



Your guide to the Village SOS Competition

Welcome to Village SOS

Village SOS is an exciting initiative from the Big Lottery Fund and the BBC.

In 2009 we invited villages from across the UK to apply to us with ideas for enterprises that would revive their communities, create new jobs and improve the quality of life of local people. The Village SOS BBC One TV series documents the stories of six of the successful villages; four more feature on the Village SOS website as inspirational examples of community action.

Village SOS is now launching a competition where your village could win up to £30,000 to make your own community business idea a reality.

This guide will tell you what you need to do to enter.

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1. About the Village SOS Competition

The Village SOS Competition will give around 250 awards of between £10,000 and £30,000 to kick start community businesses that will revive villages.

We want to support inspiring business ideas that will bring people in UK villages together and support activities and enterprises that tackle the challenges villages face. We're particularly interested in giving money to enterprising ideas that will use the skills of local people and the area's natural resources, land and buildings.

The competition has two stages:

- 1. Entry stage.** This is where we ask what your idea is, how you know it's needed and how you have consulted with your community so far. We'll use the entry forms to decide which enterprising ideas to invite to the application stage.
- 2. Application stage.** We'll invite up to 500 entrants to submit an application form answering more detailed questions about your idea, its budget and how you'll manage your new enterprise. You'll have around three months to complete this.

We expect a high demand for funding. For the best chance of success, use the tools and resources on the Village SOS website or call our Advice Line. If you don't, your entry might not be as strong as it could be.

Start your journey by becoming a Village SOS member and join the online community (www.villagesos.org.uk/user/register).



Call our Advice Line (0845 434 9123) to talk through your idea and see what support is available.



Use the Village SOS website, forum and community for guidance on how to research your idea, assess its strengths and weaknesses, and consult with your community to gain widespread support.



Decide whether your village wants to enter the Village SOS Competition.

Once you have done all of these things, **you must complete and submit your entry form by 5pm, Thursday 20 October 2011** to be in the running to win up to £30,000 for your community's enterprise.

If you decide not to enter, you can still use the Village SOS website and Advice Line to develop your idea further and work out your next steps.



2. Entry requirements

- **Your idea must be for a community enterprise.**
- **Your village must be in a rural area and have fewer than 3,000 people living in it.**
- **We can only accept one entry per village.**

All types of voluntary and community groups or organisations such as charities, community organisations, social enterprises, village and community-based co-operatives can enter.

Informal and new groups that do not currently have a constitution or bank account can still enter. If you are successful you will need to formally set up your organisation and open a bank account in its name. You'll need to send us your constitution, bank details and confirm your financial procedures before we pay you any money.

We will not give money to:

- businesses that are run for private profit
- individuals and sole traders
- organisations based outside the UK
- public bodies such as schools, local authorities, parish, community and town councils (though we would encourage you to work closely with these organisations in your area)
- entries made by one organisation on behalf of another.

What is a community enterprise?

Community enterprises are businesses that are owned and run by villagers themselves, such as village shops and pubs. Community ownership is becoming increasingly popular in the UK, with around 260 community-owned village shops currently thriving.

The community ownership model is a viable and successful business model, with all profits being reinvested into the community. It is a sustainable and ethical way of doing business, with 97% of the community-owned village shops that have opened in the past 25 years still trading. The model is flexible and has been adopted by energy schemes, woodland projects, broadband initiatives, housing schemes and many more.

Village SOS aims to inspire villages to use the power of community ownership to deliver long-term benefits to their community. Community enterprises come in all shapes and sizes, and can be tailored to what works best for individual communities. They all revolve around the idea that they:

- are owned and run by the whole community
- can sustain themselves without having to rely on handouts, such as funding or other support
- are successful businesses that reinvest their profit back into the community.



Your village must be in a rural area and have fewer than 3,000 people living in it

We want to support enterprising ideas in rural villages that have fewer than 3,000 people. The entry form will ask you to provide evidence of the size of the population, such as an extract from the census, local development plan or a residents' survey. We will use this information, together with our own, to confirm your village meets the population criteria when you submit your entry form.

We will consider entries from small rural towns, however villages in urban areas are ineligible.

We can only accept one entry per village

Running a community enterprise can take up a lot of time and energy, and will need strong community support to be successful. We expect a lot of villages will want to enter, so competition for funds will be strong. With such a high demand, and our aim to have a wide distribution of funding across the UK, we will only accept one entry per village. This means that you will need to work together with other interested organisations or groups and agree a single entry to submit. Where appropriate, proposals can be combined into one business. If we receive more than one entry from a village, we will reject both entries.

How to develop an idea

Any enterprising idea that will create opportunities, revitalise your village and enhance pride in rural areas could make a successful community business.

The best place to start is by becoming a member of the Village SOS website, which includes a number of case studies from community enterprises that have already received funding from the Big Lottery Fund. There are also discussion forums where villages like yours will be talking about their ideas.

Think about what resources are available in your village and what people really need. We want to encourage people to think creatively about the land and buildings they own, the skills within their community and their ability to manage local projects.

Whether you already have an idea or you need to canvas for other people's suggestions, it's always better to come up with a long list of possible ideas, and then consult with your community about which ones they really like.



