @ace\_national**  
[Click this link to go to our Facebook page](#).

Thank you to A2i for the words  
[www.a2i.co.uk](http://www.a2i.co.uk) (reference 36334a)