Page

Nature Networks Fund (round five)

See all updates

Awarding grants from £50,000 to £1million, this fund aims to strengthen the resilience of Wales' network of protected land and marine sites and build organisations' capacity to accelerate nature's recovery and engage communities.

Page last updated: 24 June 2025.

Is this the right programme for you?

- Are you an individual or organisation working with natural heritage in Wales?
- Do you need funding for planning or delivering a nature-based project?

- Does your project focus on improving wildlife and biodiversity in Wales in and around the network of protected sites?
- Do you require a grant of between £50,000 and £1million?
- If you answered **yes** to these questions, then the **Nature Networks Fund** is for you.

Overview

We're delivering Nature Networks on behalf of the Welsh Government, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.

The aim of the Nature Networks Fund is to improve the resilience of **Wales' network of protected land and marine sites.** It is a key element of the delivery of the Welsh Government's wider Nature Networks Programme, supporting its nature recovery targets such as '30by30'.

What is the protected sites network?

The protected sites network covers Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves, Ramsar sites and Marine Conservation Zones. To check whether an area of land or sea is included within one of these sites, please visit the Natural Resources Wales website and the Wales Environmental Information Portal.

Improving the condition of and connectivity between protected sitesenables them to function better as **nature networks**. Nature networks are vital, resilient areas where habitats and species can thrive, expand, and adapt to environmental change. Restoring connectivity in these networks will:

- prevent further declines in species and habitat condition
- support nature recovery
- enhance capacity to adapt to the climate crisis
- enhance provision of ecosystem services that support our wellbeing;

The protection and long-term resilience of sites is reliant on strong organisations, good governance and robust project planning. Therefore, the Nature Networks Fund will also **support project development and capacity building** for future nature recovery projects. This work may include (but is not restricted to):

- partnership development
- landowner/community consultation and engagement
- ecological surveying
- feasibility studies
- scheme design
- skills development for green finance
- other preparatory work for future capital projects

Capacity building can help organisations and partners to demonstrate outcomes, create robust business models that have the potential to attract investment and provide an evidence base to support effective management approaches.

This fund also supports the active involvement of communities in and around protected sites. This can be fundamental to the long-term success of nature recovery projects, as well as often having wider benefits for health and wellbeing for people.

You can submit a maximum of **two** applications to the Nature Networks Fund: one for a grant of between £50,000 and £250,000 and one for a grant of between £250,000 and £1million.

Things you need to know

- For projects of £50,000 to £250,000 **you must first submit a Project Enquiry**. You may then be invited to make a full application.
- For projects of £250,000 to £1million **you must first submit an Expression of Interest**. You may then be invited to make a full application.
- This page contains the main guidance you need to write your application, however we have additional guidance pages to help you answer the questions in our online forms and you should also read these before starting your application.
- Your project must not start before we make a decision.
- We provide lots of good practice guidance. You can read the guidance that is relevant to you to help you develop and manage your project.
- Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your grant application.

Webinar

If you are an individual or organisation that is interested in applying, and if you've read the application guidance but still have questions, then please join us for our pre-application webinar for Nature Networks Fund (round five) **on Tuesday 1 July 2025 10am–11:30am** by registering here.

What Nature Networks funds

Through the Nature Networks Fund, we want to support:

- Action on protected sites or the ecological networks that support them. This can include action outside of protected sites that will benefit the network as a whole (see What we expect from projects below). The project should also demonstrate the sustainable management of natural resources across Wales.
- Action that local communities can equitably and actively participate in and benefit from. This includes supporting active involvement with a diverse range of people and communities (particularly under-served groups). Community involvement should increase the network of people engaged with nature and build the resilience of protected sites and their ecological networks.
- Development activity that enables organisations to build their capacity and evidence base to plan future nature recovery projects. This could include building capability to continue reaching under-served communities or to attract financial investment (including green finance) into scaling up delivery of nature recovery projects.

Welsh Language

You must include the Welsh language in all aspects of your work. Tell us how you will promote and support the Welsh language and reflect the bilingual nature of Wales.

Make sure that translations are included in your project plan and project budget under the 'Other' costs category within the project costs section of the application.

For further information see our Welsh bilingual project guidance.

Promotion and acknowledgment of funding

This funding is provided by the Welsh Government. As part of your grant you must acknowledge your funding on social media, through press releases, and by displaying our partnership logo. Please read our Welsh Government acknowledgement guidance.

Planning early, and allocating appropriate budget, will help you to meet our requirements and acknowledge your grant in ways that are creative and suited to your project.

