

Cairngorms 2030 Communities Fund Panel

Session 5 – Survey Responses

The purpose of this survey was to capture your thinking on the best approach for the fund. This will inform Session 6. There are several options on the table, so you were encouraged to consider the options and share your view. We also asked you to reflect on the structure and provided an open text space for feedback or questions about the Panel process.

The survey was open from Friday 15 May to Tuesday 19 May.

12 out of 18 members of the panel responded.

Unedited and anonymised survey responses are [available to view](#). Where numbers are reflected we have rounded to the nearest whole number.

Summary of your responses

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Grant size ranges

Respondents were asked to suggest minimum and maximum figures for each grant size. Results below show the range of suggestions with the median.

Grant size	Minimum range	Maximum range
Small	£200 - £1,000	£2,000 - £15,000
Medium	£2,000 - £15,001	£10,000 - £50,000
Large	£10,000 - £100,000	£50,000 - £250,000

Comments

- Several respondents felt the large grant maximum should be capped to prevent two or three awards consuming the whole fund
- One respondent suggested £100,000 is far too high as a maximum
- One noted flexibility on the small grants lower threshold. *Note that the Park Authority will have a view on what is feasible in terms of an upper limit on the number of small grants they can process*
- One raised concern about grants for CPD or courses without evidence of long-term community benefit. *Note that the Panel decided not to have legacy and skill as a dedicated 'pot' but we might want to consider this as part of the eligibility and criteria development*

When people should be able to apply

We invited open text responses to this question. Responses showed a preference for rolling applications for small grants and fixed rounds for medium and large grants, though views varied.

Grant size	Summary
Small	Strong instinct for rolling, open at any time (majority view)
Medium	Mixed, leaning toward fixed rounds
Large	Strong instinct for fixed rounds with set deadlines

Comments

- One respondent suggested medium grants every 6 weeks and large grants every quarter
- One felt all sizes should have fixed rounds to allow fair comparison

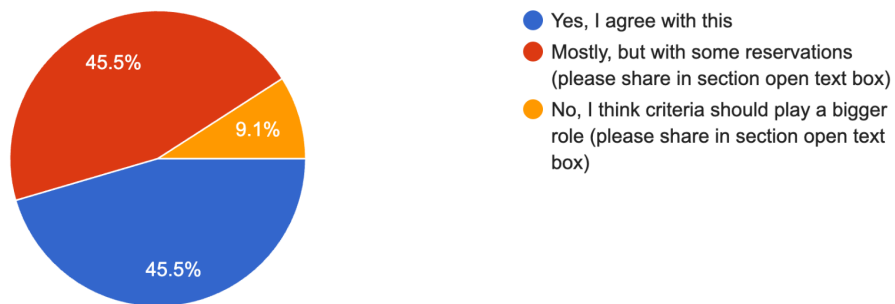
- One wanted all sizes open all year round.

Criteria principle

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following principle:
criteria check if you're in the running – the community decides the rest.

Does this principle feel right to you: criteria check if you're in the running, the community decides the rest

11 responses



Comments

- One respondent questioned whether the Panel had fully agreed the principle and noted that a definition of "community" is still needed
- One suggested small grants could skip community decision-making entirely if the criteria check is sufficient
- One felt criteria could play a scoring role rather than just a gateway role.

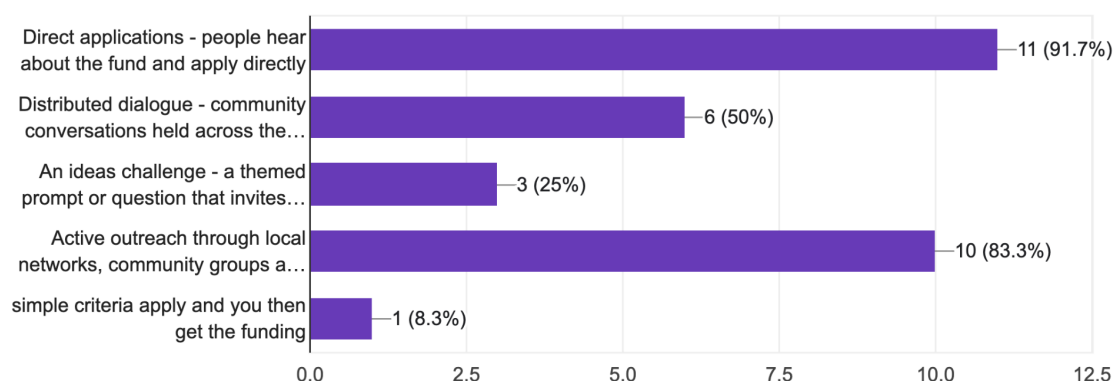
Idea generation

Respondents were asked to comment on how the fund should reach applicants and presented options which were emerging from discussion.

