Grant-making policy

This policy is intended to be a transparent, accessible reference document for all those involved in the Charity, including donors (primarily members of the WCIT Livery), members of the Charitable Operations Committee, WCIT Charity Board of Trustees, grant applicants and anyone else interested in the WCIT Charity's grant-making.

The WCIT Charity

Values and guiding principles

The WCIT Charity is supportive, inclusive and generous. It treats all requests fairly and equally. It donates its funds thoughtfully and coordinates volunteers' time and skills effectively.

Purpose

To unlock the power of tech for good, through public education, promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of charities, donating funds and by providing access to technology professionals.

Target beneficiaries

Registered charities and not for profit organisations aligned with our purpose who depend on external financial support and specialist skills to realise their IT initiatives.

Areas of focus

The WCIT Charity supports digital projects that improve one or more of these areas: education, inclusion, tech for charities, and public understanding.

Eligibility and criteria

The WCIT Charity provides grants of up to £15,000 to UK-registered charities for innovative technology projects. We focus on projects that use tech to improve lives, strengthen charities, increase inclusion, improve education or help people better understand technology.

Guidelines at glance

Your project is likely to be a good fit if it…

- Uses technology as a core part of the objective
- Aligns with one of our four focus areas
- Benefits at least 25 people in the UK
- Is innovative and not simply a business-as-usual activity
- Delivers clear and measurable outcomes
- Requests no more than £15,000

Your project is unlikely to be a good fit if it…

- Primarily seeks funding for laptops, software licences or a website
- Supports beneficiaries outside the UK
- Covers routine operating costs
- Continues an existing service without a new technological element
- Falls outside one of our focus areas

Our focus areas

Inclusion
We fund projects that improve digital inclusion, accessibility and participation, particularly for people who face barriers to accessing or using technology. For more guidance about this focus area, please see our FAQs.

Education
We support innovative approaches to improving learning outcomes and increasing digital literacy. We also fund tech-enabled educational tools (this does not include computers or commercially available equipment such as robotics kits).

Tech for charities
We support charities to test, develop or apply innovative technologies that improve services or efficiency. However, we do not fund routine purchases such as commercially available software licences, websites or standard IT infrastructure.

Public understanding of technology
We support activities that help people better understand technology and its impact on society. This is a small area of our funding programme.

In all of these areas, technology should be a central element of the project rather than simply a tool used to deliver it.

FAQs

Why do you cap the number of applications each quarter?
Due to a dramatic increase in applications in recent years and the relatively modest grants we provide each year, we now cap the number of requests we accept each quarter to 50. This matches our limited capacity to ensure that every application receives appropriate consideration. It also improves the likelihood of success for eligible applicants.

How do I know when the application portal will be open?
We will always publish the next application window and deadline on our website.

Can I clarify a potential application before I apply?
Yes, we are happy to offer advice on the eligibility of your proposal. You can either email charity@wcit.org.uk or call 020 3871 0255.

How is the WCIT Charity funded?
The WCIT Charity is funded by generous members of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists. Members are leaders, innovators and professionals who are united by a commitment to fellowship, service and societal impact. The WCIT is the philanthropic heart of the technology industry, and members 'Pay IT Forward' by championing education and technology for good, and by donating to the WCIT Charity.

Does the WCIT Charity have an AI policy?
While we do not currently have an AI policy, we do recognise that applicants may use AI tools to help draft or refine their applications. However, applications should remain authentic, accurate and specific to your organisation and beneficiaries. Generic or heavily AI-generated submissions are unlikely to be competitive.

Can we request pro bono help for our project?
Yes, we like to support charities with the pro bono expertise of our members. Their knowledge of IT, and how its selection and deployment should be approached and governed, is second to none. We welcome applications for projects that might need some additional guidance or insight, although we can't always guarantee that we will have a suitable volunteer to help. If you would like to apply for pro bono help as a separate request to your grant application, you can do so on our Pro Bono web page.

Why is grant information shared on 360Giving?
All publicly available information on grants made by the WCIT Charity is shared on open datasets, most notably via 360Giving. This is part of our commitment to being transparent about our funding. For further details, please read our Open Data Policy on Our Work (small grants) web page, and for an overview of the information we share, please visit: https://wcitcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/360-giving-WCIT-Charity-v1.xlsx. Acceptance of a grant is on the understanding that the relevant details of your grant will be published on an open dataset.

What are the reporting requirements for a grant?
Successful applicants will be asked to provide a progress and/or end-of-project report, along with photos and/or video and testimonials from beneficiaries.

