Species Survival Fund

See all updates

A short-term programme to create and restore habitats and reverse the decline of species across England, delivered on behalf of Defra.

Page created: 30 June 2023

The Species Survival Fund is now closed to new applications. Explore our available funding.

Overview

Is this the right programme for you?

- Are you an individual or organisation based in England?
- Do you have a nature recovery project planned, costed and ready to start?
- Do you require a grant from £250,000 up to £3million?
- Can you complete your project within two years?

If you answered yes to these questions, then the Species Survival Fund is for you.

The Species Survival Fund will support the creation and restoration of wildlife-rich habitats in England. It is open to individuals and organisations working to recover nature.

Projects must deliver against the fund theme of habitat creation and restoration, including ecosystem restoration, to support species abundance at a landscape, catchment or local scale, either within or outside of protected sites.

This can include targeted actions taken as part of wider habitat creation or restoration projects.

We are offering grants of £250,000 to £3m for projects of maximum two years' duration.

You are encouraged to contribute at least 5% of your project costs in cash (partnership funding).

Priority will be given to projects that can provide partnership funding from non-government sources such as private investment. Any cash contributions you provide can add to the impact and value for money of your project, which will be considered in assessment. We will also consider whether the Species Survival Fund is the most appropriate funding source for your project.

Application deadlines

- Expression of Interest deadline: 12noon 24 July 2023

- full application deadline: 12noon 26 October 2023

Expand All accordions

What we are looking for

Applicants can only apply for projects which are fully planned and costed and can start immediately once funding has been awarded. All project activity must take place in England.

You must be able to spend the full grant and complete all final reporting by the end of February 2026.

We are looking for projects which:

- carry out activities focused on habitat creation and restoration that contribute to species abundance and/or targeted actions for multiple species
- carry out capital works on wide-ranging habitats, including terrestrial, riparian, coastal and estuarine habitats
- work in partnership to maximise impact
- Focus on a wide range of species. Projects do not need to focus exclusively on priority species or those in the species abundance indicator. We value species in their own right and we also expect that action for wider species and habitats will help drive improvements in the indicator.
- Have considered local priorities for nature recovery wherever possible, for example those emerging through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) process. This could be either through engagement with Responsible Authorities on emerging LNRS or engagement with groups like Local Nature Partnerships. Applications from areas where there isn't a draft LNRS won't be penalised.
- have considered how a changing climate will affect the ecological outcomes the project is aiming for

If you have any questions, please contact us.

Habitat creation and restoration

Projects must create or restore terrestrial, riparian, coastal and estuarine habitats. Works could include:

- enlarging, connecting and improving existing wildlife-rich sites
- improving degraded habitat
- creating more sites
- improving habitats such as scrub habitat mosaics, riparian habitats and grassland that will provide the conditions that species need to thrive and grow
- targeted actions to halt the decline in species abundance taken as part of wider habitat creation or restoration projects, such as species monitoring or surveys for under-resourced sites

Projects will be prioritised if they:

- create more joined-up space for nature on land, including along rivers and streams
- align with local plans

- connect people with nature where appropriate, improving access and engagement with nature and benefiting health and wellbeing
- support climate change adaptation, and where relevant, mitigation benefits, through the use of nature-based solutions that provide multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity and people
- support green jobs, including apprenticeships, particularly in areas of high unemployment that need economic investment
- incorporate species monitoring or surveys for sites lacking this information, provided this leads to improvements for biodiversity implemented during the project

Species conservation translocations are out of the scope of this programme. This includes population reinforcement as well as the reintroduction of large mammals or apex predators such as beaver, lynx and white-tailed eagle.

Evaluation

We will need to understand how you plan to demonstrate the impact of your project or how you have delivered against your objectives. You must build in evaluation from the beginning of your project. We expect to see a realistic budget for evaluation included in your project costs.