Please include budget for acknowledgement in the ‘Publicity and promotions’ costs category within the project costs section of the application. We recommend you base these costs on quotes from potential suppliers.

Use our acknowledgement guidance to plan your activities proportionate to the size of your grant.

Evaluation and reporting

We recommend that you consider evaluation from the beginning of your project. The more carefully projects budget for their evaluation, the higher the quality of the final report. You can find further information in our evaluation guidance.

At the end of your project, we will expect you to submit an evaluation report. This needs to be submitted before we pay the last 20% of your grant. This should include details of how ecosystem resilience and/or habitat connectivity has benefitted (or will benefit in the future) from the investment. You should share relevant monitoring data and methodology.

We will also expect you to share geo-spatial and other data on where your project has worked, to enhance Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government data sets. In addition, we expect you to submit appropriate species presence/absence records to your local environmental records centre and/or similar public records database. Further guidance will be supplied on this if you are awarded a grant.

Full cost recovery

If you are an organisation in the voluntary sector (for example, you might have a board of trustees and be funded by grants and donations), we can cover a proportion of your organisation’s overheads through full cost recovery.

Full cost recovery means securing funding for all the costs involved in running a project. This means that you can request funding for direct project costs as well as a proportionate share of your organisation’s fixed costs.

This may include costs that partly support the project, but also support other projects or activities that your organisation provides, such as salaries of staff working across projects in administration, management, HR, or fundraising, office costs such as rent or utilities and legal or audit fees.

Funding that covers some of your running costs can be important for your sustainability, so we encourage you to consider including this in your budget in the ‘Full costs recovery’ costs category if you are eligible.

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.

What we expect from projects

Activities must deliver direct benefits to the protected site network now or in the future. This will usually involve improvements directly on a site or on surrounding areas that will improve the condition of features and connectivity of sites. It can also include:

- improvements to accessibility of a site
- supporting organisations to reach under-served communities
- supporting organisations or individuals who are (or will be in the future) involved with projects on sites and/or ecological networks that support them. This could include planning, staffing, training,

apprenticeships, green financing, acquiring evidence through surveys, governance reviews and so on.

Projects can operate on land/sea both within and outside of the protected sites themselves. For example, projects outside of protected sites might:

- improve ecological connectivity between specific protected sites
- act to benefit habitats or species outside of protected sites where they are also features of associated protected sites
- focus on a species which isn't a feature of a site, so long as it delivers benefits to the condition, connectivity or ecosystem functioning of specific sites and their features
- benefit a habitat or species which currently isn't a feature of a site, but which evidence suggests could become so
- be based around defined areas which are not currently statutorily protected, but which have similarly high biodiversity importance
- reduce external impacts on protected sites to improve condition, for example from nitrogen deposition or colonisation of INNS
- restore ecosystem functions around protected sites at a landscape scale

In each of these cases, an application must include an evidence-based justification for the project's eligibility. The specific sites and features benefiting from the project should be named and the ecological rationale behind it explained.

You will be expected to demonstrate that your planned project delivers against the management objectives or conservation objectives for the relevant site.

We will be looking to fund a combination of capital and revenue activity across a portfolio of projects. To understand more, please see What costs can you apply for? below.

Identifying potential sites for connectivity

Action to improve connectivity between protected sites will be most effective if it is located to enhance existing patterns of connectivity in the landscape. Action is likely to be most effective if it consolidates, expands or makes linkages between habitat networks.

The Nature Networks Maps are available to help with this and can be accessed through DataMap Wales and Wales Environmental Information Portal.

- DataMap Wales: Habitat Networks and Priority Ecological Networks
- Wales Environmental Information Portal. Please select 'explore' from the main menu, then click on the 'Ecosystem Resilience' tab.

The maps show modelled networks for a range of habitats that indicate how well habitat patches are likely to be connected across Wales and the Priority Ecological Networks. They indicate likely existing connectivity specifically between and around protected sites for different habitats. The maps also present a generic buffer around all protected sites to draw attention to the importance of action in close proximity to existing sites.

It is important to note that these maps are modelled outputs and are intended to inform, rather than to prescribe where action goes. Other model outputs may be available, and there are other connecting features in the landscape, such as watercourses, hedges or even road verges, that could be considered when planning projects.

