

how to guide



TRANSITION CORE RESOURCING



Foreword

We have put this guide together because a growing number of Transition Initiatives have been asking us for advice on how to secure resources for their core work. These groups have been telling us that, whilst they have vibrant projects, they are short of time and resources to co-ordinate and develop their core work. Some groups feel this is limiting their ability to achieve their wider aims.

In the words of one group, the core of a Transition Initiative is the '*perpetual ability to initiate change*'. Core work includes developing vision and strategy, networking, and initiating new projects, alongside fundraising, publicity, organising events, administration, and managing volunteers and finances. It's more than likely that core work will overlap with project work.

Some Transition Initiatives have taken the step of paying someone to help with their core work, though this is not for everyone. Some groups have all the resources and skills they need amongst their volunteers, some don't want to introduce paid workers, and some don't feel ready to do so.

Although this guide focuses on finances, there is, of course, much more to resourcing the core. As one Transition Initiative emphasised '*Resourcing the core needs to be more than money. Celebrating, enjoying the experience, not being too formal or administrative.*'

We hope that this guide gives you lots of ideas on how to find resources for your core work.



Good luck!
Jo Taylor and the REconomy Team

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About this guide

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for any Transition Initiative that wants to think creatively about how it funds its core activities. It is mainly for UK Transition Initiatives, but others might find useful ideas here, and some non UK examples are included.










How we put this guide together

This guide is based on the experiences of Transition Initiatives in the UK and internationally, gathered via a survey and interviews, and at workshops at a Transition Roadshow and REconomy event in St Andrews, Scotland.

How to use this guide

This guide provides a range of tried and tested (and more novel) ideas from Transition Initiatives on how to secure funding for core activities.

Each funding option is graded for the scale of income it can generate, its technical difficulty (how much specialist knowledge, expertise and experience is required to secure funds in this way), and time to fruition (how long you need to allow between getting started and getting cash in the bank). So, you can pick out the funding options that best suit you depending on the amount of funding you are looking for, the fundraising experience you have and how quickly you need funding.

<i>Scale of potential income</i>	<i>Technical difficulty</i>	<i>Time to fruition</i>
£100s 	Low 	Less than 1 year 
£1,000s 	Medium 	1 to 3 years 
£10,000s 	High 	3 years or more 

What this guide is not

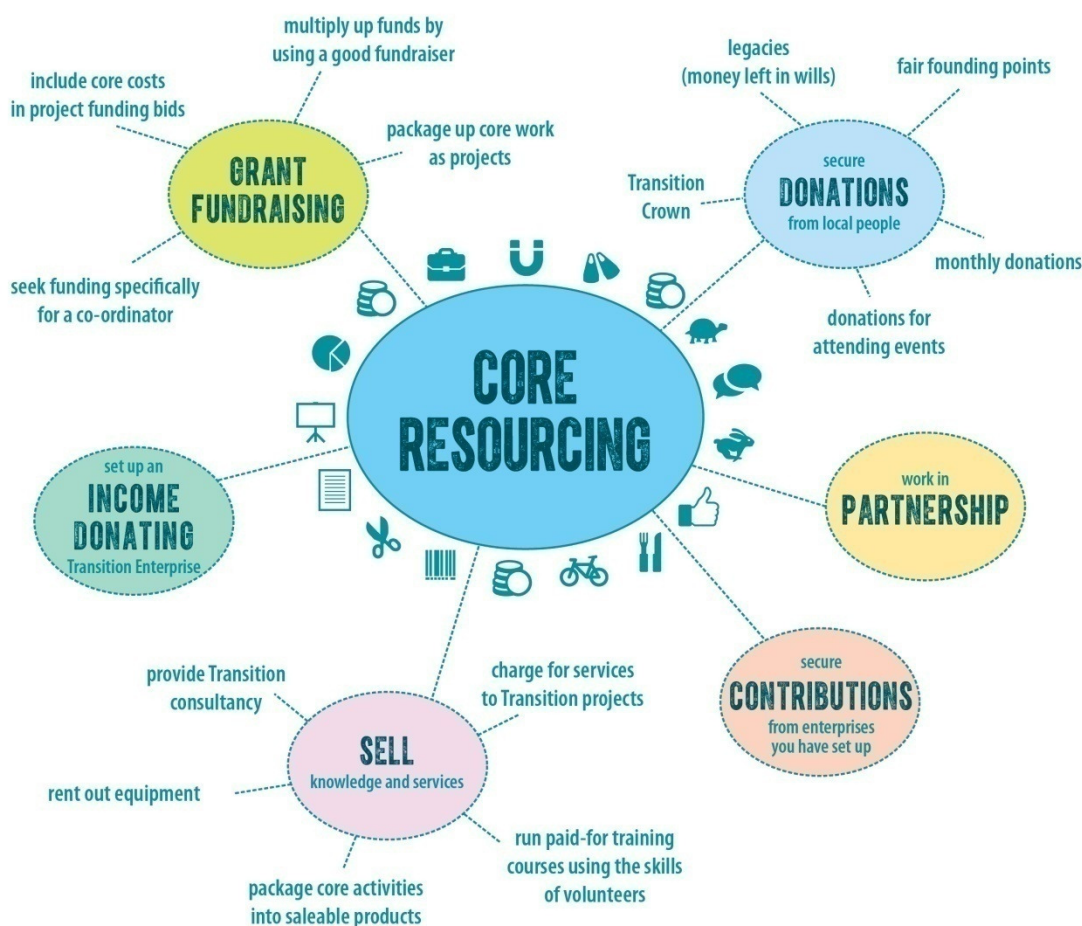
This guide is not a comprehensive list of all the fundraising approaches used by Transition Initiatives. It focuses only on those approaches that have been used to generate funds for core activities. For more information on a wide range of fundraising options see Transition Network's fundraising tools:

- [Funding Primer](#)
- [Get ready to fundraise – A webinar to help your Transition group](#)

Introduction

The challenge of securing core resources is not unique to Transition Initiatives. Most charities, community groups and social enterprises are constantly managing the balancing act of funding both their projects and core work. There is no 'silver bullet' solution to core funding. Rather, Transition Initiatives are funding their core activities by mixing and matching different approaches.

Transition Initiatives appear to use one or more of these six main approaches to fund core work:



Resourcing the core with paid help: Your experiences




We ran a 'Resourcing the core of a Transition Initiative' survey which heard from 55 Transition Initiatives:

- In the last year, 36% of Transition Initiatives have paid people to do project work, and 15% have paid people to help with core work
- A further 21% of Transition Initiatives hope to start paying people to help with core work in the next two years, and another 28% would like to if they had the funding.
- All of the Transition Initiatives paying for support with core work are at least four years old.
- The activities most commonly undertaken by paid co-ordinators are publicity, organising events, fundraising, and networking.
- The most popular fundraising route amongst Transition Initiatives currently paying co-ordinators is including core costs in project grants.

Top tip

If you are considering paying for help with projects or core work, read Transition Network's guide ['Introducing paid work to your Transition Initiative'](#) to get you started.

1. Grant fundraising

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s / £10,000s 	Medium 	Less than 1 year 

Transition Initiatives have used four main approaches to fundraise for grants for core work:

- include core costs in project funding bids
- package up core work as projects
- seek funding specifically for a co-ordinator
- multiply up funds by using a good fundraiser

Transition Initiatives have secured grants from trusts and foundations, from local councils, from the Lottery, and from the Landfill Communities Fund, among others. Writing fundraising applications is an art, and it does pay to get assistance from an experienced fundraiser, or to get some training or support.

1.1 Include core costs in project funding bids

This is currently the most popular approach with Transition Initiatives - and rightly so. Core costs include administration, office costs, administering finances and managing people. Project work is made possible by having a strong organisation that can deliver work efficiently. The degree to which you can include core costs in a project funding bid depends on the funder. Some will explicitly not fund core costs or overheads, some will have very strict guidelines, others will be more flexible. At the same time you may find pressure from inside your group to reduce the amount of core costs included so that there is more money for project work. It's a delicate balancing act. Whilst we're on the subject of fundraising, always remember to be realistic about the level of outputs you commit to in your funding bids.

A quick guide to including core costs in project funding bids

Whether you are fundraising for project or core costs, the key is to try to budget for everything that might be needed. Project costs are those directly related to delivering the project. Core costs are all the support costs that need to wrap around the project to make it work. In an ideal world, each project you run would contribute its share, for example 10%, of the core costs of running your group.