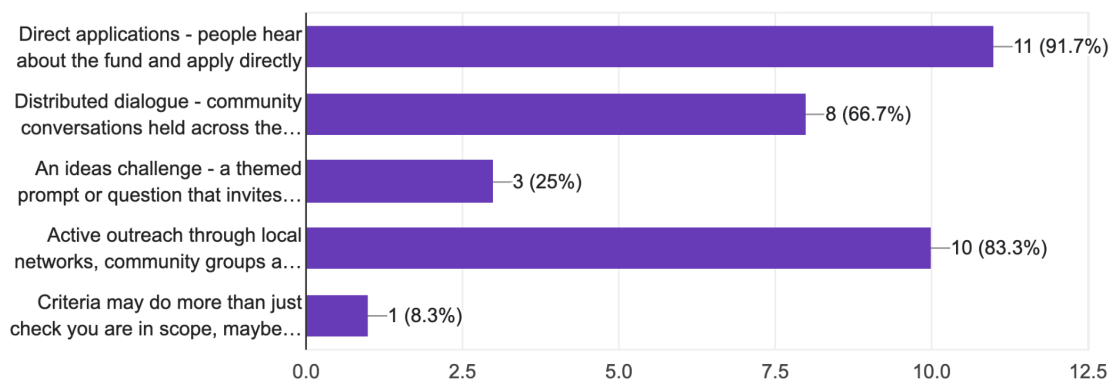
Direct applications and active outreach are the dominant preferences across all three grant sizes. Distributed dialogue grows in support as grant size increases. Ideas challenge has modest but consistent support.

Approach	Small	Medium	Large
Direct applications	11 (92%)	11 (92%)	8 (67%)
Active outreach	10 (83%)	10 (83%)	9 (75%)
Distributed dialogue	6 (50%)	8 (67%)	8 (67%)
Ideas challenge	3 (25%)	3 (25%)	4 (33%)

