

The Scottish Food and Drink Net Zero Challenge Fund Q and A

What is the fund?

The Scottish Food & Drink Net Zero Challenge Fund has been launched by [Interface](#) and the [Scotland Food & Drink Partnership](#) to support Scotland's food and drink businesses as part of the Recovery Plan funded by Scottish Government. It aims to support businesses to accelerate their journey towards net zero and improve their environmental sustainability utilising the world class knowledge base and facilities across Scottish universities, research institutes and colleges.

The aim is also to develop a number of exemplar demonstrator projects which are not only reducing the environmental impact businesses and the sector are having, but also inspiring others to improve theirs. Applications to the Challenge Fund will also provide great insight to business needs, which can inform the priorities of the SF&D Partnership Net Zero Taskforce.

What types of businesses can apply?

It is open to businesses of any size working in or supporting the Scottish food and drink sector. Businesses could be from farming, fishing, processing, manufacturing, distribution, retail or wholesale, technology or packaging companies etc, so long as the project is providing a solution or measures to improve environmental sustainability for the Scottish food and drink sector.

Why should a business get involved?

Environmental sustainability needs to be a priority, it isn't just about saving the planet and the natural resources our sector relies on but it makes economic sense for business. The environment is becoming a bigger priority for everyone and we want businesses to be ready to tap into green market opportunities, taking advantage of changes in consumer trends. Future legislation will demand change particularly when it comes to food waste and reducing carbon emissions.

What types of projects will be funded?

Funding may be awarded to projects in a wide range of areas including sustainable agricultural practices, food waste, sustainable packaging, resource and energy efficiency and water use.

What process will they go through?

For companies already partnered with an academic expert, the process is a simple application form jointly filled in. **Deadline 5pm, 17th December.**

For those that don't have an academic partner and would like support in identifying, there are three steps to the process:

1. Businesses get in touch with Interface with their sustainability challenge by completing a Project Brief Form. **Deadline 5pm 17th November**
2. A search process will take place by Interface to find interested and relevant academia to support the project and develop solutions to the challenge

3. The company and the academic institution then jointly apply to the fund. **Deadline 5pm 17th December**

What will happen with the grant and how much can be awarded?

Funding awards will be up to £10,000 in value, which will cover university, research institute or college project costs, (e.g. time, facilities and consumables). Collaborating with academia helps de-risk innovation for individual and groups of companies. This type of funding usually requires match funding in cash and in-kind, however due to the current economic challenges being faced by industry, the cash element has been waived.

What if 100 businesses get in touch?

We will be delighted! The process is a competitive one and an assessment panel will be set up to score the applications. Each project will be judged on its merits and impacts and we are looking for a broad church of projects across the supply chain and sub-sectors to fund. For those which are unsuccessful, Interface will endeavour to find alternative funding and support through our own networks as well as other schemes and organisations when they become available.

What if we can't fund all the projects?

Some may not be suitable for this type of funding or may not be as competitive as others. We will provide companies with relevant support and guidance through the Scottish support landscape but also the academic partners. We are also looking to leverage other funding options, but if we can demonstrate a pipeline of demand for these types of projects then there may be opportunities to make a case to access or tie in with other funding proposals and calls.