Eligibility

Which charities can apply for a WCIT Charity grant?
We fund UK-registered charities whose beneficiaries are based in the UK. Because of our limited capacity we are not able to fund:

- CICs or other not-for-profit groups or organisations
- Schools, academies or PTAs (except our existing partner schools)
- Individuals
- Private companies
- Local authorities or councils

Our grants of up to £15,000 are made to small-to-medium sized charities that have been established for at least one year and that have both an annual income and unrestricted reserves below £1 million.

Can a new charity apply?
As long as your organisation was registered with the Charity Commission or the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator more than 12 months ago, you are able to apply.

What types of projects can receive funding?
Projects are eligible if they:

- Use technology in a meaningful way and support one or more of our priority areas:
    - Education
    - Inclusion
    - Tech for charities
    - Public understanding of technology
- Deliver clear, measurable outcomes for beneficiaries
- Benefit at least 25 people
- Request no more than £300 per direct beneficiary

We are particularly interested in innovative projects involving areas such as AI, data and analytics, robotics, digital skills or accessibility technologies.

Projects are more likely to be successful if they:

- Have potential for lasting impact and wider adoption
- Demonstrate strong value for money and social impact

Our funding should also represent at least 25% of the overall project budget.

What makes a strong application?
Successful applications clearly demonstrate:

- A well-evidenced need for the project
- Clear outcomes and how they will be measured

- An innovative use of technology
- Strong leadership and delivery plans
- Appropriate management of risks
- Long-term sustainability beyond the grant period
- Good value for money
- The potential for wider learning, adoption or replication

What is not funded by the WCIT Charity?
We are most interested in funding the development, testing or implementation of innovative technology-based solutions rather than the purchase of standard operational tools and services, so we do not fund:

- Website creation or redesign
- Off-the-shelf hardware or software
- Networking or telephony costs
- Apps for income generation or staff administration
- Consultancy fees

Furthermore, as we have limited funds we do not provide grants for:

- Core running costs
- Existing services, or projects already delivered
- Political or lobbying activity
- Loans, debt repayment or endowment-building
- International projects where beneficiaries are outside the UK

Costs and budget

What expenses can we include?
You can include all reasonable expenses linked to your specific project; these should be listed in your budget.

Can we include staff costs?
Yes, you can include staff costs, as long as they are linked to your project and do not represent the full amount of your financial request.

Can we buy laptops or tablets?
Unfortunately we do not fund off-the-shelf hardware, other than adaptive technologies.

What is meant by 'off-the-shelf' hardware or software?
This means any ready-made hardware such as laptops, tablets, robotics kits, monitors and mobile phones that can be bought from a retailer. It also means any commercially available software licences and subscription products.

What counts as reserves?
For the purposes of WCIT Charity funding, reserves include unrestricted income funds, general funds that are not ring-fenced for specific projects, and assets such as cash, investments and bank balances.

Our income is below £1 million but our reserves are over £1m - can we still apply?
We appreciate that some charities such as those providing lifelong care or contract-based services

may have higher financial reserves, but as the WCIT Charity is a modest funder we do uphold the £1 million reserves limit.

Project scale and impact

How do you calculate the cost per beneficiary?
We calculate this by dividing the amount requested by the number of direct beneficiaries. The amount requested should normally equate to no more than £300 per direct beneficiary.

How would you like us to measure social impact?
We do not advocate a particular mechanism for measuring social impact, as the work that charities deliver varies so greatly. Instead, we suggest finding the right tools and models which will best suit your work, drawing on resources from the NCVO and Centre for Charity Effectiveness.

Are pilot projects eligible?
Yes, we welcome pilot projects and are happy to support these - especially where there could be a potential for your project to be scaled or replicated within the charity sector.

What is the difference between outputs and outcomes?
Outputs are the activities you plan to deliver, while outcomes are the difference a product or activity may make – we are most interested in the intended outcomes.

Funding request

What size grants do you typically award?
Our grants typically range from £5,000 to £15,000. You can see the most recent grants we have made on Our Work (small grants) web page or on 360Giving.

What do you mean by 'a meaningful proportion of the overall project budget'?
We prefer to fund most or all of a project. At a minimum, we require our grant to cover at least 25% of your total budget.

What do you mean by a technology project?
Technology should be a core part of the project rather than a supporting tool. We are most interested in projects that develop, test or apply technology to create measurable benefits for beneficiaries or improve how charities operate.