We recognise that it may not be possible to demonstrate delivery of longer-term environmental outcomes by the end of the funded delivery period. However, we expect you to:

- set out in your application what inputs and outputs you will deliver during the project that will contribute to your longer-term outcomes
- have a plan to evaluate the project's impact, including plans for onwards species monitoring beyond the funded period
- have a plan to sustain positive impacts of the project post-delivery and work on this in more detail during your project

We expect you to describe in your application where you have drawn on existing evidence around what works in delivering species abundance, or in developing indicators for your projects. For example, you may wish to use websites such as Conservation Evidence in considering objectives and indicators for nature conservation and restoration.

At the end of your project we will require delivery of an evaluation report before we pay the last 10% of your grant.

We will also expect you to participate in a wider evaluation of the fund, to be managed by the Heritage Fund. This will require you to submit data about the actions you have taken to restore or create wildlife-rich habitats, mapped against GIS data or spatially defined areas of land. Further details and guidance on this will be supplied if you are awarded a grant. We recommend you include costs in your application for the collection and administration of output data.

Expand All accordions

Who is eligible to apply

We welcome applications from all individuals and organisations working with landscapes and nature in England. This includes:

- environmental not-for-profit organisations
- AONBs and National Park Authorities (via their accountable or registered body)
- local authorities
- farmers and land managers

Partnerships

We encourage organisations to apply as partnerships where this is likely to lead to more joined-up projects.

Partnerships must be led by one of the eligible organisations listed above. Partnerships can include other not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, providing all works are for public benefit rather than private gain.

Partnerships **cannot** include the following government bodies (although these bodies may be represented on steering groups and may contribute funding, land and/or advice):

- non-ministerial departments
- executive agencies
- executive or advisory non-departmental public bodies

If you are making a joint application, you will need to decide which organisation will be the lead applicant. The lead applicant will fill in the application form and, if you are successful, take receipt of the grant and report on progress.

Please submit a draft of your partnership agreement as part of your application (see Supporting documents).

Eligible individuals and organisations can submit a maximum of one application as the lead applicant. You may be involved in additional projects as a partner.

Expand All accordions

What we can fund

It is important that you identify in your application which of your project costs are capital and which are revenue. Across the whole portfolio of projects, we are looking to fund a combination of capital and revenue activity to a ratio of 2:1 capital to revenue. The following list is an example of capital costs that applications can include.

Capital costs:

- materials associated with land management and species recovery activities, such as fencing, plants and trees
- equipment purchase or hire where essential to deliver the project
- contractor costs for capital works
- consultant fees, such as ecologists, site surveys and technical designs
- salary costs for staff directly delivering land management and species recovery activities
- purchase or development of computer software required for project delivery
- purchase, design and installation of interpretation panels
- fees incurred for statutory permissions, licences and consents where essential for the delivery of the project
- community grants for capital works – see our Community Grants Good Practice Guidance

- management and maintenance costs incurred for up to five years after project completion
- Contingency funding for unexpected capital costs. We recommend this be approximately 10% of your capital costs.
- inflation funding to allow for cost increases in year two of delivery

Revenue costs:

- salaries and on-costs of staff working on project administration and community engagement
- wages for apprentices or job placements (only where these cannot be funded through other sources)
- recruitment for the project
- skills and training for the project
- volunteer travel and subsistence
- communications
- grant monitoring and evaluation activities
- legacy planning activities
- full cost recovery (for charities only)
- evaluation – see our Evaluation Good Practice Guidance

Funding for AONBs, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities and universities can be used to cover the following revenue costs:

- salaries and direct on-costs of staff delivering the project
- costs of backfilling an existing post where a member of staff is transferred to deliver new work associated with the grant
- activity costs

Please note that these lists are not exhaustive but give you an idea of the type and range of costs we will cover. Further guidance on costs can be found in the application help notes.

Your project costs must be compliant with UK Subsidy Control Regime rules. For further information about these rules, see the Legal requirements section.