Examples of core costs:

- recruitment - advertising
- managing people - paying someone to spend time managing paid workers and volunteers
- administration - paying someone to do this
- administering finances - paying someone to do this, or elements of this e.g. book keeping, or preparing accounts for audit
- office costs - rent, rates, insurance, IT, telephones, stationery, postage, photocopying, printing
- publicity - paying someone to co-ordinate publicity, website costs, printing costs

A quick guide to including core costs in project funding bids (continued)

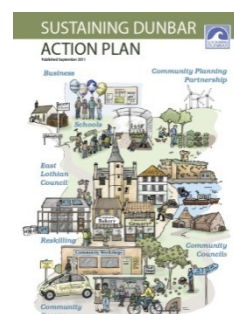
You can present core costs to funders in various ways, depending on the funder's guidelines. For example, you could:

- include a specific budget line for paying someone e.g. 'Management support by Project Manager', 'Financial administration by Book keeper'
- package up all costs into a lump sum e.g. 'Delivery of 10 Greeniversity events'. You are not explicitly saying that you are including e.g. administration costs, but they are parcelled up into the overall sum
- present core costs packaged with project costs e.g. 'Telephone including project specific mobile phone' could also include a contribution to overall telephone costs.

1.2 Package up core work as projects

Some aspects of core work can be packaged as projects to attract funding. This might include undertaking a specific piece of research or feasibility study, developing a local action plan, or perhaps running an awareness-raising campaign.

[Sustaining Dunbar](#) secured a grant of £90,000 over two years from the [Climate Challenge Fund](#) for the Dunbar 2025 project - a two year community engagement project which included the development of a [Local Resilience Action Plan](#).



1.3 Seek funding specifically for a co-ordinator

Securing funding specifically for someone to drive your core activities can be a great benefit, but tough to achieve as only a limited number of funders will consider this. As with all fundraising, telling a compelling story is key:

- What would having a funded co-ordinator achieve?
- Are you ready to scale up?
- Are you being held back from doing great work due to a lack of certain skills or capacity?
- What is unique about your group and this moment which means a paid co-ordinator would have a high impact?

Also, think critically about what you will do when funding comes to an end. How will you resource the work the co-ordinator has started, or find other means to fund their role? Will it leave a gap that you can't fill, or can you structure work in a way to minimise this risk?

1.4 Multiply up funds by using a good fundraiser

Funders rarely grant funds to pay for a fundraiser, so you will need to find this money from another source. Finding the right fundraiser, with a solid track record in the community sector, is key. You could put out a request for help from local fundraisers and see if anyone would support your Transition Initiative by giving their time for free.

[Transition Town Totnes](#) used this approach successfully in its early years. They secured £5,000 from a local benefactor, and used this to pay a skilled fundraiser who secured £80,000. The donor really liked the idea of multiplying up their impact in this way.

2. Securing donations from local people




Transition Initiatives have used the following approaches to secure donations:

- monthly donations
- donations for attending events

Other Transition Initiatives are planning to test:

- Fair founding points
- Transition Crown
- legacies (money left in wills)




2.1 Monthly donations

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s 	Low 	Less than 1 year 

‘Paying someone to update our website and do the monthly newsletter is clear and defined and works well. Monthly direct debits cover about two thirds of the cost and mean we don't have to spend all our time worrying about where the next tranche of funding will come from.’

[Transition Town Lewes](#) pays someone about £250 a month to keep their website up to date, and to produce their newsletter. Monthly donations (£5 to £20) from local Transition supporters cover two thirds of the cost, bringing in about £150 a month. People donate via Paypal or standing order (preferred as Paypal makes a charge) using a simple form. Donors were recruited via the Transition Town Lewes newsletter, and 1,000-strong mailing list. Most have continued donating since the scheme launched two years ago.

2.2 Donations for attending events

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s 	Low 	Less than 1 year 







Many Transition Initiatives say that their events struggle to cover their costs. They want to make events free or low cost so that the maximum number of people can attend. The downside is that these events then use up resources that could fund other core work. Some groups have a very active policy of seeking donations at events, so that events pay their way. Their tips include:

- mention ‘free, but donations welcome’ or ‘a suggested donation of £X’ in publicity
- make sure the person introducing the event explains that you will be collecting donations
- if you are offering a ‘freebie’ e.g. freshly pressed apple juice, have a donation box on the stand
- always have someone allocated to collect donations on the door at the end of events
- events such as ‘swap and mend’ where people take away items or a new skill are particularly good for getting donations

Transition Initiatives also run events that are specifically geared to generating income, such as barn dances or jumble sales, or ‘premium’ events where, for example, people pay to hear a high profile speaker.

One way to think about seeking donations at events is through the concept of the [gift economy](#).