Application deadline and key dates

For grants of between £50,000 to £250,000:

- Project Enquiry deadline: **12noon** on **14 July 2025**
- Application deadline: **12noon** on **26 September 2025**
- Decisions will be made: **December 2025**
- Your project completion date: **30 January 2029**

For grants of between £250,000 to £1million:

- Expressions of Interest deadline: **12noon** on **12 August 2025**
- Application deadline: **12noon** on **18 November 2025**
- Decisions will be made: **February 2026**
- Your project completion date: **31 March 2029**

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to all private landowners and organisations working with natural heritage in Wales. You must demonstrate that you are aware of and have, or be working towards obtaining, the right permissions, licences and consents to undertake activity on the protected site network or surrounding areas. The area you are improving must be in Wales, but you/your organisation can be based anywhere in the UK.

Partnerships

We strongly encourage you to work with other people to develop and carry out your project.

A partner is another organisation or third-party body that is integral to the delivery of your project.

Partners are not subcontractors. They will take on an active role in the project and will be involved in the project. They will help to report on the project, attend regular partnership meetings and support project evaluation.

If you plan to work with any other organisations to carry out a significant proportion of your project you must formalise your relationship with a partnership agreement.

Private owners of heritage

As a private owner of heritage you must demonstrate that the public benefit of your project outweighs any private gain.

- If the owner of the heritage is not making the application, we will ask them to sign up to the terms and conditions of your grant.

We will not fund:

- works that can reasonably be considered as the statutory duty of the owner
- the purchase of buildings or land
- construction of new, large-scale buildings

Working on private land

Many designated 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 create farm ponds, provided 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. We 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 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.

Licences, permissions and consents

Applicants must demonstrate in their application that they are aware of, and working towards obtaining, the relevant permissions and licenses to carry out their project.

You should include details about any outstanding permissions in your project plan, available on our templates page.

What costs can you apply for?

If you are applying for a project under £250,000 you can apply for a Development/Capacity building project, a Capital project or a combination of both in a single application. You may not make more than one application under £250,000.

Applications over £250,000 should be for Capital projects only. You may not make more than one application over £250,000.

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 balanced combination of capital and revenue activity.

Development/ Capacity building projects

These projects should contain a majority of revenue funding. You can include some capital costs, but capital work should not be the focus of the project.

Capital projects

These projects should include a majority of capital funding and should focus on capital works. You can include some revenue costs within these projects.

Capital costs:

The following are examples of capital costs and is not an exhaustive list.

- the purchase of items associated with land management activities, such as trees, hedge plants, fencing and capital works items required to deliver the outcomes

- general costs incurred in installing the capital works, which include contractor costs for labour and use of equipment
- the purchase of machinery and equipment up to the market value of the asset
- the purchase, design and installation of interpretation panels, including translation costs
- the acquisition or development of computer software and acquisitions of patents, licenses, copyrights and trademarks
- consultant fees, other technical design costs, site surveys and professional fees such as fees related to environmental sustainability
- Planning application fees and costs. Fees incurred for statutory permissions, licences and consents are eligible, provided they are essential for the delivery of the capital project and are incurred after the grant is awarded.
- contingency funding for additional capital costs (we recommend approximately 10% contingency)
- inflation funding to allow for cost increases in future years of project delivery

Revenue costs

- staff time
- full cost recovery or core organisational costs towards project delivery (voluntary sector organisations only)
- activity costs (events, refreshments, room hire, etc)
- evaluation
- project planning (feasibility studies, ecological surveying or baselining, landowner/community consultation, governance reviews, consultancy advice on green finance)
- training and apprenticeships costs
- translation costs
- contingency funding for additional revenue costs (we recommend approximately 10% contingency)

Ineligible costs

You may not include costs for:

- ongoing maintenance or running costs beyond the duration of the project.
- acquisition of land
- recoverable VAT
- costs for any activity that has taken place before a grant is awarded

Match funding

There are no requirements for cash or non-cash contributions for the Nature Networks Fund. However, any cash, non-cash or volunteer contributions you provide can add to the impact and value for money of your project, which will be considered in assessment.

You may not use this grant as match funding for a project from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, or vice versa.

How to apply

Please note: Do not proceed straight to an application. You must first submit a Project Enquiry or an Expression of Interest so we can provide you with early feedback on your project proposal.

Grants of between £50,000 and £250,000

For grants between £50,000 and £250,000, you must submit a Project Enquiry. Please visit our Project Enquiry page for more information on how to complete your form.

The deadline for Project Enquiries is **12noon on 14 July 2025.**

We will use the information you provide to decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application. An invitation to apply does not guarantee a grant from us in the future, but does indicate that we see potential in your initial proposals.

If your Project Enquiry is successful, you must submit your full application by **12noon on 26 September 2025**.

Go to our online service to apply.

Grants of between £250,000 and £1million

We ask all applicants for a grant between **£250,000 and £1million** to complete a short **Expression of Interest**. Please visit our Expression of Interest page for more information on how to complete your form.