As part of the assessment process we will consider how the proposed budget delivers on the project's environmental objectives. For example, we will assess how equipment costs relate to stated objectives and will challenge anything that seems disproportionate. We will also consider the balance of budget across partners.

Projects can deliver works or activities on private land providing that they are for public benefit rather than private gain.

What costs you can't apply for

- recoverable VAT
- costs related to promoting the cause or beliefs of political or faith organisations
- costs related to lobbying and/or activity to influence legislative or regulatory action
- costs incurred before a grant is awarded
- full cost recovery for organisations which are not charities
- redundancy costs
- cost of land acquisition

- research

How much partnership funding is needed?

We expect this fund to be highly competitive. We will be looking for applications to demonstrate value for money, particularly by including partnership funding to cover a proportion of the costs.

Applicants are encouraged to contribute at least 5% partnership funding in the form of a cash contribution from public or private sources (in-kind contributions such as volunteer time will not be counted as part of this contribution).

Sources of partnership funding

Projects that include partnership funding from non-government sources will be prioritised.

Partnership funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund is not eligible.

If your project involves capital work, the value of increased future costs of environmental monitoring, management and maintenance for up to five years after practical completion can be included as partnership funding.

Your Expression of Interest form and application should outline any other grant funding you have or intend to apply for. Partnership funding can be unsecured at the point of application but will need to be confirmed by the time the project is given permission to start.

Expand All accordions

When to apply

- We are accepting Expressions of Interest from 30 June 2023 **until 12noon on 24 July 2023.** We will aim to assess Expressions of Interest by 25 August and will invite the top scoring projects to apply.
- If we invite you to apply, you must submit your full application by 12noon on 26 October 2023.

Expand All accordions

How we will assess your application

Firstly we will consider whether you and your project costs meet the Eligibility Criteria, listed in ‘Who is eligible to apply?’ and ‘What can we fund?’. If you do not meet the Eligibility Criteria, we will not assess your application further.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, we will then assess your application against the quality criteria below. The criteria are given equal weight and we will prioritise applications that perform most strongly across all four. We will also consider if your proposals are proportionate to the amount of funding you are applying for.

We expect to receive more high-quality applications than we can fund. Where there is a need to differentiate between applications assessed as high-quality, our decision makers will apply the balancing principles below.

Quality criteria

The application will be primarily assessed on your ability to:

- demonstrate the project proposal follows established good practice in delivering outcomes for habitat recovery and that works are appropriate to place
- Deliver the project activities successfully within the required timescale. Priority will be given to projects that are fully planned with a clear and realistic timetable for obtaining any required permits, licences, statutory consents and landowner consents. You must be able to demonstrate a track record of high-quality delivery on the part of the applicant(s), and the appropriate skill sets to deliver the project.
- Deliver good value for money for public funds. Value for money means the level of outcomes that you will deliver relative to the total amount of grant you are requesting based on clearly defined outcomes and realistic costings. We will include in this assessment the level of partnership funding you are contributing from other sources.
- Demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the project outcomes beyond the funded period. We want to see how you will maintain and build on what your project has delivered, how your project links to local plans and strategies and how you propose to secure any follow-on funding required. We will expect you to work up your sustainability plans (including ongoing monitoring plans) during your project and you should budget for this in your project costs.

Balancing principles

If we receive more good quality applications than we can fund, we will prioritise projects which will also deliver one or more of the following outcomes. These outcomes are not listed in any order of priority:

- **create and/or retain green jobs, including apprenticeships**, especially for people in areas that need economic investment
- provide **active public engagement** with species and nature
- **encourage private investment**, either through partnership funding or through plans to generate private revenue (‘green finance’) from project outputs in the future

We will also aim to create a portfolio of funded projects which will:

- represent a **balanced geographical coverage** across England, including rural, coastal and urban areas
- support **a range of habitats and species** across the theme of the fund
- maintain a funding ratio of 2:1 capital to revenue costs

Once you submit your online application, we will check everything is in place and will be in touch to let you know if we need any further details. Unless we need to check anything with you, it is unlikely that you will hear from us again until we notify you of our decision.

