



Department
for Transport

REACH FOR THE SKY CHALLENGE FUND GUIDANCE

2023/2024

Introduction

1. The 2022/23 Reach for the Sky (RFTS) Challenge Fund, announced as part of the Government's 22 point plan to support the post-pandemic recovery of the aviation sector, has been a key part of the Department for Transport's [Generation Aviation](#) programme. Launched in October 2022, Generation Aviation continues to deliver productive collaboration between government, the industry and the charity sector to support activity that will inspire the next generation of aviation professionals.

2. Building on the popularity of the 2022/23 Challenge Fund, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are pleased to say that the competition returns in 2023. This document will outline the criteria and process for those applying for the fund in 2023/24.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this competition is to provide funding opportunities to a range of potential outreach partners to support projects that will contribute to the Generation Aviation programme. As with last year, the funding competition will continue to operate as a *challenge fund*, jointly administered by the Department for Transport and the CAA. The Cabinet Office gives the following definition for a challenge fund:

"A challenge fund is a competitive process under a grant scheme, used to disburse funding to a range of projects, based on a set of pre-published criteria – challenge funds include an assessment of quality, in relation to delivery proposals."

Funding

4. Applicants for this year's fund will be **able to apply for a share of £750,000**. Projects can last between 3 and 12 months. Applications to deliver one-off events will also be considered provided they meet the evidence requirements and criteria set out in the application form.

5. Total project costs should remain lower than the total amount of funding available. Projects are requested to submit 'gold, silver and bronze' funding ambitions within their application. Successful applicants will be awarded funding for either their gold, silver or bronze requests,

depending on the strength of their application, the strength of other applications and the demand on the overall fund

- a. **Gold.** The maximum amount you would like to request, allowing applicant organisations to meet your most ambitious objectives and KPIs set out for the project.
- b. **Silver.** A reduction in ambition and therefore funding for the project. This should represent a midway point between the objectives and KPIs of gold and the minimum product represented by bronze.
- c. **Bronze.** The minimum funding request, representing a minimum viable output of the project.

6. An organisation is able to submit more than one application, provided they are for different and clearly distinct programmes. Two or more organisations may submit a joint application, but the lead organisation should be noted on the application form.

Objectives and criteria

7. The 2023/24 RFTS Challenge Fund is aimed at supporting *outreach projects*. Applicants for the fund will be required to demonstrate their ability to meet the following three objectives:
 - a. **Inspire the next generation of aviation professionals, championing the opportunities available in the sector.** Activities should focus on developing interest and engagement with the opportunities available in aviation. This might also involve supporting someone to develop skills or experience that could be useful for a career in aviation, but should not replace formal education i.e., delivery of statutory licences or educational qualifications.
 - b. **Reach individuals who would not otherwise be aware of opportunities available within the aviation sector.** We would encourage applicants to consider how their project might benefit under-represented groups (i.e. women and girls, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities, lower socio-economic backgrounds)
 - c. **Have a broad impact by reaching and engaging multiple people.** This might be achieved through some form of mass participation event, delivery through an education setting or youth group, or via virtual methods that can reach a mass audience.
8. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate they can meet the following criteria:
 - a. Projects must be delivered on a not-for-profit basis.
 - b. Projects must be focused mainly on England, with the possibility of delivering across the UK.
 - c. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to deliver their project; this might include evidence of a previous track record of delivery, or evidence of sufficient skills, resource, or experience within an organisation to deliver a new project.
 - d. Applicants must be willing to submit to financial due diligence, namely:
 - i. Demonstrating the short and medium-term financial viability of the applicant organisation.
 - ii. Able to provide suitable information via Companies House/Charity Commission to verify its identity.
 - iii. Able to provide a verifiable UK Bank account for payment of the funding. In the case of joint applications this should belong to the lead applicant.

