

Membership Overview

Membership of DTA Scotland is open to community groups and organisations that **are committed to and can evidence that they are working** to the development trust model and approach. All applications for membership will be assessed by a DTA Scotland Development Officer, who will make a recommendation on appropriate membership to the DTA Scotland board of Trustees. Membership applications will be assessed on the following defining criteria:

Place-based and community-led

Development trusts are membership-based organisations working in a defined geographic community. Their membership will elect boards or management committees, who will be comprised of a majority of local residents. Development trusts will utilise community engagement activities to establish local priorities and inform the 'community agenda' to which they are working. In this way development trusts are driven by, and accountable to, their local community. They are inclusive organisations, working with, and involving all sections of the community, and will often harness voluntary effort to take forward projects and run activities.

Engaged in economic, social and environmental regeneration

Development trusts are not single activity organisations. They will take a holistic approach to addressing local issues and generally improving the quality of life for local people. In practice this tends to mean setting up and running a mix of activities, services, businesses or facilities which respond to various needs of the community. Development trusts invariably own assets – to accommodate activities and services, or to generate income to fund activities and services. There are countless examples available in other parts of the DTAS website which demonstrate the wide range and scale of development trust activity.

Aiming for financial sustainability

Development trusts are enterprising organisations, in the business of sustainable change. They will try to avoid overdependence on a single funder, and generally aim to reduce dependence on grant-aid in the long term, by creating an income-earning asset base, and / or building up trading operations or contract income. Development trusts often respond to (both private and public) market failure, which can often make the involvement of successful, enterprise organisations challenging, particularly in the short term.

Not for private profit

As enterprising organisations, development trusts will seek to generate income streams and produce surpluses. However, any profits generated will not be distributed for private gain, but instead re-invested in the organisation or community, and this arrangement will be enshrined in the governance document of the development trust.

Independent, but committed to partnerships working

Development trusts often occupy the place where the business, public, community and voluntary sectors meet. This is potentially a position of unique strength, but the effective realisation of this potential requires building active alliances and partnership with other organisations. These partnerships will tend to be initiated by the community, and involve specific partners for specific purposes. The level of formality of the partnership will also vary to suit the particular circumstances and context.

In responding to membership applications, DTAS will meet with the community organisation, and work with them to assess their application against the above criteria. In addition DTAS will also make

a judgement on whether to offer Full or Provisional membership, which largely reflects the stage of development of the applicant organisation.

Full membership is offered to those who can provide evidence to support all of the above. This is usually in the form of, but not limited to: annual accounts, AGM Reports, proven track records in fundraising and project delivery, robust governance, community consultation, management and operational procedures.

Provisional membership is offered to those on their way to delivering the above, but recognises that the group is still in development and is likely to grow and evolve as they begin to deliver on the aims and objectives as an organisation. Provisional members must have a recognised legal structure and are offered the same member benefits as full members.