

APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2009-10

COMMA, the Community Aggregates Fund, is using money from the Aggregates Levy charged on quarrying of aggregates and crushed rock¹ in the United Kingdom. ACRE has been commissioned to deliver the fund in 23 geographical areas defined by local authority boundaries. COMMA aims to broadly compensate communities affected by quarrying, by supporting community-based projects in their area.

Before you proceed with your application, please check your project is located in a qualifying area. A list of these areas is given on the ACRE website². If your project is not in one of these areas, it may be being delivered by a local authority. Check the Defra website³ for more information.

Please read the following guidelines carefully. They are designed to give you the maximum chance of receiving funding for your community project.

Eligibility criteria

The maximum grant available towards your project in this grants round is £20,000. The minimum grant available is £3,000. Five essential conditions must be satisfied for a project to be eligible for COMMA funding:

- The community where the project is based is/has been affected by aggregates extraction or transportation of aggregates
- The proposed project is within a 10 kilometre radius of an aggregates extraction site, either current or disused. Where a project is within a COMMA area, but the quarry is not i.e. it is over a county border, we will allow the application. Where the project is outside any COMMA area, even if the quarry is within one, we cannot allow the application.
- The proposed project must benefit the whole community or a section of the community, not an individual
- The applicant must be a community organisation, a charity, a parish or town council
- All project works funded by COMMA grants this year must be capable of completion by the end of March 2010.

Please note, there will be a further COMMA funding opportunity in 2010-11, but, at the moment, amounts available from Defra are not confirmed. If your project is eligible and ready to go so that it can be completed March 2010, we encourage you to apply this year.

How to make an application

Your application must be supported by one of the 23 Rural Community Councils⁴ in whose areas the fund is applicable. Completed applications, together with any supporting documentation, must

¹ Aggregates and crushed rock includes sand and gravel but excludes coal & clay, dimensional stone and limestone for industrial uses including cement.

² http://www.acre.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment_comma.html

³ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/aggregates/funding.htm>

be sent directly to your local Rural Community Council who will be assessing which projects they wish to shortlist against the national criteria. These shortlisted applications will be forwarded by the RCC to ACRE for final decisions to be made. There will be a success rate of approximately 50% amongst shortlisted applications.

Your local Rural Community Council will provide you with support throughout every stage of your application. They can help you identify other possible sources of funding, how to identify your outcomes and produce evidence about why your project is needed right through to the all important stage of actually completing your application form so that it has the highest chance of success. Once funding is granted they will also be on hand to support you managing your project to completion.

Completed applications must be received by the relevant RCC on or before the 5th June 2009. Applications sent direct to ACRE **will not** be accepted. Save the application form when it is completed and send it by email to your local Rural Community Council. You will also need to forward a copy of the application form, including the signed declaration and any other supporting documents. If you are unable to access the excel application form you will need to contact your RCC who will provide a hard copy.

Types of projects which may be funded

The COMMA fund aims to support community-based projects which provide genuine and lasting benefit for the community. This list below is not exhaustive, but gives guidance as to what we will be looking for and factors that we will value highly in any assessment of your project:

- Projects that provide, improve, repair or maintain a building, structure, place or feature that will be of value to people in the local community and improve their quality of life.
Examples of community amenity projects include:
 - Improving access to the countryside and local facilities
 - Improving a community space or community building
 - Tree planting, allotments or green spaces
 - Transport projects that can improve access to services and reduce car use
 - Restoration of monuments/sites/structures and other arts and heritage projects
 - Facilities for sports and other activities for children and young people
 - Locally produced publications about local facilities and environment
- Creation of sites that support biodiversity and wildlife. This can include management and interpretation of sites
- Projects that restore (or provide access to) land adversely affected by aggregates extraction, including management and interpretation of sites.

Within each project, we need to ensure that we contribute to Defra's overall objectives for the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. We will therefore value projects that benefit environmental objectives, by, for instance, reducing carbon footprints, saving energy and resources, supporting recycling and reducing travel. This can be achieved within any of the above projects by, for instance, using materials from sustainable sources, ensuring low energy equipment is used or demonstrating a reduction in private car usage. In addition, we are looking to fund projects which can demonstrate strong community support.

⁴ RCCs are the local members of ACRE. Contact details for your local RCC are shown on the list of qualifying areas listed on the website.

What we can fund

- We expect to fund projects requiring a grant of under £7,500 without any match funding, but applications for more than **£7,500** with good match funding in place will score higher than those with no match funding.
- The elements of your project for which you request COMMA funding must be completed by the end of March 2010.
- We are able to fund capital and revenue expenditure.
- We **cannot** fund any project that has already been started, but we **can** fund a second phase or separate stage of an existing project, where no expenditure has so far been made.
- We **cannot** fund moveable assets, except for community transport projects or equipment that will remain part of the project.
- We **cannot** fund applications from schools or educational institutions unless the project is clearly for wider community benefit
- We **cannot** fund ongoing salaries although a salary which is part of a phase of a project can be funded.