3. How to enter

- Sign in to the Village SOS website and go to www.villagesos.org.uk
- Research your idea and consult your community.
- Call the Village SOS Advice Line for advice and support.
- Submit your entry form online at **www.villagesos.org.uk/competition** by 5pm, Thursday 20 October 2011. (We prefer you to submit your entry online. However, you can post it to Village SOS Competition, Big Lottery Fund, Apex House, 3 Embassy Drive, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1TR or you can email us at competition@villagesos.org.uk).

You send us your completed entry form online by 5pm, Thursday 20 October 2011.



We review the entry forms by the beginning of November 2011 and invite the best ideas to take part in the second stage of the competition.



We send the application form and some additional guidance to help you put the finishing touches to your idea. We will ask for more detailed information including your budget and how you will manage the enterprise.



You continue to use the Village SOS website and Advice Line for support and guidance.



Your final application form is completed and received by 5pm on Thursday 2 February 2012.



We assess your application, and announce the result in April 2012.

We anticipate a high demand for money and the nature of the competition means that we will not be able to provide detailed feedback on every unsuccessful entry. While we can only fund a small number of enterprises, we hope that all villages will benefit from the advice and support available through Village SOS.



4. Help with filling in your entry form

This guide will help you to answer the questions on the entry form. Please read these notes carefully before you start filling in the form and refer to them as you go along. This will improve your chances of success.

1. What is the name of your organisation?

If you are a legally recognised organisation this needs to be your organisation's legal name, as shown on your governing document (for example, your constitution, set of rules or trust deed).

If you are an informal committee or association and you haven't yet adopted a constitution, the name you put here will be the name you will use in your organisation's constitution when you set one up (for example, Roxen Village Improvement Group).

2. What is your registered address?

If you are a legally recognised organisation, please tell us your registered address.

3. What kind of organisation are you?

We need to be sure that your organisation is eligible to enter the competition. It's not essential that you have a constitution at this stage. However, before we can pay you any money, your organisation will need to adopt a constitution and we'll need to see it. We'll provide you with guidance on this at the second stage. Alternatively, you can call the Advice Line if you'd like more information on what's involved.

4. Name and address of your village

Give the name and address of your village, including the postcode. Just the first half of the postcode will be enough (e.g. SY17). Please also tell us your local authority.

We need this information to see whether your village is in a rural area and to check whether we have received more than one entry from your village.

5. What is your village size?

To enter the competition your village must have fewer than 3,000 people living in it. Tell us how many people live in your village and how you have arrived at this figure (for example, you may have used census data, a local development plan or done a residents' survey).

6. Main contact details

This should be the lead person for your entry, who should be available to answer any questions on the entry form. It's very important that you give us the right contact details. Please let us know if this person has any particular communication needs.

7. Your idea

Briefly describe your enterprising idea, telling us what you hope it will achieve for your community.

Please tell us:

- what your business will do
- how your business will use the skills and assets of the local area
- who you think your customers will be.



We're particularly interested in what makes this idea inspiring and enterprising, but we also need to be sure that it will be sustainable – that is, it will make a profit that can be ploughed back into the community enterprise or other community projects.

8. Need

We need to know about the social or economic challenges your village faces. This may include transport problems, isolation and poor access to services and amenities.

Please tell us:

- the challenges that are relevant to the business idea you have in mind
- about any research you have carried out (referencing any regional strategies or local development plans) that support the need for your community enterprise
- how you think your community enterprise will revive your village.

We are particularly interested in how your business idea will address the needs you have identified.

9. Consulting with local people

Give details of how you consulted with people in your village and what the results were.

Please tell us:

- how you consulted with people in your village
- how many people you spoke to
- what the results were and how you acted on them.

We are particularly interested in how people's views are reflected in your idea and how you will continue to involve local people in your community enterprise.

10. Budget

Please tell us how much money you'd like from us. You can ask for an amount between £10,000 and £30,000.

We need to know that the money we give you will be spent on things that we can pay for under the rules of this competition, so tell us clearly what you plan to spend the money on.

We'll pay for some or all of your costs, but we won't pay for:

- your existing work
- retrospective costs
- building projects costing more than £25,000 including VAT.



- other items or activities we won't pay for
 - projects that are entirely focussed on making current facilities and services accessible
 - activities that public bodies have a legal obligation to pay for, including activities and subjects in the school curriculum or delivered within curriculum time
 - endowments
 - feasibility studies
 - fundraising
 - items that only benefit one person
 - loan or interest repayments
 - projects with high maintenance costs, unless you can pay for them
 - religious or political activities
 - any VAT you can recover from HM Revenue and Customs.

Data protection

We have a duty to protect public funds and, for that reason, we may also share information with other Lottery distributors, government departments, organisations providing matched funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in Lottery applications, grants or specific funding programmes, or for the prevention and detection of crime.

We might use the data you provide for research purposes. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applicants, grant holders, contractors and people making a complaint.

If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act we will release it, subject to exemptions; although we may choose to consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, you should let us know when you apply.

By submitting your entry form you confirm that you understand our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that you accept that we will not be liable for any loss or damage to you pursuant to our fulfilment of our obligations under the relevant law.

For further information visit www.villagesos.org.uk/competition, call for free advice **0845 434 9123*** or email competition@villagesos.org.uk

*Calls from landlines will be charged at local rates (3.4p per minute peak times, 1.7p per minute in evenings and 0.6p per minute at weekends). Calls from mobiles will vary and may be considerably more.