2.3 Fair founding points







Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s  	Low / Medium  	Less than 1 year / 1 to 3 yrs  

[Marburg im Wandel](#), in Germany plan to partner with a community land project and local co-op and introduce a system of 'fair founding points'. This 1/10/100 strategy collects money in three steps:

1. donation of 1€ via paypal to sign up to the joint project newsletter
2. donation of 10€ to be a supporter of the initiative
3. payment of 100€ to purchase a share in the project









Payments 1. and 2. are non-returnable so can be spent during the start-up phase. Payment 3. is for a share where a return on investment is anticipated.

2.4 Transition Crown

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s  	Low / Medium  	1 to 3 years  




[Transition Gothenburg](#), in Sweden, are considering introducing a Transition Crown (local coin), and asking local cafés and shops to give customers the opportunity to add a crown for local Transition work to their bill when they shop.

2.5 Legacies (money left in wills)

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s / £1,000s / £10,000s   	Medium  	3 years or more   

[Transition Town Totnes](#) has started to explore the potential of seeking donations via legacies (money left in wills). This is a longer term route to securing resources, but could play a role in securing the work of the group into the future.

3. Working in partnership

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s / £10,000s 	Medium 	Less than 1 year / 1 to 3 yrs 

As a result of the good links they have at the town, district and county level, [Transition Town Dorchester](#) were invited to include their work in a bid for Big Lottery 'Communities Living Sustainably' funding. As a result, they secured £7,500 over three years to pay a co-ordinator to focus on outreach for half a day a week. The time spent by the co-ordinator is tiny in comparison to that put in by volunteers, but crucially, they do the work that the volunteer team doesn't really want to do. Paying someone also brings a focus to things that might otherwise not get done.

One of the founders of [Viver Telheiras](#) in Lisbon has secured funding to study for a PhD at Lisbon University. He is undertaking action research into the work of Viver Telheiras and similar community groups, and is able to spend time working on core activities as well. This partnership with the university has also allowed Viver Telheiras to use the skills of university students to support core activities.

Inspiring others to take action is a key part of [Transition Linlithgow's](#) approach. This enables the group to deliver core activities through partnership. One result is the Black B'tch magazine (named after a dog story in the town's past). The magazine was created by members of the business association and others, with Transition Linlithgow helping to kick start the idea. The magazine is funded by local business advertising. The main costs are graphic design and printing. Articles and photos are contributed for free and it is hand delivered by volunteers to every house in town - about 6,000 properties. Transition Linlithgow love the magazine, which allows them to inject positive messages, stories and event information. Amongst other things, they have written about energy saving, food co-ops, REconomy, and orchards.

4. Selling knowledge and services




Some Transition Initiatives are generating income through selling their knowledge and services in a range of ways, including:

- renting out equipment
- providing Transition consultancy
- packaging core activities into saleable products
- running paid-for training courses using the skills of volunteers

Other Transition Initiatives are planning to test:

- charging for services to your Transition Enterprises








4.1 Renting out equipment

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s 	Low 	Less than 1 year 



[Transition Sudbury and District](#) rent out their apple press and gazebo (purchased with grant funding) to other organisations to generate income. They are fundraising to buy a smoothie bike which they are planning to rent out. The group also runs refreshment stands at their own and other local events to generate income.

4.2 Providing Transition consultancy




Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s / £10,000s   	Medium / High   	Less than 1 year 

[Transition Town Wigan, and Billinge and Orrell](#) is seeking three years of funding for two staff members to roll out the Billinge and Orrell approach and set up a self-sustaining network in each district within the Wigan area. As part of this package, some core resource will be allocated to Transition Billinge and Orrell. This approach is 'selling' Transition Town Wigan, and Billinge and Orrell's expertise in setting up a successful Transition Initiative, to do the same elsewhere.

[Viver Telheiras](#) in Portugal is seeking funding for a communications and design worker to provide free services to the Transition Initiative and its partners, but also sell paid-for services more widely to generate income.

Members of [Den Haag in Transitie](#) in the Netherlands are not paid for their direct work for the Transition Initiative. The Transition Initiative seeks to create jobs for, or help its volunteers get paid assignments through its network and reputation. As a result, many of the core volunteers work part-time as self-employed entrepreneurs in Transition-related activities and have enough time left to invest voluntary hours in the Transition Initiative.

4.3 Packaging core work into saleable products




Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£10,000s 	High 	1 to 3 yrs / 3 yrs or more 

Some of the core activities of Transition Initiatives are ripe for packaging up for sale to funders, local councils and national government. Catalysing and supporting new Transition Enterprises and local community action are skills developed by many Transition Initiatives that have wider application. There is a particular need for building these skills locally in a climate where councils are reducing service delivery and looking to the community to, for example, run libraries or manage community buildings. Transition Initiatives could provide packages of development support to local people wanting to work on these projects.