Expand All accordions

The application process

This guidance covers everything you need to know to apply. We are requesting only the information we need. **Please read this guidance and the supporting help notes before you start your application**.

Please note: the Heritage Fund uses the same online forms across the programmes we administer. Some questions need to be answered differently for the Species Survival Fund, so follow the application help notes at all points to understand what information is required where.

Before you apply

- Make sure you read the application guidance and help notes and check that you are eligible to apply.
- Have your supporting documents ready to submit with the application form.
- If you aren't already registered on our Get funding for a heritage project service, you will need to create a new account before you submit your Expression of Interest or application.

How to apply

We are accepting Expressions of Interest from 30 June 2023 until 12noon on 24 July 2023. Please refer to our EOI help notes for more information on how to complete your form.

An assessment panel involving all the fund partners will use the information you provide in the EOI to decide whether to invite you to submit a full grant application. We use this step to identify priority projects early on, as we recognise the work that goes into preparing a full application. An invitation to apply does not guarantee a grant from us but does indicate that we see potential in your initial proposals.

We will aim to respond to all EOIs by 25 August 2023. You will then receive a unique link to submit a full application. You must submit your full application by the deadline of 12noon on 26 October 2023.

When you submit your online application form, you will be asked to confirm that you have read, understood and agree with the statements set out in the declaration. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Expand All accordions

Supporting documents

Everything we need to assess your application should be included in the application form and supporting documents. Please do not submit any extra documents as we will not use them in our assessment.

We will not begin assessing your application until you submit all of the relevant supporting documentation. If you do not provide your supporting documents by the application deadline, your application will be withdrawn.

You should attach the relevant supporting documents to your online application form. We can accept most standard file formats. Please use the document names below so that we can easily identify each document.

1. **Governing document** (**mandatory** for all applicants)

For example, a constitution. If you are applying as an individual or private landowner then please provide proof of ownership of the site(s) you will be working on, for example, Land Registry title register in the same name as your application or conveyance for unregistered land.

2. **Audited or verified accounts** (**mandatory** for all applicants)

If you are an individual, a newly-formed organisation, or do not have accounts less than 12 months old, please upload bank statements in the same name as your application for the last three full months.

3. **Detailed cost breakdown** (**mandatory** for all applicants)

A spreadsheet detailing the cost breakdown in your online application form, **clearly separating capital and revenue costs**. For partnerships, please separate out costs per partner.

Please ensure that your calculations provide a breakdown of costs relating to jobs, making clear how many jobs will be created/retained in total.

4. **Project plan and risk register** (**mandatory** for all applicants)

All applicants must submit a project plan and risk register using our template. Your project plan should set out activities that will clearly progress the land or feature towards the eventual outcome, indicating your target outputs during the funded period. Please use separate tabs for your capital works and engagement activities. Your capital works tab should also show which permits, licences and consents are needed to carry out the work, when they will be applied for and when they will need to be in place for capital works to start.

5. **Map** (**mandatory** for all applicants)

Please submit a map clearly outlining the area/s your project will work in.

Please also submit a **mandatory** ShapeFile, Tab File or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons.

6. **Project management structure** (mandatory for all applicants)

This should outline your project management structure so we know who will make decisions and how you will control change during the project.

7. **Cash flow** (mandatory for all applicants)

This should be detailed for the first year and an outline for the second year.

8. **Job descriptions** (if applicable)

If you plan to recruit a new member of staff to help deliver your project, including an apprentice, please submit a job description for that post.

9. **Partnership agreements** (if applicable)

You only need to provide a partnership agreement if your partner organisations will receive grant payments to deliver part of your project.

The agreement should outline all partners' roles and responsibilities, including financial arrangements. The agreement can be unsigned at point of application, but it will need to be signed by all parties before the project can start.