Would the WCIT Charity be open to match funding?
Yes, where your project budget exceeds our £15,000 limit, we are open to match funding, especially if the amount has already been secured.

Can we apply while other funding applications are pending?
Yes you can apply alongside other applications, but if you are then successful elsewhere for the same project, you must declare that to the WCIT Charity and your request with us would be cancelled.

What is the application process?

- Applications are submitted through our online portal (link)
- Applications are reviewed against our eligibility criteria and funding priorities
- A shortlist is presented to the Charitable Operations Committee

- The Committee meets four times each year (usually around February, May, September and November) to make funding decisions
- Applicants are notified of the outcome shortly after the Committee meeting

Due to limited capacity we are unable to offer individual feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Can I apply more than once in a year?
If your application has been unsuccessful you will not be able to reapply for another 12 months.

What are some examples of suitable projects?
Examples of projects we may fund include:

- An AI-powered tool to support people with disabilities
- A digital platform designed to improve educational outcomes
- A charity pilot using data analytics to improve service delivery
- Technology that improves digital accessibility and inclusion
- A project that helps charities test innovative technologies

Examples of projects we do not fund would be:

- Replacement laptops
- Standard software licences
- Website redesigns
- Telephone systems
- General operational costs

You can also see some of the recent projects we have funded on Our Work (small grants) web page.
Please note that these examples are only illustrative and do not guarantee eligibility or funding.

Assessment process

How will my application be assessed?
Depending on the nature of the project, we may assess:

- Value for money
- Evidence of need
- Organisational size and capacity (we prefer to support smaller charities)
- Expected outcomes and impact measurement
- Innovation and scalability
- Contribution to your wider mission
- Potential for learning and replication
- Level of risk
- Financial health and sustainability

What makes a good digital inclusion project?
Digital inclusion and accessibility remain big challenges, and we welcome applications designed to address this. However, we receive a high volume of requests for community digital inclusion projects so we would encourage you to think about how a relatively small grant from us could have the biggest impact on your beneficiaries, and what would make your project stand head and shoulders above any others. We will be most interested in projects which demonstrate the potential for a high

Social Return on Investment. This guide to valuing digital inclusion from Just Economics/BT could help you think about some of the potential outcomes. We will also look favourably on organisations that are part of the Good Things Foundation's National Digital Inclusion Network.

What would be a strong education-related project?
We receive a large number of requests for education-related projects, especially STEM training for younger children and girls. We are therefore most likely to fund innovative approaches to improving learning outcomes or improving digital literacy, or projects that are developing technology-based educational tools.

What do you mean by 'public understanding of technology'?
This is a small area of focus for the WCIT Charity and is mainly covered by our grant to Gresham College for its Professor of IT who delivers free lectures to the public.

Why do you not fund hardware or software?
The requirement for up-to-date equipment and software is an on-going need for almost all small charities in the UK. Our grant funding is simply not able to address this need in any significant way and so we choose to have a narrower focus for our funding.

Does the WCIT Charity prefer local or national impact?
While the WCIT Charity is based in the City of London, we are a national charity and like to distribute our grants to the areas of greatest need. This may be a small local community or a national community that is underserved.