Defining Aggregates

The definition of the aggregates upon which the levy is made is provided by the [Finance Act 2001](#) (Chapter 9) The aggregates concerned must have paid the Aggregates Levy, i.e. crushed rock (except limestone used for cement), sand (except sand used for glass) and offcuts from building stone. Materials that do not qualify include fluorspar, gypsum, lignite, coal, slate, shale, peat, clay, rock or stone used for building and any material used in agricultural or industrial processes. Chalk is ineligible unless it can be shown that it was extracted for use as an aggregate.

How we will fund projects

ACRE expects to make final decisions and let projects know if they have succeeded during the week commencing 3rd August 2009. ACRE will be the grant administrator for the project and distribute the grant offer and contract. Once all necessary paperwork is complete, successful applications for grants over £7,500 receive 80% of the grant offered and the project can start. The remaining 20% will be released once the project is completed, providing the project has supplied us with copies of appropriate invoices, receipts and a financial report. This must be supplied before the end of March 2010 or the retained 20% of the grant will not be paid.

Successful applications for £7,500 and below, will receive the full grant award immediately. However, these projects will still need to complete by the end of March 2010 and final reports must have been submitted to ACRE by that point.

Implementing your project

Assets of significant value (over £1,000) cannot be disposed of without permission from ACRE and should be included in an asset register to which ACRE has access, on request. We expect such assets to be well maintained by the grantee for their reasonable life-span.

All projects should ensure they have appropriate permissions in place and adequate insurance to cover the project work and its future operation.

For further information, contact your local RCC or contact ACRE by phone (01285 653477) or email comma@acre.org.uk

Answering the questions

The following sections provide guidance on answering the individual questions on the application form.

Section One	About your project
1.1	<p>Tell us about what you wish to achieve with the help of COMMA funding. Identify, where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How this project relates to existing facilities• Where facilities are to be improved or extended, the size and scale of the project• Who will manage it once the project is complete
1.2	<p>A primary aim of the COMMA Fund is to ensure that as many sections of your community benefit as possible. Please identify clearly which groups will benefit. If your project aims to benefit particular targeted groups, please identify these at 1.2.b ie if the project is to improve accessibility at a building, it will benefit people with disabilities. If the project is to provide a play area, it will benefit young people and families.</p> <p>Nb even if your project's purpose is not solely aimed at improving accessibility, you should consider the ability of all sections of the community to use the facilities or premises.</p>
1.3	<p>How many people will use and benefit from your project/service? For projects that open on a regular basis (eg a playscheme or community bus) estimate the number of people who will use this facility at least once. Later on we ask the size of your community. This figure gives an indication of what percentage of your local community will be able to benefit from this funding.</p>
1.5	<p>Indicate how far the proposed project location is from the existing or former aggregates site or disruption. This distance should be calculated 'as the crow flies' It is your responsibility to find this out, you can work with your RCC for details and there is further guidance available on our website.</p>
1.6	<p>The main aim of the COMMA fund is to compensate communities for the impact of aggregates extraction. This could be because of noise, dust, visual intrusion, loss of amenity from the site, but also because of quarry traffic from transportation of aggregates. These impacts may relate to disused sites eg visual intrusion, loss of jobs etc.</p>
1.8	<p>Most community projects serve, in the main, their very local area. However, there are some projects, eg a wildlife project or local festival, which may attract visitors from surrounding communities.</p>
1.9	<p>Community support for your project is an important factor to the success of your application. Include here any formal endorsement of your project and attach letters of support to your application, where relevant.</p>

Section Two	About your organisation
2.1	This fund aims to support community action. To apply, your organisation must be one of the following groups: parish/town council; a charity; a community organisation with a formal constitution. Companies limited by guarantee with charitable status are eligible to apply. If your group is not one of these, then you may be able to work through your local parish council or other community organisation.
2.2	In this question, we want you to tell us about your organisation and its work. The description of the project itself should have been outlined in 1.1.
2.3	If you are a parish council, you will be able to reclaim any VAT so please do not include VAT in your budget for the project. If you are registered for VAT, any recoverable VAT should be excluded from your project budget. (See 4.4)
2.4	Only applications supported by your local Rural Community Council (RCC) will be accepted. Details of all RCCs, and the 23 eligible to sponsor during 2009-10, are available on the ACRE website www.acre.org.uk . It is your responsibility to contact your RCC in order to progress your application.
2.5	This would normally be your last year's income, but do not include any extraordinary expenditure, for instance, receipt of a grant or loan for purchase of a new minibus or heating system.
2.6	<p>If an award is made to your organisation, the payment will be made via the BACS system. Details of your bank account are needed at this stage of the application. Applications without these details will not be able to be considered.</p> <p>Note: if you use a building society savings account only, you will need to contact the society for your organisation's reference number.</p>

