



Guidance for Applicants:

Building Websites & Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

The Community Fund recognises the importance of websites for businesses and social enterprises - 81% of people research a business or service on the internet before making a purchase decision. We want to support enterprises in the Fund area to be as strong and competitive as possible, and to benefit from the digital age, so applications for costs related to website development and SEO may be supported.

1. Websites

Proposals will need to demonstrate that

- **Careful thought has been given to the purpose of the website:** many people do not truly understand what they want when they set up a website. It's very easy to get it wrong and create an unsearchable blog when you actually need a functioning platform capable of accepting payments or bookings. Have you investigated and taken advice on this? Are you confident that the work you have planned will suit your business needs?
- **You understand your customers and what they want to do:** you may have decided to set up a business – or at least digitalise an existing business - but do you know who your customers are? What they are looking for? How they will search for it? Market research needs to be done at an early stage, but it's also something you should never stop doing. People age, preferences and habits change, what works now won't work in 10 years.
- **You have sought specialist professional help:** if you want something done properly, you need ask someone with proven experience and skilled in the necessary field to help. The problem with building a website is that many people *think* they are experts – “how hard can it be?” The rule is that you get what you pay for - someone may offer to build you a website for £50 but that doesn't mean that it will be done well. At the same time, some agencies charge thousands of pounds for a site that still won't meet your needs. Choose a company able to provide examples of work they have done and references – talk to their previous customers if you can.
- **You have thought carefully about content and who will be responsible for writing this and keeping it up to date:** the size of your organisation will dictate how you handle this. You may have people who are capable of populating your website or you may even want to do it yourself.
- **You understand the timeline:** it takes time to build a good website. Even when most of the work has been done, you will need to set aside plenty of time to test the site on your laptop, tablet and mobile BEFORE opening the doors to internet traffic. You need good reviews from the start.

2. SEO, social media and email marketing

Just because you've taken the time to build it, doesn't mean visitors will just come. When your website does go live, you'll need to switch your attention to marketing techniques. People do not just find your website by magic: your SEO won't kick in properly in the short-term, so you'll need to consider alternatives. If you are a brand-new business then growing your identity through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the likes, or via email marketing, are just a few options.

Paid search can give you instant visibility on the web, but it can be costly, depending on how competitive your industry is. Most people assume that paying for SEO for 12 months will drive online business, but it must be managed effectively to bring in relevant customers and drive up sales. SEO can undoubtedly drive up traffic to

website, but this may not result in an increase in sales. The impact and benefit of paying for SEO management has diminished dramatically and it requires an intelligent marketing strategy to work.

If you are paying for SEO or marketing during initial period, how will these costs be sustained into future years.

Further Guidance:

- Business Wales – [Marketing Guidance](#)
- Simply Business – [‘How to build a business website – a step by step guide’](#)

Also see our [Guidance Note for Businesses](#)

NB: compliance with this guidance note does not guarantee that an application will be successful – it just gives an indication of some elements of our assessment process and criteria.