

Urban Community Energy Fund - Is my project urban or rural?

The Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF) has been set up to complement the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) – ensuring that every community in England can access support for renewable energy projects.

The two funds were established separately and on different timescales because they are funded differently:

- UCEF was launched in November 2014 with government funding through the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), and is administered by CSE and Pure Leapfrog
- RCEF was launched in June 2013 with funding through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), and the Department of Energy and Climate Change and is administered by WRAP.

Your community project's location will be eligible for either UCEF or for RCEF.

The Rural Community Energy Fund is designed to meet a range of policy objectives that relate to improving community energy capacity and strengthening rural communities. As such, there may be some larger towns where it would be more appropriate for the Rural Community Energy Fund to provide support, especially those larger towns that provide essential services to a large rural hinterland.

For this reason, we have produced an online eligibility checker, which will return one of three results when you enter the postcode of the location where your project will be:

1. Urban area - Apply to UCEF
2. Rural area – Apply to RCEF
3. Rural fringe or large settlement serving a wider rural area – contact RCEF. They will assess which fund you should apply for.

If your project location returns the third result, then this means that although your project is located in an area that is defined as 'urban', Defra may wish to support your project because your settlement provides essential services for the wider rural area. You should therefore contact RCEF in the first instance.

What definition of urban and rural is being used for the eligibility checker?

UCEF and RCEF are using a combination of two definitions of urban and rural, which both come from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The first defines rural/urban at a local authority area, and the second is based on classification of output areas (the smallest statistical area used by ONS).

Simply put, the rules are that:

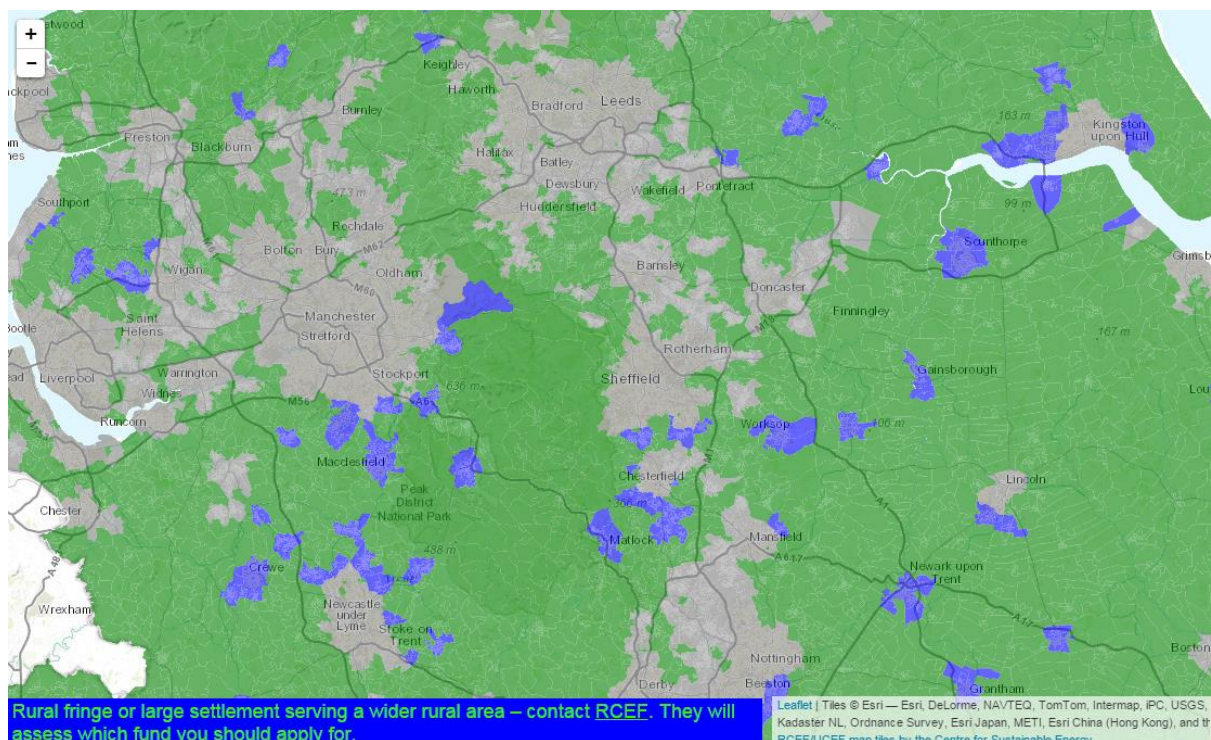
- **Urban areas** are defined as settlements with more than 10,000 people which do not lie within a predominantly rural local authority area. These are coloured grey on the map.
- **Rural areas** are defined as situated in a predominantly rural local authority area and within a settlement of less than 10,000 people. These are coloured green on the map.

- **Urban areas that may be eligible for the RCEF scheme** are defined as settlements with more than 10,000 people that lie within a predominantly rural local authority. These are coloured blue on the map, and you should contact the administrators of the RCEF in the first instance if your project is located here.

It's important to note that in all cases, UCEF fills the gaps left by RCEF, so any projects located in a blue area that RCEF determine they are unable to fund will automatically be able to apply to UCEF.

Please do use the online checker so that you can look up the location of your project and see whether it is eligible for UCEF or RCEF. In many cases, the answer will be obvious. However, small settlements in fairly urban local authority areas, or large towns in rural areas, might have unexpected eligibility – so make sure you check before applying.

You can use the postcode from your correspondence address, if it is roughly in the same place as your intended project site. However, if they are in different places, you will need to use a postcode from your project's location. There are some free online tools that can help you to find a postcode if you don't have an address, such as UK Grid Reference Finder: <http://gridreferencefinder.com/gmap>.



Example map of areas eligible for UCEF (grey) and RCEF (green). The message in the bottom left will tell you which fund to contact based on the postcode you enter. The online tool can be found on the [urban/rural checker](#).

If you need any help checking your eligibility, please contact the UCEF team for help.

Email: info@ucef.org.uk

Post: UCEF, CSE, 3 St Peter's Court, Bedminster Parade, Bristol, BS3 4AQ