- iv. Able to demonstrate that the applicant organisation or its directors are not subject to any investigation, charge or conviction that would make it unsuitable to receive grant funding.
- e. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that it can comply with any safeguarding processes required in a grant funding agreement, namely:
 - i. Evidence of suitable health and safety processes.
 - ii. Evidence of suitable policy in relation to Modern Slavery.
 - iii. Evidence of suitable policy for the protection of vulnerable adults or children where necessary.
- f. Applicants must be able to obtain the necessary insurance outlined in the grant funding agreement.
- g. Applicants must be willing to declare any conflicts of interest at the earliest possible opportunity.
- h. Applicants must be willing to provide evidence of their impact in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation requirements set out in the grant funding agreement.
- i. Applicants must be able to operate under a quarterly payment schedule outlined in the grant funding agreement.

9. Applicants will be required to complete an online application form, available [here](#), demonstrating their ability to meet these objectives and criteria. Although these criteria are stringent, they are drawn up in line with current Cabinet Office guidance on grant management for government departments and arms-length bodies.

10. An outline of the questions applicants will be required to answer is included at Annex A. An outline of how these responses will be assessed is included at Annex B. **Please note that these are included to assist applicants in preparing answers for the online form and are not a substitute for applying through the portal.** Any completed copies of this form will be rejected.

Process

11. The 2023/24 RFTS Challenge Fund will operate as follows:
- a. **Application Phase.** Applications will open. A *clarification period* will open concurrently, during which time applicants will be able to ask questions regarding the fund by directing them to the Challenge Fund email inbox (See *clarification and contact* below).
 - b. **Review Phase.** Applications will close and the DfT/CAA team will begin the process of reviewing applications. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via email, at which point the project will enter a *standstill period*. After this has expired, work will begin on completing the grant funding agreement and ensuring mechanisms are in place of swift payment.
 - c. **Delivery Phase.** The recipients of the fund will be announced publicly by the Department for Transport. First payments will be issued and projects will commence. Recipients will be required to meet quarterly with DfT/CAA representatives and maintain regular contact. Projects will be required to submit thorough evidence of activity, impact and spending before further payments are agreed and provided.

12. The timetable for the 23/24 Challenge Fund is outlined below. Applicants should note that payment schedules are included as an example for a project that lasts 12 months. Payment schedules for projects of differing lengths would be agreed in consultation with the Challenge Fund project team.

Event	Date
Applications open/clarification window open.	23 June 2023
Clarification window closes	14 August 2023
Clarification answers published	By 1 September 2023
Applications close	1200hrs 29 September 2023
Applicants informed of outcomes	15 November 2023
Public announcement	January 2024
First payment	January 2024
Second payment	April 2024 (indicative timings)
Third payment	July 2024 (indicative timings)
Final payment	October 2024 (indicative timings)
Final review meeting	December 2024 (indicative timings)

Monitoring and Evaluation

13. In order for DfT to ensure that projects demonstrate value for money and achieve the desired impact, applicants will be expected to undertake monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities and to report the resulting information to DfT/CAA on a quarterly basis.

14. For the purposes of this application form, the following definitions for “monitoring” and “evaluation” should be used:

- a. **Monitoring.** The planned and consistent collection of data about the progress of a project. Monitoring tells us what is happening, but not why.
- b. **Evaluation.** The assessment of a project’s implementation and outcomes. It is used to understand how a project is being implemented, what effects the project is having, for whom and why.

15. Given the diversity of the expected applications and the wide range of resulting outputs and outcomes, prescriptive guidance will not be provided to applicants concerning the desired M&E approach. However, to assist applicants, the following types of data could be considered when designing a suitable M&E approach:

- a. Examples of **output data** include: recording of number of participants, demographic data of participants, number of events delivered, location of delivered events, hours of participation etc.

- b. **Outcome data** will be used to understand the impact that a project is having. For example, data gathered through participant surveys could be used to evidence greater awareness of aviation careers, or an increased intention to pursue an aviation career.

16. The examples provided above are non-exhaustive and applicants are expected to identify and outline the specific outcomes and outputs for their specific projects, and the methods that will be used to gather this data. When doing so, applicants should aim to gather evidence that shows that the funding objectives have been met.