You must submit your Expression of Interest by the deadline of **12noon on 12 August 2025.**

We will use the information you provide to decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application. An invitation to apply does not guarantee grant from us in the future, but does indicate that we see potential in your initial proposals.

We aim to respond to your Expression of Interest within 20 working days. If your Expression of Interest is successful, you must submit your full application by **12noon on 18 November 2025.**

Ewch i'n gwasanaeth ar-lein i wneud cais.

Supporting documents

You will need to provide relevant supporting documents, listed below, as part of the application process. Please visit our Application questions: £50,000 to £250,000 or Application questions: £250,000 to £1million page for full details. You can download the necessary templates here as part of your application. File sizes should be smaller than 20MB.

Please note that some of the supporting documents required for this programme are different to those stated in the online application form.

All projects of between £50,000 and £1million must provide the following **mandatory** documents:

- a governing document (unless exempt)
- Audited or verified accounts (mandatory if you are an organisation). You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts. If your organisations accounts are older than 18 months, or your organisation was set up less than 14 months ago and does not have a set of audited accounts, you must provide your last three bank statements or a signed letter from your bank.
- a project plan (please use our template)
- a cost template (please use our project costs template and you **must** separate costs into Capital and Revenue)
- land ownership documents, such as Land Registry or lease or Heads of Terms (mandatory for **capital projects only**)
- a map showing the location of the site(s) on a regional scale
- at least one map showing the locations of capital works, with protected sites/features labelled. ShapeFiles, Tab Files or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons (mandatory for **capital projects only**)

For projects of between £250,000 and £1million, you must provide the following **additional mandatory** documents:

- a document that outlines your **project management structure**, so we know who will make decisions and how you will control change during your project
- a document that outlines the **main risks** facing the project after it has been completed and how they will be managed

In addition to the mandatory documents, all projects of between £50,000 and £1million may also include the following documents where applicable:

- partnership agreement (**mandatory** if you are working in a partnership)
- job descriptions (**mandatory** if you are creating new jobs or apprenticeships as part of your project)
- briefs for commissioned work (if applicable)
- calculation of Full Cost Recovery (if applicable)
- evidence of support, such as letters, emails or videos of support (optional)

How we assess your application

When we assess your application we will consider a range of factors including:

- the contribution your project makes to improving the condition and connectivity of the protected sites network in Wales
- your plans for ensuring everyone has opportunities to learn, develop new skills and explore nature, regardless of background or personal circumstances
- whether your organisation will develop and sustain skills and capacity to ensure a long-term future for the protected sites network in Wales
- the number of jobs/apprenticeships/traineeships offered, especially for young people
- how your project’s impact will be sustained

Balancing criteria

If we receive more good quality applications than we can fund, we will prioritise projects which will:

- work in areas that most strongly support the delivery of Resilient Ecological Networks within the Nature Networks Programme as identified and evidenced from the Nature Networks Maps

- represent a geographical, biodiversity and lead organisation spread across Wales and across all previous rounds of Nature Networks funding
- provide a balanced combination of capital and revenue projects across the portfolio

Considering risk

When assessing your application, we will make a measured judgement on the potential risks to your project and current organisational risks – and we will look to see if you have identified these and told us how you will mitigate against them.

All projects will face threats and opportunities that you need to identify and manage. We want you to be realistic about the risks your project and organisation may face so that you are in a good position to manage and deliver the project successfully.

You should also carefully consider inflation and contingency costs within your application.

Inflation for capital projects is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future. You should account for inflation based on the project timescale, plus other factors such as materials used, labour demands and location.

The types of risk and problems you should consider are:

- financial: for example, a reduced contribution from another funding source
- organisational: for example, a shortage of people with the skills you need or staff needed to work on other projects
- economic: for example, an unexpected rise in the cost of materials
- technical: for example, discovering unexpected protected species on your site
- social: for example, negative responses to consultation or a lack of interest from your target audience
- management: for example, a significant change in the project team
- legal: for example, subsidy control, or changes in law that make the project impractical
- environmental: for example, difficulties in finding sources of timber from well managed forests

Assessment time

We aim to make decisions on projects of £50,000 to £250,000 by the end of December 2025, and on projects of £250,000 to £1million by the end of February 2026

Please note: we cannot start assessing your application until all the required checks are completed and we receive all the required supporting information.

If your application is successful

We will provide additional guidance on our monitoring requirements and legal conditions at the point of award.

All grants under £250,000 will be paid in three instalments. You will receive 50% of your grant once you have received permission to start your project. You will receive the next 30% at the midpoint of your project, when the first 50% has been spent. We withhold the final 20% of your grant until the project is completed.