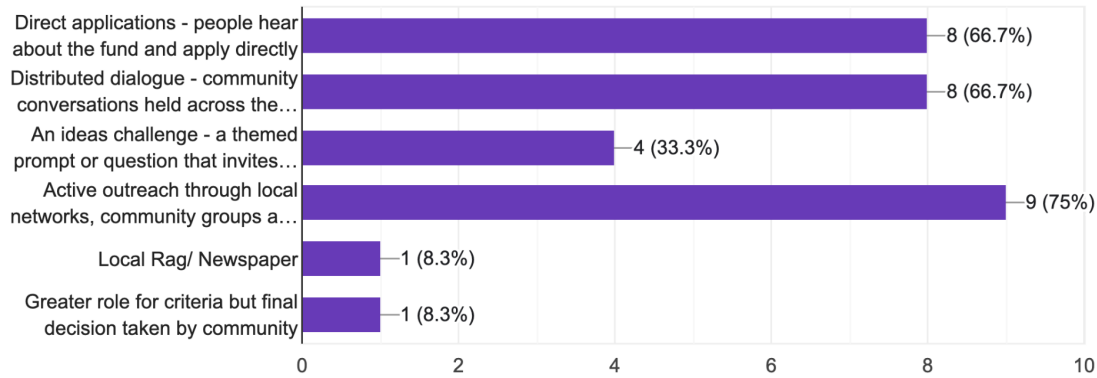
Small grants



Medium grants



Large grants

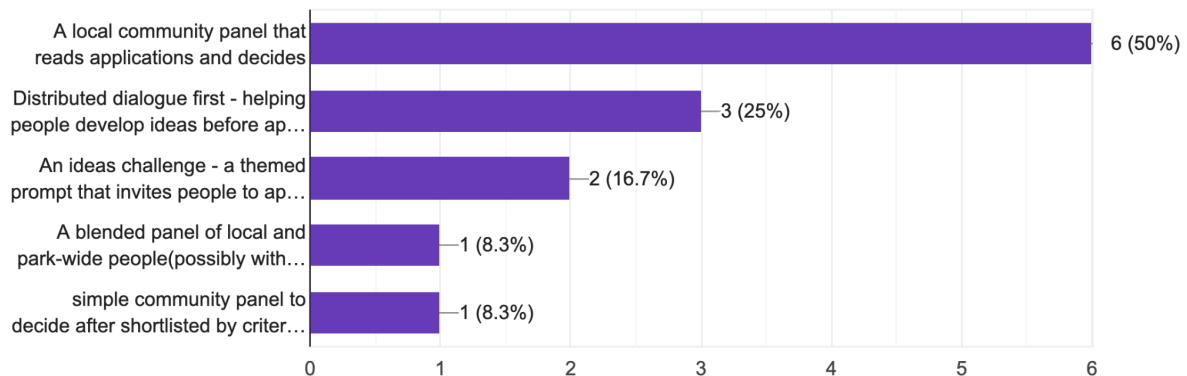


Community decision-making

Respondents were asked to comment on how the fund should involve communities in decision-making and presented options which were gaining broad support based on our discussions.

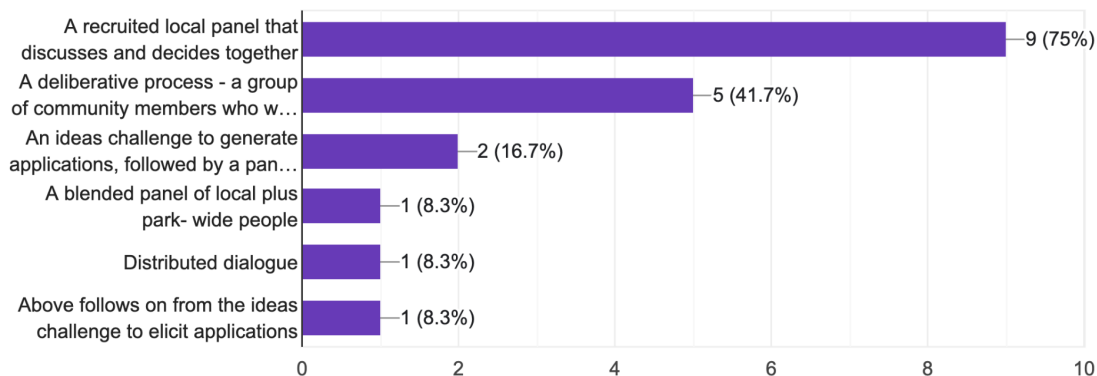
Small grants

Community panel 6 (50%), distributed dialogue first 3 (25%), ideas challenge 2 (17%)



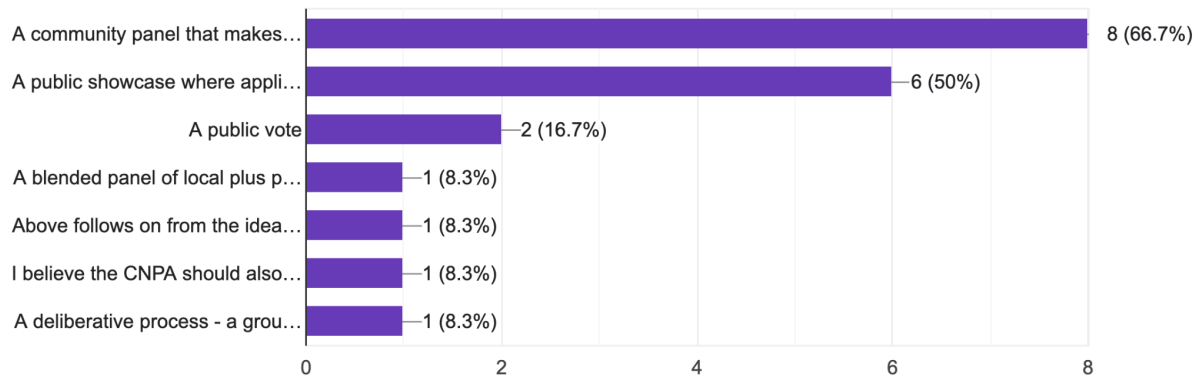
Medium grants

Recruited local panel 9 (75%), deliberative process 5 (42%), ideas challenge 2 (17%)



Large grants

Community panel after shortlisting 8 (67%), public showcase then panel 6 (50%), public vote 2 (17%)



Comments

- One respondent strongly opposed the same people who sit on multiple community panels being involved
- One raised concern about geographic representation with a risk that the park fringes could be sidelined
- One respondent felt a professional board should make decisions on merit
- One suggested a consensus approach
- One noted opposition to a public vote feeling "too popularity contest-like."