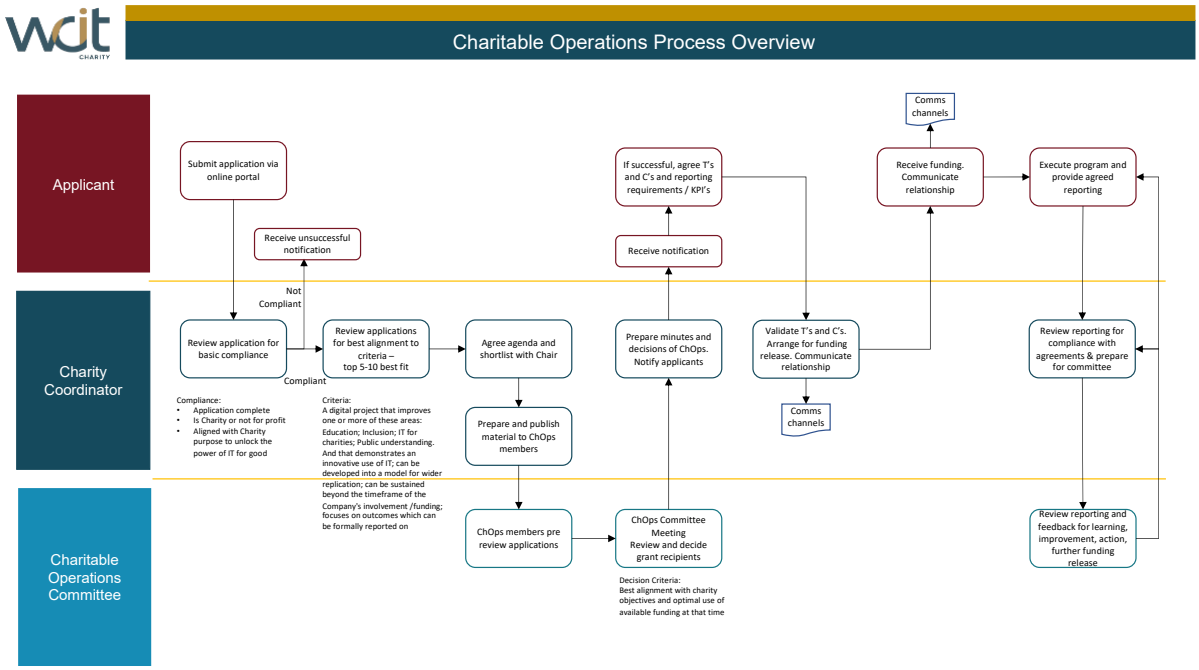
Governance

WCIT Charity Board of Trustees
The majority of trustees are members of the WCIT Livery and have full responsibility for the distribution of funds under its management. Trustees are responsible for setting the framework within which the grant-making activity operates and require assurance that the grants made meet the principles outlined in this policy. The Board is also responsible for making sure the work of the Charitable Operations Committee is complementary to and supportive of the WCIT Charity's strategic objectives.

Charitable Operations Committee (the grants panel)
The members of the Charitable Operations Committee are all volunteers and members of the WCIT Livery. The committee meets quarterly to discuss and decide on the applications received.

WCIT Charity staff
The Charity CEO is the Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists. They are supported by the Charity Coordinator who deals with the administration of grants and day-to-day Charity operations, and the Financial Controller, who is a shared resource with the WCIT Livery.

Grants review process



Timeline
Applications are reviewed quarterly, and the Committee's review usually takes place one month after the application deadline. Applicants can expect to be informed of the outcome six weeks after that deadline.

Monitoring and evaluation
All grants are awarded with Terms and Conditions (appendix 2) which must be agreed by the organisation being funded before payment is released. At this time, the WCIT Charity and organisation will also agree on appropriate reporting for the project and the grant. This reporting typically includes case studies, videos, and final reports, and allows the WCIT Charity to report on the impact of its grants to members. It also helps inform future grant making and funding strategy.

For this reason, satisfactory reporting is part of the Terms and Conditions of receiving a grant and failure to fulfil that obligation can result in future funding applications from that organisation being rejected or subject to additional conditions.

Discretionary grants

There are some grants that, due to their size or nature, fall outside of the standard grant-making process.

Small grants
The WCIT Charity sometimes receives applications for financial assistance on a small scale. Such applications are often straightforward, perhaps from applicants with whom we have existing relationship, and do not always warrant a full review. Examples include the granting of room hire in the WCIT Hall to prior applicants. The Chair of the Charitable Operations Committee has delegated authority from the Trustees to approve such grants to an individual maximum value of £1,000. The

total value of such grants shall not exceed 5% of the Charitable Operations Committee's budget per year, or £5,000, whichever is the lesser.

Although a small grant requires only the approval of the Chair of the Charitable Operations Committee, such grants must comply in all other respects with the eligibility and suitability criteria laid out by the Charity Trustees and the objects of the Charity.

Such grants will appear in the grants reports to the Charitable Operations Committee and to the Trustees. They will be clearly highlighted as having been made under the small grants process.

Emergency grants

In exceptional circumstances, the Trustees may approve an emergency grant to help in times of unforeseen crises or unexpected costs. Such grants must comply in all other respects with the eligibility and suitability criteria laid out by the Charity Trustees and the objects of the Charity.

Approved by the Chair of WCIT Charity on behalf of the trustees.

Signed:

Gary Moore, Chair of WCIT Charity

Date: 25 March 2026 (updated August 2026)

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **annually**.

This policy statement was last reviewed on 10 August 2026.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Due diligence points include

1. Financial due diligence
2. Governance structure and capacity of executive leadership
3. Strategic fit of goals and values between the WCIT Charity and applicant
4. Strategy development: involvement of beneficiaries, knowledge of environment
5. Suitably qualified staff
6. Track record of organisation, how do they prove impact
7. Human resource management
8. Communications with key audiences
9. Networking and relationships with stakeholders, cooperation
10. Effectiveness compared to competition
11. Risk Management Policy
12. Ambition and future potential of the organisation

Appendix 2: Grant terms and conditions and communication guidelines

WCIT Charity grant terms and conditions

The WCIT Charity is pleased to award a grant to your organisation. By accepting a grant from us, you are accepting the following Terms and Conditions.