Grants of £250,000 and over will be paid in arrears, in regular instalments, on receipt of evidence of expenditure.

You must wait to receive permission from us before beginning your project.

If your application is unsuccessful

The assessment process is competitive and we cannot fund all of the good quality applications that we receive.

Community grants

Community and third-party grants schemes are pots of money that you can use to fund other groups or organisations to deliver small projects that help you achieve your overall aims for heritage. They can help you enhance engagement and widen the impact of your project.

Community grants can be used to fund activities or capital works to heritage assets. They can be awarded to not-for-profit community groups or private owners of heritage to undertake capital works to conserve that heritage. Community grants cannot be given to acquire land, buildings or heritage items.

If you are the lead applicant, you will manage the community grant process and funding pot. You will be responsible for:

- inviting and assessing applications through a fair, open and transparent process
- establishing a panel to make decisions to award or reject grants
- reviewing progress made on the project to ensure it is satisfactory
- making grant payments
- monitoring compliance with the terms of the community grant, resolving any issues and repayment of the grant if necessary

In your application you should explain what the aims of your community grant scheme are, how it contributes to the wider project and how it will be managed.

We recommend that the community grants pot should not exceed £200,000. Individual grants should be limited to £10,000 for activities and £25,000 for capital works.

You will need to formalise the grant award in a third-party agreement between you and the community grant recipient which defines the activities to be delivered and sets out the terms of the grant. Community grant recipients must sign up to our terms and conditions, with particular reference to the following (where relevant):

- overall Grant Expiry Date
- acknowledgement of Welsh Government funding
- clawback
- project monitoring
- unspent grant
- procurement
- digital requirements
- land and property in third-party ownership

You will need to reflect these areas in your agreements with the community grant recipients, as you will be responsible for ensuring they understand and agree to the terms and conditions of your grant.

Agreements with third-party landowners, including private owners, must secure the management and maintenance of capital works from the start of the work on the project until 10 years after the project’s completion.

You may include costs for managing the grant scheme, including the costs of adapting and setting up any third-party agreements and taking legal advice, as part of the costs in your application.

You will need to develop a fair and transparent application process with clear guidelines. You must submit your application and monitoring process to us for approval before the community grant scheme is launched.

You should have clear criteria for applications and make these criteria publicly available along with a list of your awards.

You must undertake due diligence before awarding community grants. As a minimum you will need to request the following from an applicant:

- the organisation's governing document (unless they are a public sector organisation or private owner of heritage)
- proof of ownership if the project involves work to land, buildings or heritage items (for example, deeds, leases or any information relating to mortgages)
- copy of recent accounts or last three months of bank statements

Decisions to award or reject applications must be made by a grants panel. Members of the panel should not all be from the same organisation, and it should not include organisations or individuals who may wish to apply for grants from the community pot. This is a conflict of interest.

You will need to ensure that the community grant recipients have complied with the terms of your community grant scheme and the grant has been used appropriately. To do this you will need to gather evidence from the community grant recipient. The level of detail you request should be proportionate to the grant amount.

You will need to resolve any issues with the community grant recipient including the arrangements for repayment or clawback of the grant.

You will have overall responsibility for reporting to us on the progress of the community grants and will need to produce an evaluation report at the end of your project. You must make sure that you allocate sufficient budget to undertake this evaluation work.

Legal and policy requirements

Ownership

We expect you to own any property (land, buildings, heritage items or intellectual property) on which you spend the grant or have a lease that meets our requirements.

You must own the freehold or have a lease with at least five years left to run after the Project Completion Date.

The Project Completion Date is the date we let you know that we have recorded the Project as complete.

All leases must meet the following requirements:

- 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 may be able to sell on, sublet the whole or part, and mortgage your lease but if we award you a grant, you must first have our permission to do any of these

If the subject of your project is land that is owned by a third party or multiple third parties we will usually expect the owner to become a joint grantee. In some situations, rather than make the owner a joint grantee, we may ask them to sign an additional letter agreeing to comply with any terms and conditions that relate to their property.

In this instance, a legal agreement should also be put in place between each land or building owner and the grantee. There is no prescribed form of agreement but we have specific requirements which should be included in any third party owner agreements.

At a minimum, the agreements should include the following:

- confirmation as to how the land is held (freehold or leasehold)
- a description of the property (including plans)
- covenants on the part of the owner to maintain the property and provide public access in accordance with the terms of the grant (as applicable)
- a provision that any onward disposal should be subject to the third party agreement
- confirmation that the agreement will last from the start of the work on the third party land until five years following the Project Completion Date for projects below £250,000, and 10 years following the Project Completion Date for projects over £250,000.