10. **Calculation of full cost recovery** (if applicable)

If you are including full cost recovery in your project budget, you must include a document that outlines how this calculation has been made.

Recognised guidance on calculating the full cost recovery amount that applies to your project is available from organisations such as The National Lottery Community Fund.

Expand All accordions

If your application is successful

If we award you a grant, we will send you a letter which includes the amount you have been awarded and outlines the conditions of the grant.

You will need to complete the legal process to confirm that you are accepting the grant and signing up to the terms in the letter.

We will pay quarterly in arrears, on submission of a progress report and payment request form including evidence of spend. The final 10% will be paid when you have finished your project and sent us a final completion report and project evaluation, alongside evidence of the remaining grant spend.

Acknowledging your grant

You must acknowledge your grant publicly. Download the logo and find out more about how to acknowledge your grant on the Species Survival Fund acknowledgement page.

Expand All accordions

Legal requirements

Property ownership

For projects that include works on land, you must either own the freehold or have a lease that meets the following requirements:

- not-for-profit organisation and private owners: your lease must have 10 years left to run after the expected project completion date
- we do not accept leases with break clauses (these give one or more parties to the lease the right to end the lease in certain circumstances)

- we do not accept leases with forfeiture on insolvency clauses (these give the landlord the right to end the lease if the tenant becomes insolvent)
- you must be able to sell on, sublet and mortgage your lease but if we award you a grant, you must first have our permission to do any of these

If a third party owns the land (which may include a project partner) we will either require the owner to sign up to your grant contract directly with us, or require you to enter into a legally binding agreement with the owner.

Third party ownership agreements

Where the land subject to grant funding is owned by a third party or multiple third parties (including private owners), legal agreements should be put in place between each land owner and the grantee. These agreements **must** be in place prior to any work starting on the land.

There is no prescribed form of agreement, but we have specific requirements which should be included in any third party land owner agreements.

At a minimum, the land owner agreements should include:

- details of the parties
- confirmation as to how the land is held (freehold or leasehold)
- a description of the property (including plans)
- covenants on the part of the land owner to maintain the land in accordance with the terms of the grant (as applicable) or to allow access for the grantee to undertake maintenance
- a provision that any onward disposal should be subject to the third party agreement
- A provision that the agreement will last from the start of the work on the third party land until 10 years following project completion. You will need to provide us with copies of the landowner agreements to ensure compliance with these requirements. The land owner agreements will need to be completed and in place before any grant funds are released for work on each plot of land owned by a third party.

Working on private land

Many priority habitats and species occur on land that is owned by private individuals or for-profit organisations. Projects can deliver works or activities on private land so long as any public benefit clearly outweighs any potential private gain, and provided subsidy control rules are not breached.

For example, we could fund the restoration of hedgerows or the creation of farm ponds, provided that they do not add financial value to the land or convey any significant indirect financial benefit that could breach subsidy control rules.

When working on private land, we understand there may be limits to public access. We do however encourage public access whenever practical and also accept that physical access may not always be appropriate or desirable for habitat conservation reasons. If improved access is possible, you may also wish to apply for funding for new infrastructure, for example paths or hides, that can help to accommodate increased public access.

Works can take place on land owned by a government department or arm’s length body provided they do not financially benefit from any investment. If an environmental charity or partnership were to undertake work on such land, then it can only be for works that would not be covered by any statutory responsibility. For example, a charity may create a new

fish pass on Environment Agency (EA) land, provided responsibility for ongoing maintenance was transferred back to the EA and it is work that EA would not normally undertake as part of their statutory duties. Due consideration would also need to be made to ensure compliance with subsidy control rules.