Section Three	The difference your project will make
	<p>The Comma Fund has the primary aim of compensating local communities for the local extraction of aggregates. However, we will also bear in mind how the project can contribute to the other aims of Defra, on whose behalf ACRE is delivering the fund.</p> <p>This section is for you to tell us what difference your project will make. Your local RCC will be able to provide guidance as to the best way to complete the questions in this section if you have any doubts.</p>
3.1	Tell us how you have identified the need for this project. What would happen if the project did not go forward? For instance, without it, a community building might fall into disrepair or the current users of the building could not maintain attendance at group activities and events. The need for a transport project might be demonstrated by the lack of alternative means to travel. The need for a project to improve access to a facility may be due to some residents not being able to negotiate steps or walkways. It may be that there are no other similar facilities in the area and the project is one for which local

	<p>people have expressed a need or strong interest. Or it may be that, without it, the project site would remain derelict or of no value to the community.</p>
3.2	<p>What difference will it make to the community? There are usually several ways in which a single project can benefit the community and you should include here all the ones that you think are appropriate. This could be, for instance, how an environmental project will improve an area, enhance the local wildlife and offer increased opportunity for local people to enjoy their surroundings. A project that improves a community building may mean more people have the opportunity to take part in local events and activities, more volunteers come forward to run local groups and the groups are more likely to be financially viable.</p>
3.3.a	<p>The COMMA fund is dependent on continued funding through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). If there are to be further rounds of funding in the future, we will need to show that the investment of COMMA funding has produced significant benefits that fit with the overall aims set by Defra. To secure further funding, we want to know whether your project is also contributing to the aims other than those that relate to delivering community benefit.</p> <p>Please indicate whether your project contributes to Defra's overall aims. Tell us whether your project will contribute to any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving energy • Reducing travel • Saving resources and recycling • Shopping locally • Caring for the environment <p>You should specify up to two links only i.e. the one/those which provide the greatest contribution/s Your answer to this question will be used for reporting purposes and will not be used in the scoring assessment of your application. It will be taken into account in the final decision making process if difficult choices have to be made about which projects to fund.. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a building project may include measures to reduce energy consumption or commit to using sustainable or recycled materials • better facilities for those who use bicycles, or provision of new facilities within the local area, will reduce the need to travel • a community transport project will also reduce the need for private car or taxi use and be doubly beneficial if the vehicles used are energy efficient • if your project, once completed, will rely on use of locally produced materials or local foods for catering, then this will reduce the overall transportation of goods and services • if your project includes developing a wildlife area, or increasing access to it, then this will enhance biodiversity and the overall environment enjoyed by your community.
3.3. b/c	<p>In addition, please note here whether your project is directly related to improving a site used, or previously used, for quarrying and/or if it promotes a better understanding of aggregate extraction. This information will not be used in the scoring assessment of your application but it may be taken into account at the very final stage of assessment, if difficult choices have to be made.</p>
3.4	<p>Once this year's grants have been awarded and the projects completed, we will be returning to a number of the projects to ask in more detail how they have benefited their</p>

	<p>communities. This will help us justify a continuation of the COMMA funding programme.</p> <p>How do you intend to measure these benefits of your project? Given your answers in 3.2 and 3.3, tell us here how you will set about measuring the difference the project has made according to each of the benefits you believe will result. This could be, for instance, by recording the usage of a building or a transport scheme, or by surveying the local community to ask how the project has added to their quality of life.</p>
Section Four	Your project budget
	<p>Applicants will normally be expected to demonstrate evidence of self-help in fund raising and value for money. We expect projects requiring over £7,500 of COMMA funding to draw on some matched funding. This can come from their own funds or other grant schemes or by in-kind and voluntary contributions. Applicants must be able to demonstrate on their application form how they intend to raise the balance of funding.</p>
4.1	What is the total cost of your project? Even if you are only asking for part funding from the COMMA fund, you need to insert the full cost of the overall project here.
4.2	The minimum grant available is £3,000 and maximum grant available is £20,000
4.3	We want to know how the project will proceed. Include here the dates by which particular stages of your project will be completed. This will help us in monitoring progress, since all COMMA funding must be spent by the end of March 2010.
4.4	What is the COMMA funding to be used for? List which items/parts of the project will be funded by this money if you receive an award. Include VAT if you cannot recover this later. If a project is not registered for VAT and VAT cannot be reclaimed, then the gross cost must be included. COMMA will fund costs exclusive of VAT that can be reclaimed. Please ensure all estimates are realistic – you cannot ask for more COMMA funding at a later stage if costs increase unexpectedly. Where a purchase or a service will cost over £3,000, you should already have obtained at least two recently dated estimates from suppliers. Please attach such estimates to your application. Make sure you have included any necessary professional fees, insurance and other charges relevant to your project. In exceptional circumstances this requirement will be waived, for example where the application for COMMA funding is a sub-section of a much larger project and the same company is being used throughout or where a specialist supplier is being used.
4.5	List here, in the same way as 4.4, the other elements of your project which are to be funded through your match funding. We do not require copies of estimates for large items in this list, but please make sure that costs are realistic.
4.6.a	If your project is to be only part-funded by COMMA, this answer will show us that your project is unlikely to be held up by not having necessary match funding in place. In the first line, enter any funding you already have in your bank account that you are contributing to the project. In the other part of the table, enter the funding body you have applied to and tell us whether you have had this contribution confirmed. If it is not yet confirmed, please enter the date you have been given when the application decision is to be made. Should you be awarded a COMMA grant, we will check that the match funding is in place before finally awarding the grant to ensure that the project can be completed on time. Include details here of any contribution likely to come from local fundraising events between now and the end of July 2009.
4.b	You need to outline how your project will be affected if funding from another body is not forthcoming. Projects need to complete by the end of March 2010 and you will have to