The agreements will need to be completed and in place before any grant monies are released for work on any land or building owned by a third party.

We do accept applications for landscape and nature projects that are on both public and privately owned land, provided that public benefit outweighs any private gain for the individual land owner(s) where they are private individuals or for-profit organisations.

Digital works

We have specific requirements for digital works produced as part of any project.

This covers anything you create in your project in a digital format that is designed to give access to heritage and/or help people engage with, and learn about, heritage.

For example, this could include photographs, text, software, web and app content, databases, 3D models, sound and video recordings. Items created in the management of the project, for example emails between team members and records of meetings, are not included in the requirement.

We ask you to share your digital outputs under an open licence. Our default open licence is CC-BY 4.0. This helps remove barriers to the use and reuse of funded works, enabling greater engagement with the UK’s heritage. It also helps to ensure others give proper credit to your work.

Our regulations around digital works vary depending on grant size.

Read further guidance on producing digital materials as part of a project.

Procurement

You must follow our procurement guidelines. As an overview, projects with any single goods, works or services worth more than £10,000 (excluding VAT), should get at least three competitive tenders/quotes. For all goods, works and services worth more than £50,000 (excluding VAT), you must provide proof of

competitive tendering procedures.

Your proof should be a report on the tenders you have received, together with your decision on which to accept. You must give full reasons if you do not select the lowest tender. Depending on the nature of your organisation and project you may be required to comply with UK Procurement Legislation.

If a project partner is providing goods or services paid for through the grant, then you need to tell us why they have been chosen and why an open tender process is not appropriate. We will consider whether this is the best way to carry out your project and expect you to show value for money and meet any relevant legal requirements.

If you are unsure about your obligations, we advise you to take professional or legal advice. If you have already procured goods, works or services for the project that are worth more than £10,000, (excluding VAT), you will need to tell us how you did it. We cannot pay your grant if you have not followed the correct procedure.

Staff recruitment

You must also openly advertise all project staff posts, with the following exceptions:

- You have a suitably qualified member of staff on your payroll that you are moving into a project post.
- You are extending the hours of a suitably qualified member of staff on your payroll so that they can work on the project. In this case we will fund the cost of the additional hours spent on the project and you will need to tell us about their role.

In these instances, you still need to provide a job description for the post that explains work the appointed staff member will carry out in the context of your project.

We are committed to ensuring that the heritage sector is inclusive and sustainable. You must use at least the Living Wage rate (and London Living Wage where applicable) for all project staff. Please show evidence of budgeting for at least the Living Wage rates in your staff costs and budgets.

Procedures to recruit consultants and contractors must be fair and open and keep to the relevant equality legislation.

Subsidy control

If your application is successful, it is important to remember our grant comes from public funds and is subject to the Subsidy Control Act 2022. We ask that you familiarise yourself with the key requirements.

A subsidy is where a public authority provides financial support from public money that gives an economic advantage to the recipient, where that recipient can be considered to be engaged in economic activities. The majority of our grants will either not be a subsidy or will be able to proceed as a lawful subsidy which meets the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

As a public body it is our responsibility to make the final determination of whether your grant is a subsidy and/or apply relevant exemptions as necessary and our subsidy control assessment is an important part of the application process. In preparing your application you should consider whether any particular subsidy control exemption is required for your project. We will expect your grant to comply with the principles of the subsidy control regime including the Act and published Statutory Guidance. If you are unsure whether your project will satisfy the relevant requirements you should seek independent legal advice.

We reserve the right to impose further requirements and seek further information in this respect and we will expect you to provide us with any assistance we may reasonably require in completing a subsidy control assessment.

Government embargoes and sanctions

Our grants must not be used to fund organisations who are supporting extremism, criminal activity and/or who are subject to government embargoes and sanctions.

You must follow all legislation and regulations that apply to your project and carry out your own due diligence on any funds, contracts or individuals linked to places that may be subject to government embargoes and sanctions.

If your project is affected, please contact your Investment Manager or local office. We reserve the right to withhold grant payments if we consider public funds are at risk.

Get in touch

If you have a question about the Nature Networks Fund, please contact natur@heritagefund.org.uk.

We understand that you may be disappointed with a decision.

There is no right to appeal for the Nature Networks Fund. We can only review our decision if you make a formal complaint about how we have dealt with your application. We have a two-stage complaint process for this programme.

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 **within 10 working days** of receiving your application decision. You must send your complaint to: enquire@heritagefund.org.uk

We aim to acknowledge your complaint within three working days.