17. Where appropriate, applicants should consider collecting data prior to the project commencing, as this will make it easier to attribute impacts to the project itself. Further information about Monitoring and Evaluation can be found in DfT's central evaluation strategy.¹

Financial Reporting

18. As part of the application form, applicants are required to provide a breakdown of their expected spending during the project. It is vital that this information is as accurate as possible and sufficiently detailed for three reasons:

- a. A clear breakdown indicates the feasibility of the project and the suitability of applicants to receive funding.
- b. Expenditure should be fully costed with current/future market figures to reduce the risk of overspend.
- c. Successful applicants will be required to report against this during the funding period.

Clarification and contact

19. To give all applicants a fair and equal opportunity to seek answers to any questions they may have, contact between the project team and applicants will be tightly controlled.

20. The opening of the application window will coincide with the opening of a *clarification period*. During this time, applicants will be able to contact the project team to ask any questions they may have about the challenge fund and the application process. Applicants should contact the project team via: skillschallengefundteam@caa.co.uk

21. Following the end of the clarification period, these questions and answers will be collated and published for all applicants to view on the RFTS Challenge Fund webpage.

22. After the end of the clarification period, the project team will no longer answer any questions about the challenge fund or the application process. The project team will still be contactable and be able to help in the event of some kind of technical difficulty.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dft-monitoring-and-evaluation-programme/dft-evaluation-strategy-and-programme-2022#fn:1>

23. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application via email in line with the timeline outlined above.

Closing Remarks

24. After a popular initial year, we are very excited to be able to reopen applications for the Challenge Fund. We are keenly aware that this application process is rigorous but is designed to help us identify the highest quality projects worthy of receiving funding from the taxpayer.

We hope that this guidance document will serve as a useful aide in completing your application. We wish you they very best of luck.

Annex A – Application Form

The following is an outline of the application that applicants for the 23/24 RFTS Challenge Fund will be required to submit.

PLEASE DO NOT COMPLETE OR SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE PROJECT TEAM. ANY APPLICATIONS SENT IN THIS WAY WILL BE REJECTED.

Eligibility checklist

This checklist ensures that your proposal meets our eligibility criteria. If you are not able to answer yes to any of these, you will not be able to progress with your application.

Eligibility criteria	Yes	No
All funds awarded will be used in delivering the project described.		
The proposed project focuses on aviation and/or aerospace.		
The benefits of my project focus on England.		
Financial control over any grant that I was awarded will not be delegated to another organisation.		
The organisation(s) has a UK bank account to receive funds		
I have read the guidelines and consider that this project will comply with all the relevant terms attached to the funding.		
I am not aware of any reason that the organisation would be excluded or unsuitable to receive public funding.		

Main contact details

Title	
Forenames	
Surname	
Position or job title	
Telephone	
Email	

Organisation details

Organisation legal name(s)	
Address	
Primary telephone	
Email	
Website	

Organisation type

If you are a charity, what is your charity number?

Or

If your organisation is registered with Companies House, what is your company registration number?

Or

If you are not a registered charity or a registered company, please describe what you are and provide a link to (or a copy of) your constituting/governing documents.

Project overview

Bid Amount:

Gold	
Silver	
Bronze	

Participants or beneficiaries of project

Number	
Location(s)	
Demographic(s) (<i>maximum 200 words</i>)	

Summary of project (500 words maximum)

Project details

How does the project meet each objective?

