

**FOUNDATION SCOTLAND**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

---

**Our Vision, Purpose,  
Ambitions and Objectives  
2024 - 2030**



**Foundation  
Scotland**

**Our vision is of confident, thriving, resilient communities across Scotland.**

**For every community to thrive, it should be resourced to match its vision. Our purpose is to support communities to shape their future with the capacity and resources to do so.**

## **Ambition 1 - Grow**

Grow a range of income, focussed on new, independent funding:

- Grow the number of new donors
- Grow the value of donated funds for distribution and for investment

## **Ambition 2 - Invest**

Invest wisely to create a financial return and to achieve positive social impact:

- Build invested capital, underpinned by an impact investment approach
- Develop social investment products and a portfolio of investees

## Ambition 3 - Distribute

Work alongside stakeholders and communities to design grant and loan programmes that are fit for purpose:

- Distribute more funding into Scotland's communities
- Deliver a range of distribution models, with increasing emphasis on co-produced approaches

## Ambition 4 - Learn

Build an evidence base of how we achieve positive social impact:

- Build an evidence & learning base through analysis of our donor support, fund distribution, grant & loan making, and its impact
- Use our evidence and learning to grow our reach & visibility, and influence policy and funding

## Ambition 5 - Improve

Deliver as a team, focused on continuous learning and improvement, and on financial and environmental sustainability:

- Develop staff capabilities and engagement, and organisational effectiveness
- Operate in a financially and environmentally sustainable way

## OUR AMBITIONS AND OBJECTIVES

### Ambition 1 - Grow

Grow a range of income, focussed on new, independent funding.

We manage funds for a wide range of donors, including philanthropists, companies, community non-profit companies, and charitable trusts which are either active or inactive. We focus on establishing new funds, independent of government, which is distinctive from many other funders in Scotland. Where we believe we can add value, we also manage public sector funds.

Our growth ambition focusses on increased funding to deliver against our vision. Communities, and community projects, present a wide range of needs and opportunities, up and downstream, long and short term. We seek funding that aligns with these needs and opportunities, with our Commitments of Thriving, Fair and Green, and our seven Themes.

	Objective	Progress Measures
1	Grow the number of new donors	Number of funds set-up
2	Grow the value of donated funds for distribution and for investment	Value of donations into non-invested funds
		Value of donations into invested funds
		Value of unrestricted donations

## Ambition 2- Invest

Invest wisely to create a financial return and to achieve positive social impact

Our investment ambition focusses on encouraging donors to set-up invested funds, as part of a long-term financial sustainability model. Funds distributed now can help solve immediate problems, whereas the next generation will face challenges and build on opportunities we cannot always foresee. Investments focussed on place, or theme, or both, provide returns for long-term use by the next generation.

We favour an impact investment approach, where the invested capital does social good and avoids harm across communities globally, as well as achieving the financial returns used for grant distribution in Scotland. This approach places us at the forefront, as a pioneer in this investment model and, we believe, on the right side of history.

Taking the approach a step further, we invest unrestricted capital into social enterprises and community-owned businesses in Scotland. This social investment approach is delivered through financial products tailored for social enterprises and community businesses.

	Objective	Progress Measures
3	Build invested capital, underpinned by an impact investment approach	Capital value of all invested funds
4	Develop social investment products and a portfolio of investees	Value of the loan portfolio

## Ambition 3 - Distribute

Work alongside stakeholders and communities to design grant and loan programmes that are fit for purpose.

As an independent funder we strive to do things differently, such as working with others to fund solutions which focus on social, economic, and environmental situations. We design funding programmes, conscious of upstream and downstream approaches. We take a long-term view, not limited by short-term funding cycles. And we enable citizens to gather around a common vision, providing the resources so they can take action that is 'people powered.'

We fund communities of place, and communities of interest, i.e. those that share a common need or ambition. We also fund others to implement solutions or capacity building activity that may be testing an approach or delivering at scale. In programme design and decision making, we strive to involve people who have personal experience, so that funding can make the biggest impact, informed by individuals and communities.

We take a relationship-based approach, with the communities we support and with our donors, working together to achieve the best outcomes. We connect donors with funded organisations and communities, so they can share learning and celebrate achievements.

We work with local, regional, and national organisations across and beyond Scotland, learning from others and participating in collaborations to support improved outcomes for communities.

	Objective	Progress Measures
5	Distribute more funding into Scotland's communities	Annual distribution – Philanthropy
		Annual distribution – Community
		Annual distribution – Social Investment
6	Deliver a range of distribution models, with increasing emphasis on co-produced approaches	Proportion of new funds that are co-designed with stakeholders  Proportion of funds that are FS Advised

## Ambition 4 - Learn

### Build an evidence base of how we achieve positive social impact

We use our learning and experience to build evidence of positive impact, and to improve our practice and programmes. We use an Impact Framework that enables us to draw on evidence and learning to inform the design of programmes, and to monitor the outcomes from community organisations which receive funding. We embed evaluation, which enables us to learn from what works well or less well, and to demonstrate models of best practice and social innovation in communities which lead to positive outcomes. A Foundation-wide Impact Framework and fund evaluations underpin our evidence base of what works and our learning culture.

We share this learning to inform our work, and to influence practice and policy. Having an evidence base gives us credibility on local and national platforms, and supports us in partnership working, which in turn can amplify sector and system influence.

This evidence base also helps us to grow our visibility, our reach and reputation. Visibility as a funder, underpinned with evidence, provides an authentic base from which we attract new donors, new funding opportunities, and the means to inform a wide range of stakeholders. Our focus is on Scotland, but we seek to share and exchange learning across the UK, and internationally, particularly within the community foundation movement.

	Objective	Progress Measures
7	Build an evidence and learning base through analysis of our approaches to donor support, fund distribution, grant and loan making, and its impact	Number of published learning reports and impact evaluations
8	Use our evidence and learning to grow our reach and visibility, and influence policy and funding	Number of published outputs Number of newsletter subscribers Number of website visitors Number of Advisory / Working Groups

## Ambition 5 - Improve

Deliver as a team, focused on continuous learning and improvement, and on financial and environmental sustainability

Our success hinges on the collective strengths of our team, making the cultivation of engaged, enthusiastic, and impactful colleagues a key focus. In an ever-evolving landscape, a team with the desire and expertise to learn, adapt, and improve ensures we remain at the forefront of societal needs and philanthropic endeavours.

A culture of continuous improvement is the bedrock of organisational excellence, and helps to inform our systems and practices. It also underscores our dedication to providing a high standard of service to grantees, investees, donors, and communities.

We practice and promote financial and environmental sustainability, through a social justice lens. We build and use financial reserves to amplify our social impact, not solely through funding distribution, but also through our approach to working closely with grantees, investees, and community members. This can take the form of guidance and mentoring, connecting, convening, and sharing practice.

	Objective	Progress Measures
9	Develop staff capabilities and engagement, and organisational effectiveness	Staff turnover Time spent on learning and development
10	Operate in a financially and environmentally sustainable way	Ratio of salaries / operating costs Carbon footprint per staff member