Your complaint will initially be reviewed by one of our Nation & Area Directors, 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.

Managing your data

The Heritage Fund & Welsh Government will be joint data controllers for any personal data you provide in relation to your grant application or request for grant funding. We will process it in line with our public task and the official authority vested in us to prevent fraud and money laundering, and to verify identities.

Your personal and grant related data will be shared with another data controller, Welsh Government, and any contractor appointed by Welsh Government to undertake external evaluation of Nature Networks to review the impact, performance and costs of the scheme. You will be informed when an external evaluation is taking place and will have the opportunity to opt out.

Guidance updates

We will regularly 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.

The Nature Networks Fund (round five) is being delivered by the Heritage Fund, on behalf of the Welsh Government and in partnership with Natural Resources Wales.

Back to the top.

Project Enquiry: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £50,000 to £250,000

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
All applicants applying for a Nature Networks Fund (round five) grant of £50,000 to £250,000 must submit a Project Enquiry before proceeding to a full application.

We will use the information you provide to decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application. An invitation to apply does not guarantee a grant from us in the future, but does indicate that we see potential in your initial proposals.

You must submit your Project Enquiry by **12noon on 14 July 2025**.

Looking to apply for more than £250,000? You should submit an Expression of Interest instead.

Important: The National Lottery Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of programmes that we deliver. When completing your application form, you must follow the guidance below as some questions need to be answered differently for this programme. You **should not** use the help icons embedded in the online form as they do not relate to this funding.

Before submitting

- Please make sure you have read the full application guidance for Nature Networks Fund (round five).
- Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your Project Enquiry.

Project Enquiry questions

You can see the Project Enquiry questions here.

Have you spoken to anyone at the Heritage Fund about your idea?

If so, tell us their name. Tell us also if you have spoken to anyone in Natural Resources Wales about your project and about what, for example permissions or licences.

What is the need for this project?

What is the need for this project in supporting the aims of the Nature Networks programme? What is the current condition of the site(s)? Is there a particular risk to the site(s)?

Tell us about any research you have done with your audience.

You have 200 words.

Describe what you will do during the project.

Include any tasks you have to do to achieve the project goal. For example, describe what specific actions you will undertake to improve the management of habitats/species, including development and capacity building activity if relevant.

You have 200 words.

Do you have a title for the project?

You **must** include the prefix #NNF5 in your project title.

For example, #NNF5 Dragonfly nature reserve improvements, being clear and succinct on project activity and location if possible.

If invited to submit a full application, you can change your title.

Tell us about the heritage of the project.

For this programme, heritage refers to the protected sites network.

Please tell us:

- how your project links with the protected sites network (for example, specific site names e.g. SSSI and/or people/organisations who manage them)
- why it is important (for both biodiversity/wildlife and people).
- where the work will take place.
- what habitats/species populations you will work to conserve or restore.

You have 100 words.

Please outline how your project will respond to our four investment principles.

The Nature Networks Fund aligns with all of our investment principles, but the strength of focus, and emphasis on each principle, will be for you to decide and demonstrate.

Saving heritage, please tell us:

- how your project will improve the condition of Wales' protected sites network.
- how will you restore connectivity and contribute to Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs), even if this will be in the future.

Protecting the environment, please tell us:

- how your project will mitigate and adapt to threats to protected sites, such as climate change, invasive non-native species, and pollution.
- what ecosystem services you will work to conserve or restore.
- how your work will contribute to ecosystem resilience on a landscape scale.

Inclusion, access and participation, please tell us:

- how will communities or audiences be actively involved in and around the protected sites.
- If there will be any accessibility improvements.

Organisational sustainability, please tell us:

- how your project will develop and sustain skills and capacity and/or improve your organisational resilience to ensure a long-term future for the protected sites network.

You have 300 words.

Who will be involved in the project?

Tell us about who will run the project, any partnerships and if people will volunteer on the project.

You have 100 words.

How long do you think the project will take?

Tell us an estimated start and end date. Note that projects must conclude by 30 Jan 2029, including evaluation and all financial reporting.

You have 50 words.

How much is the project likely to cost?

If you know, tell us about the most important costs, split into capital and revenue costs. These costs can be estimated.

You have 200 words.

How much funding are you planning to apply for from us?

£[enter amount]

How to submit

When you are ready to submit your enquiry, please complete the questions on our online service **by 12noon on 14 July 2025** .

Before submitting, you will need to register an account for yourself and for the organisation you are applying for.