[Transition Town Brixton](#) and [Transition Town Totnes](#), with £25,000 apiece of funding secured through the REconomy Project, are exploring new ways of mobilising a community to support and invest in its local entrepreneurs and economy.

4.4 Running paid-for training courses using the skills of volunteers

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s / £1,000s 	Low / Medium 	Less than 1 year 




[Transition Sudbury and District](#) run 'Greeniversity' skill share events. Workshops to date have included bread making, Christmas wreath making, composting, vegetable growing, knitting, felting, and keeping chickens, and are aimed at beginners. Workshops are run by volunteers from the group or people they know, who give their time for free. The local Sainsburys provides a free training room. Attendees are invited to donate what they can towards attending.

4.5 Charging for services to your Transition Enterprises

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£100s 	Medium 	Less than 1 year 

Some Transition Initiatives are providing services to enterprises they have set up, which have now become independent. These services include applying for and receiving grants, managing finances and providing project management support. A financial value can be put on each of these services, and the cost can be built into the enterprise's plans for raising finance. Once finance is secured, the enterprise can pay the Transition Initiative for its support. This does not raise core funding as such, but it provides the Transition Initiative with money to spend on the core work it isn't doing because it is servicing its enterprises instead.

5. Setting up an income donating Transition Enterprise

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£10,000s 	High 	3 yrs or more 




The holy grail of many charities and community groups is to secure a long-term, reliable source of income to support their work. A number of Transition Initiatives are looking into setting up [Transition Enterprises](#) specifically to create income to support their core work. These enterprises need to align with Transition values, but be capable of generating a decent surplus. Community energy projects currently appear to present the best prospects, although Transition Initiatives are also looking at furniture recycling and asset ownership as options.



The key here is that the Transition Enterprise specifically exists to generate income for the Transition Initiative, and is legally structured accordingly.

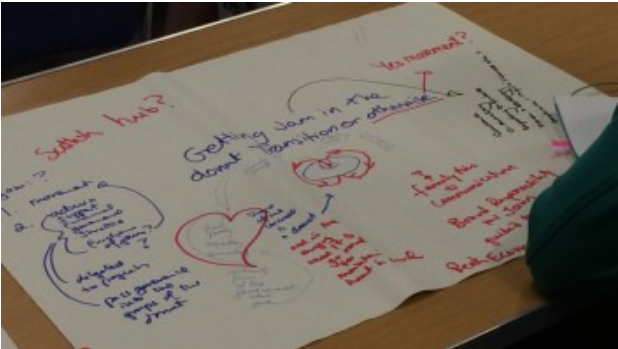
[Sustaining Dunbar](#) initially looked into establishing a community wind turbine, but this is on hold due to planning issues. A community-owned solar farm is at the feasibility stage, and community owned, hydrogen-based, energy storage is being considered. Asset ownership is also being explored, with the group looking to secure a two acre site to create a community enterprise park which will generate income from leasing land and buildings.

6. Securing contributions from enterprises you have set up

Scale of potential income	Technical difficulty	Time to fruition
£1,000s 	Medium / High 	3 yrs or more 

This is different from setting up an income donating Transition Enterprise, as described in section 5. above. In this case, the enterprises originated in the Transition Initiative, but have now developed into independent entities with different levels of relationship and connectedness to the ‘parent’ Transition Initiatives.

Some Transition Initiatives, including Sustaining Dunbar, and Transition Town Brixton have agreements with their spin-off enterprises to covenant a proportion of profits back to the ‘parent’ Transition Initiative when financial performance reaches a certain level. In practice, the enterprises are not yet ready to do so. Whether there is the financial potential, or motivation for spin-off enterprises to provide funding for core Transition activities remains to be seen. Some Transition Initiatives feel that generating income by providing services to spin-off enterprises (see section 4.5 above) or providing a paid-for membership package of benefits to enterprises appears more viable.



Sharing thoughts on core resourcing at the Transition Roadshow in St Andrews

Let us know how you get on

We hope that this guide has helped stimulate ideas for resourcing the core of your own Transition Initiative. Please let us know how you get on. It would be great to hear about the things that work, and the things that don't, so that we can share them with the Transition movement.

REconomy Project

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Thank you

Many thanks to the Transition Initiatives that responded to the 'Resourcing the core of a Transition Initiative' survey. Thanks also to the Transition Initiatives who have kindly shared their time and thoughts in research interviews and workshops.



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