Eligibility

Respondents were asked two open questions: who should be able to apply and why, and who should not be eligible. Responses are summarised below.

There was strong consensus that the fund should be broadly open.

Key themes from open text:

- Open to anyone with a project that fits the Cairngorms 2030 themes
- For medium and large grants, constituted groups expected or required
- Geographic connection to the park is important – those living or working within the boundary
- Small grants more open, larger grants require evidence of capacity to deliver

Key themes on who should NOT be able to apply:

- Large organisations with other significant funding sources
- Academic bodies with access to research funding
- NGOs based outside the national park
- Those who could access funding elsewhere for the same project
- One respondent noted under-16s should not apply directly (though their ideas could be supported through another applicant)
- Private businesses above a turnover threshold
- One respondent felt eligibility should be based on the project, not the applicant type

Project scope

Respondents were asked what would help someone know if their idea is right for this fund.

There was no clear consensus, but some direction. We will further develop this during Session 6 and 7. Respondents broadly felt:

- The four Cairngorms 2030 themes are wide enough to cover most ideas and that should be communicated
- A list of example projects would help, but must be clearly non-exhaustive
- Video examples or case studies could be more effective than written category lists
- One respondent felt categories are needed; others felt naming categories risks exclusion.

EDI statement

Respondents were asked to read the revised equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) statement and share their response.

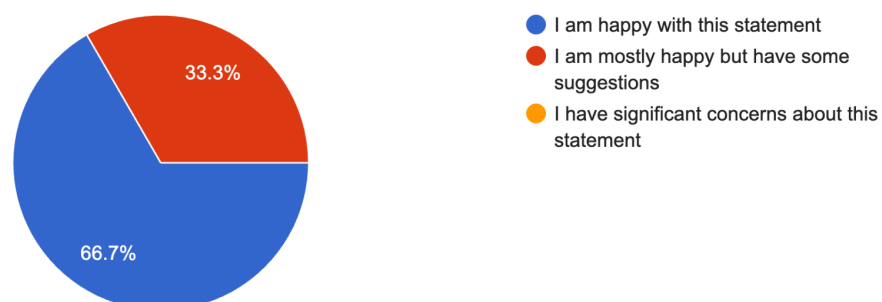
The fund will direct a minimum of 10% of its total value toward projects whose primary beneficiaries are people and communities in the Cairngorms who are least likely to benefit from a standard funding process – because of who they are, where they live, or the barriers they face. This is not about ticking boxes. It is about making sure the fund reaches people it would otherwise miss.

Equity recognises that some people need more targeted support to have a fair chance, and directs resources accordingly. Reaching those people is not just about keeping the fund open – it requires active promotion and practical support to apply.

8 respondents (67%) were happy with the statement and 4 (33%) were mostly happy but had suggestions. No respondents had significant concerns.

What do you think of this statement?

12 responses



For information, we had also included the following note in the survey. There were some comments suggesting that we include this in the statement itself rather than as a footnote:

Note: The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In the Cairngorms context, the Panel has also raised that people in remote or rural areas and older people are also groups the fund is particularly keen to reach. EDI is assessed on who a project benefits, not on the characteristics of the person or organisation applying.

Suggestions

- Delete the word "primary" - one respondent felt it implies a binary EDI/non-EDI distinction
- The commitment to active promotion and practical support needs to be real, not just stated
- EDI weighting in decision-making needs to be discussed practically
- One respondent opposed a separate EDI pot (note that the group resolved this in Session 5 and we will not have a separate pot)
- One respondent queried how EDI is weighted once applications are received

Comments on process

An open text space was provided for feedback or questions about the Panel process. Several respondents shared the following.

- Not enough time in online sessions to reach shared understanding before breakout rooms
- In-person sessions are significantly more useful than Zoom
- Concern that collective language is being used to mask individual views (note our group agreement principle of speaking from the 'I' rather than the 'we')
- A lot to cover with limited time.