Objective 1: Inspire the next generation of aviation professionals, championing the opportunities available in the sector. (*maximum 250 words*)

Objective 2: Reach individuals who would not otherwise be aware of opportunities available within the aviation sector. (*maximum 250 words*)

Objective 3: Have a broad impact by reaching and engaging multiple people. (*maximum 250 words*)

How will the project be delivered, including through which platforms (for example face-to-face, online provision) (*maximum 250 words*)

Do you envisage specific eligibility criteria for participants in your project? If yes, what is the criteria? (*maximum 250 words*)

Please set out whether and how your organisation will work in partnership with other organisations to grow the size, reach and impact of the project. Who are the other organisation(s) and how will you work together and manage your relationship with them? Please also outline your internal processes for ensuring any funding received is kept separate from other funding. (*maximum 250 words*)

Measurement of impact

Please tell us what data you will collect and how this will be GDPR compliant. *(maximum 250 words)*

How will you use this data to inform improvements to the project? *(maximum 250 words)*

How will the data enable you to demonstrate impact? *(maximum 250 words)*

Please tell us how you would evaluate the programme *(maximum 250 words)*

Capacity to deliver

Has your organisation delivered a project of a similar size before? Please provide details including overall outcome of the project. *(maximum 250 words)*

Who will be responsible for managing the project and what is their experience? *(maximum 250 words)*

Please set out your delivery plan. *(maximum 500 words)*

Please outline below the key deliverables against the objectives for each budget: *(maximum 50 words per deliverable)*

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Objective 1			
Objective 2			
Objective 3			

Risks and mitigation

Please provide details for risks you have identified in your project and how you will manage this.

Risk	Impact Rating (high / medium / low)	Likelihood Rating (high / medium / low)	Mitigation
20 rows available			

Budget breakdown

Please provide a breakdown of your budget for the three tiers of your project.

Expense	Gold	Silver	Bronze
	£	£	£
20 rows available			

TOTAL	£	£	£
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Declaration

As part of the application process, we will need to share information about your application with-panellist(s) from Civil Aviation Authority and the Department for Transport.

You certify that the information contained in this form and any accompanying documents is true and correct, and that you have the authority to act on behalf of the organisation and this proposal has been approved by the Trustees/Directors.

If the application is successful, the information provided by the applicant in this application will form part of a legally binding offer letter.

By completing this declaration, I agree to use of this data as outlined above.

Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Date	

Annex B - Scoring Criteria

Applicants will first be required to answer the questions outlined in the eligibility checklist. Failure to answer these questions correctly will result in the rejection of an application.

Applicants will then receive a score from 0 to 10 for each of the sections outline in the application form in Annex B. These will be combined through weighted average according to the following:

Section	Weighting
Project Details	30%
Measurement of Impact	20%
Capacity to deliver	15%
Risk & Mitigation	10%
Budget breakdown	25%

These scores will be assigned by using the following criteria:

SCORE	CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION
0	No response or complete non-compliance	No response at all, or incomprehensible response which either does not address the requirements and/or does not propose a solution in any way.
1 - 2	Unclear response (potential for some compliance but very major areas of weakness)	Unacceptable proposal which fails in several significant areas to set out a solution that meets the requirements: little or no detail and/or evidence may have been provided to support and demonstrate that the applicant will be able to meet the objectives; considerable reservations as to the applicant's proposals in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the project.
3 - 4	Partial compliance (some major areas of weakness)	Weak submission which does not does not set out a solution that meets the requirements: response may be minimal with little or no detail or with insufficient evidence provided to support and demonstrate that the applicant will be able to deliver the project; some reservations as to the applicant's proposals in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to provide the services.
5 - 6	Partial compliance (minor areas of weakness)	Proposal largely sets out a solution that addresses and meets the requirements, with some evidence provided to support the submission; minor reservations in one or two areas of the applicant's proposals in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the project.
7 - 8	Compliant with requirements	Criteria met and evidence provided to support the applicant's submission, demonstrating how the applicant proposes to deliver the project and the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the project.

9 - 10	Compliant, with some areas exceeding requirements	Criteria met (as in 7-8 above) and exceeded in some or all areas; and the applicant's submission robustly and clearly demonstrates how the applicant proposes to deliver the project as proposed.
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Applications will be reviewed independently by more than one member of the project team. These scores will be combined to generate a moderated score.

These scores will then be used by the project team to identify successful applicants for the Challenge Fund.