Subsidy control

Defra has assessed this grant scheme and deemed it to be a lawful subsidy scheme, compliant with the requirements of The Subsidy Control Act 2023. As such, Defra, as the Public Authority, will publish details of the scheme on the transparency database. All awards will have their applicant and grant details published on the publicly available Subsidy Database, managed by the Department for Business and Trade. You will be expected to co-operate with our subsidy control assessment process. We reserve the right to impose further requirements and additional conditions in relation to this matter.

Citizen science, biological recording and data

Any habitat and species data collected through your project must comply with the standards for data quality and accessibility as set out by the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) on the NBN Atlas. These observations must be made available to the public on an open licence at capture resolution, subject to sensitive species restrictions.

There are several ways of achieving this. NBN Atlas Data Partners may prefer to supply datasets directly to the NBN Atlas. Alternative options include through the online recording tool iRecord or they can be shared with your local or regional environmental record centre for onward transmission to the NBN Atlas. If submission to the NBN Atlas is via a third party, please ensure they are aware of the requirements to submit this data at capture resolution on an open licence. If you are unsure how best to proceed, please contact the NBN directly to discuss the most appropriate data supply route.

Consideration of permissions or licenses

Applicants should consider if their project requires any permissions, permits, consents or licenses for the project to be delivered. These could include (but are not limited to):

- planning permission from a local planning authority

Natural England consents:

- Consent for a proposed operation or management change on land in a SSSI
- Assent: SSSI public body responsibilities
- Habitats Regulation Assessment
- Minor and temporary adjustment (MTA) form: Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship
- Wildlife licence when you might need to carry out work that affects wildlife and its habitat
- EIA (Agriculture) regulations
- Development proposals affecting AONBs

Environment Agency consents:

- Water abstraction or impounding licence from the Environment Agency
- Fish pass approval

- Environmental permit for flood risk activities
- Environmental Permit to discharge liquid effluent or waste water to surface water or the ground
- Environmental permit for using, treating, storing and disposing of waste
- Permission to move live fish to or from a fishery
- Application to use herbicides in or near water

Forestry Commission consents:

- An Environmental Impact Assessment for woodland – afforestation, deforestation, forest roads, forestry quarries

The cost of any permissions or licenses should be considered in the overall project costs. Turnaround time for obtaining permissions and licenses should be clearly indicated in your project plan to ensure the project is deliverable within the time available. Early engagement with licensing bodies is advised.

Expand All accordions

Other funds

As part of our value for money assessment, we will consider whether the Species Survival Fund is the most appropriate funding source for your project. Below is a list of other Defra Group funds that you could consider as alternative funding sources. This list is not exhaustive and applicants are advised to check the Defra website for other relevant funds.

- Agri-Environment Schemes including:
    - Sustainable Farming Incentive
    - Countryside Stewardship
    - Landscape Recovery
- Species Recovery Programme
- Farming in Protected Landscapes programme
- Nature for Climate Fund, including:
    - England Woodland Creation Offer
    - Trees for Climate (Community Forests) - regionally specific
    - Grow Back Greener (Woodland Trust) - regionally specific
    - Local Authority Treescapes Fund
    - Urban Tree Challenge Fund
    - Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme
    - Paludiculture Exploration Fund
- Big Nature Impact Fund

Nature for Climate Fund

The Species Survival Fund will only consider applications for woodland restoration or peatland restoration if the activity is outside the criteria of the Nature for Climate Fund. Examples of the sorts of activities which the Species Survival Fund can support include:

- the creation/restoration of riparian buffers, for example, re-meandering of watercourses
- improvements to existing woodland
- complex woodland creation projects to create under-represented or especially biodiverse woodland types, such as wet woodland, temperate rainforest or woodland habitat mosaics
- woodland creation where open habitat restoration has led to woodland removal to avoid a net-deforestation outcome from projects

Species Survival Fund and Biodiversity Net Gain

Habitat creation or restoration projects paid for in full by public funding are not eligible to be sold to developers for meeting mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements or nutrient mitigation. Biodiversity Net Gain and/or nutrient mitigation credits may be sold where they arise from distinct or additional improvements over and above the new baseline habitat condition funded through a public grant. Explore further information on stacking net gain and nutrient mitigation credits with public grants.