	show that you can meet this deadline if other grants are not approved.
4.6.c	We value local support for the project. Include here an estimate of all the volunteer effort that will contribute to completion of your project.
4.7	We cannot fund a project where the expenditure for which COMMA funding is requested will not be finalised by the end of March 2010. If we award a grant, and this money cannot be spent by this date, we will not release the 20% of the grant. For those applicants with smaller grants, who were in receipt of the full amount up front, but cannot complete within the timescale, ACRE reserve the right to reclaim the grant.
4.8	Some projects will be expected to offer free access to visitors and users, for example, play areas and green spaces. Others are likely to charge the user, for instance, through hire of the facilities, community transport or sale of goods. Simply answer yes or no to this question.
4.9	Estimate here how often the project/service will be available to users. For instance, a play area would be accessible all the time; a mother and toddler group may be weekly; a community newsletter may be issued monthly; a community bus may be available for hire twice a week during the day and for hire on evenings and weekends.
4.10	We are interested in whether your project will increase assets, such as land or buildings, under community control. This question will not affect the scoring of your project, unless we are concerned about the potential for completing your project on time.
4.11	We need to know whether you will require official permission (from the planning authority or other statutory body) for completion of your project. If you need to apply, we will need to be assured that planning permission will be in place at the end of July 2009, before awarding the grant.
4.12	It is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance is in place to cover the project work and subsequent activity associated with the completed project.
4.13	Acknowledgement of Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, ACRE's COMMA Fund and the RCC which supported your project should be made throughout and on completion of your project. You may propose to do this in newsletter, on a plaque, on your website etc. Relevant logos are available through ACRE.
Do not forget to check the items in the declaration and sign your application.	

Additional guidance

Who will see your application?

- Your supporting Rural Community Council
- The ACRE COMMA Fund Project Team
- A grant assessors panel at ACRE

Glossary of terms

Match funding

Match funding is money you have raised for your project through local fundraising or offers received from other funding bodies. For applications over **£7,500** the evidence of match funding will improve the quality of the application under our assessment processes. The overall outcome of your project should be linked closely to our objectives explained previously, but we are prepared to contribute to any part of your project. Your Rural Community Council will be able to help you and their contact details are on our website.

Rural Community Council (RCC)

RCCs are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, which support and enable initiatives in rural communities. RCC staff are professionals who understand your local area, its needs and its opportunities.

Rural Community Councils work closely with parish and local councils, service providers and community groups within your area. As such they can provide detailed local knowledge backed up with detailed knowledge of funding streams, sources of information and advice and in many cases relevant suppliers/contractors of use to community projects.

It is important to contact your RCC before completing this application. They will be able to help you with project plans, budgeting forecast and the completion of the form.

Make sure you have attached:

- Statements of support from local bodies (see question 1.9)
- For projects applying for over £7,500, please attach a copy of your most recent financial statements (see question 4.2)
- Two estimates of any expenditure items over £3,000 to be funded by COMMA (see question 4.4)
- Statutory Agency permissions (see question 4.11)

Please note: Applications sent directly to ACRE will **not** be accepted. All applications **MUST** be sent by email, directly to your local Rural Community Council **on or before the 5th June 2009**. You will also need to forward a hard copy of the application form, including the signed declaration, and any other supporting documents to your local Rural Community Council. If you are unable to access the excel application form you will need to contact your RCC who will provide a hard copy.