Use of grant

1. The grant can only be used for the purposes outlined by your organisation in your grant application. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, you are unable to use the grant for the specified purposes, you must contact the WCIT Charity before spending any portion of the grant.

2. If your project works with children or vulnerable people, by accepting this grant you are confirming that you have:

    - An appropriate Safeguarding Policy in place, approved by your Trustees; and
    - Appropriate guidelines in place for the express consent of photography or video content, and an understanding of the potential risks of sharing these. We recommend following the guidelines provided by the NSPCC: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/online-safety/photographing-filming-children

3. During, and for a period of 12 months following the completion of the payment schedule of our grant, you will tell us in writing as soon as possible of any investigation concerning your organisation, your trustees, your directors, your employees or your volunteers carried out by the Police, Charity Commission, HM Revenue & Customs, or any other regulatory body which would impact upon your responsibility for charitable funds. You will also inform us of any serious internal incidents identified that you are duty bound to report to the Charity Commission as set out in its published guidance.

4. If, during the course of the project, there are significant changes to the project's outcomes, timeframe and delivery, you will seek our agreement as soon as possible.

5. We require an end of project report for all our funded projects. The timescale of this will be agreed with you, and our Charity Coordinator will send you a report template to be submitted by email.

6. You will not use the grant to pay for any spending commitments you have made before the date upon which the grant was awarded, unless you have our prior written approval.

7. Where the grant is to support the cost of all or part of a post within the capital, the London Living Wage will be the minimum amount paid (except for Arts Apprenticeships) in respect of that post.

8. All of our grants are restricted. You will inform us as soon as possible of any projected or actual underspend in the grant, and you understand and agree that we reserve the right to claim back any such underspend or to readjust grant payments accordingly.

9. By accepting these Terms and Conditions, you acknowledge that you have read the Fundraising Regulators Code of Practice 10.0 Events (which can be found at https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code/standards-which-apply-specific-fundraising-methods/events) and agree your project will abide by this Code of Practice for any event-related activity.

10. We reserve the right to withhold a grant or require a payment if:

    - Your organisation becomes insolvent.
    - The work delivered is not the work for which the WCIT Charity grant was intended.
    - We learn that you have provided us with misleading, false or fraudulent information during the application process.
    - We have concerns regarding the safeguarding of your staff or beneficiaries.

Data protection
For our data protection policy, please go to https://wcitcharity.org.uk/privacy-policy/

Communication guidelines

Congratulations on your application being approved! We would be grateful if you could acknowledge the funding for this project in any communications you produce and we would also appreciate it if you acknowledged it elsewhere, such as in your annual report or if you have a funders' page on your website.

Announcing the funding
We like to share the news of recent grant recipients on our website, on LinkedIn and in our members' newsletter. If you would prefer us not to announce this, please let us know within two weeks of receiving the offer email. The funding will also be listed in our Annual Report and we may mention our support for your organisation in other publicity material from the WCIT Charity.

Press releases
If you want to acknowledge our funding in a press release or any other type of media, please share the content with the WCIT Charity Coordinator.

Logo
You can use our logo in connection with the work we are directly supporting, but please check with us first before using it in a promotional capacity.

Photos
We keep a library of images from the organisations we fund to use in our Annual Report, website and on social media. Although some projects do not lend themselves to photography, we would appreciate any images you can supply either now or in the future, especially ones that capture the story of the project, or the work in progress.

Please send images in JPEG, TIFF or PNG format and ideally no less than 2-3MB in size. Don't forget to include any credits if required, along with confirmation that you are happy for us to use the photograph/s and that all permissions have been confirmed.

Where children or vulnerable people are featured, please confirm that you have written consent to use the photos. When deciding what images to share, we recommend following the NSPCC's guidelines which advise focusing on the activity rather than the child or person; favouring images that capture the activity from a distance; and photographing individuals from behind or from the side. We would not expect to receive the names of the individuals in the images or video content.

Publications
If the work we have funded involves a publication, please keep us informed of the launch date.

Contact us...
If you have any questions relating to communications or your grant in general, please contact the WCIT Charity Coordinator on 020 7600 1992 or email charity@wcit.org.uk