Guidance for the farming sector

There are several farming schemes and programmes that will fund actions for habitat restoration and creation and species abundance, for farmers and land managers to choose from. We encourage farmers and landowners to consider which grant scheme will be most suited to you and your specific circumstances. The Heritage Fund is unable to advise on other Defra funding programmes. Explore further guidance on Environmental Land Management schemes.

The Species Survival Fund is a short-term grant aimed at a variety of stakeholders, including farmers. The Environment Land Management (ELM) schemes will pay farmers and land managers to provide environmental goods and services, including improving species abundance, alongside food production:

- the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) will pay farmers to adopt and maintain sustainable farming practices that can protect and enhance the natural environment alongside food production, and also support farm productivity (including by improving animal health and welfare, optimising the use of inputs and making better use of natural resources)
- Countryside Stewardship (CS) will pay for more targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats. There will be an extra incentive through CS Plus for land managers to join up across local areas to deliver bigger and better results
- Landscape Recovery will pay for bespoke, longer-term, larger-scale projects to enhance the natural environment. Defra will open applications for further rounds of Landscape Recovery in spring 2023 and in 2024. Round two will focus on net zero, protected sites and habitat creation. In each round, Defra will award the highest-scoring projects with development funding. This will support more detailed planning as required over around a two-year period. At the end of this time, successful projects would proceed to implementation with agreed long-term (for example, 20 years plus) funding from Defra and the private sector. Projects can apply for funding under both the Species Survival Fund and Landscape Recovery but cannot be paid twice for the same activity under both schemes.

The ELM schemes will be available beyond the end of the Species Survival Fund. By 2028, Defra aims to have at least 70,000 agreements in ELM schemes, covering 70% of farmed land and 70% of all farms, so that farmers and land managers can collectively deliver the government's ambitious targets for the environment and climate, alongside food production.

Support for farmers to improve protected landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) for nature and biodiversity is also available through the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme, which has been extended until March 2025.

Farmers who apply to the Species Survival Fund for a parcel of land, where that land parcel is in an existing Countryside Stewardship or Higher Level Stewardship agreement, will only be considered provided there is sufficient space in the parcel for all the options on both agreements, the same actions are not being funded twice, and the actions required in your existing agreement and the proposed new Species Survival Fund project are compatible.

Farmers and other land managers who are successful in receiving a grant from the Species Survival Fund will not be given automatic entry into any future agricultural scheme such as ELM and would need to apply to those scheme under their normal application criteria.

Expand All accordions

Making a complaint

We understand that you may be disappointed with a decision we make. There is no right to appeal or re-apply for the Species Survival Fund.

We can only review our decision if you can make a formal complaint about how we have dealt with your application. We have a two-stage complaint process for this fund. We will only be able to consider and investigate the complaint if you can demonstrate that:

- we did not follow the published procedures for assessing your application
- we have misunderstood a significant part of your application
- we did not take notice of relevant information

A formal complaint must be made in writing by emailing enquire@heritagefund.org.uk within 10 working days of receiving your application decision. We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three working days.

Your complaint will initially be reviewed by an area or nation director from the Heritage Fund, who is independent of recommendation and decision panels for this fund. We aim to communicate a decision within 15 working days from when you submitted your complaint.

For assistance, contact our Customer Services team on 020 7591 6044 or email enquire@heritagefund.org.uk.

Where does the funding come from?

We are delivering the Species Survival Fund on behalf of Defra. It is designed to make crucial early progress towards the statutory 2030 Species Abundance target.

Changes to this guidance

We will periodically review this guidance and respond to user feedback. We reserve the right to make changes as required. We will communicate any changes as quickly as possible via this webpage.

Page updates

30 October 2023: This programme was moved to closed programmes.

Tag Link
Closed programmes