Hearing back from us

Once you have submitted an enquiry we will contact you by the start of August 2025 to let you know the outcome. If your enquiry is successful, you will be invited to make a full application by the deadline of 26 September 2025.

Guidance updates

We will regularly 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.

Expression of Interest: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £250,000 to £1million

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
We ask all applicants requesting a Nature Networks Fund (round five) grant of £250,000 to £1million to submit an Expression of Interest before making an application.

We will use the information you provide to decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application. An invitation to apply does not guarantee a grant from us in the future, but does indicate that we see potential in your initial proposals.

You **must** use this guide to assist you in completing the online Expression of Interest (EOI) for grants from over £250,000 to £1million. **If you do not submit an EOI, you will not be invited to submit a full application.**

The EOI word count is deliberately short (maximum 1,000 words) to minimise the time and effort for you to complete this stage.

You must submit your EOI by 12noon on 12 August 2025.

Looking to apply for less than £250,000? You should submit a mandatory Project Enquiry instead.

Important: The National Lottery Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of programmes that we deliver. When completing your application form, you must follow the guidance below as some questions need to be answered differently for this programme. You **should not** use the help icons embedded in the online form as they do not relate to this funding.

Before submitting

- Please make sure you have read the full application guidance for Nature Networks Fund (round five).
- Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your Expression of Interest.

How to submit

When you are ready, please complete the EOI on our online service.

You will need to register an account for yourself and for the organisation you are applying for if you do not have one already.

The deadline to submit your EOI is **12noon on 12 August 2025**.

Hearing back from us

We aim to respond to your EOI within 20 working days from the end of the EOI deadline.

We will let you know via email whether you are successful in being invited to submit a full application to Nature Networks Fund (round five).

Expression of Interest questions

You can see the questions on the EOI below.

Have you spoken to anyone at the Heritage Fund about your idea?

If so, tell us their name.

Tell us also if you have spoken to anyone in Natural Resources Wales about your project, and about what e.g. permissions or licences.

Describe what you will do during the project.

Include any tasks you have to do to achieve the project goal. For example, describe what specific actions you will undertake to improve the management of habitats/species .

You have 200 words.

Do you have a title for the project?

You **must** include the prefix #NNF5 in your project title.

For example, #NNF5 Dragonfly nature reserve improvements, being clear and succinct on project activity and location if possible.

If invited to submit a full application, you can change your title.

Please outline how your project will respond to our four investment principles.

The Nature Networks Fund aligns with all of our investment principles, but the strength of focus, and emphasis on each principle, will be for you to decide and demonstrate.

Saving heritage, please tell us:

- how your project will improve the condition of Wales' protected sites network.
- how will you restore connectivity and contribute to Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs), even if this will be in the future.

Protecting the environment, please tell us:

- how your project will mitigate and adapt to threats to protected sites, such as climate change, invasive non-native species, and pollution.
- what ecosystem services you will work to conserve or restore.
- how your work will contribute to ecosystem resilience on a landscape scale.

Inclusion, access and participation, please tell us:

- how will communities or audiences be actively involved in and around the protected sites.
- If there will be any accessibility improvements.

Organisational sustainability, please tell us:

- how your project will develop and sustain skills and capacity and/or improve your organisational resilience to ensure a long-term future for the protected sites network.

You have 300 words.

Tell us about the heritage of the project.

For this programme, heritage refers to the protected sites network. You should explain how your project links with the network (for example, specific site names e.g. SSSI and grid references and/or people/organisations who manage them) and why it is important (for both biodiversity/wildlife and people).

Tell us:

- Where will the work take place?
- What ecosystems/habitats/species populations will you work to conserve or restore?

You have 100 words.

What is the need for this project?

Please tell us:

- What is the need for this project in supporting the aims of the Nature Networks programme?
- What is the current condition of the site(s)?
- Is there a particular risk to the site(s)?
- about any research you have done with your audience.

You have 200 words.

How long do you think the project will take?

Tell us your estimated start and end dates. Your project must be complete by **31 March 2029** including evaluation and final reporting.

You have 50 words.

How much is the project likely to cost?

You must apply for between £250,000 and £1million. These costs can be estimated. If you require less you should complete a Project Enquiry for £50,000 to £250,000 and not an EOI. Please provide estimated amounts of capital and revenue costs you will apply for.

You have 200 words.

How much funding are you planning to apply for from us?

Submit an amount.

When are you likely to submit a funding application, if asked to do so?

You have 50 words. If invited, you will have to submit your application by **12noon on 18 November 2025.**

Templates: Nature Networks Fund (round five)

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
Use these templates to help prepare your application to the Nature Networks Fund (round five).

Attachment	Size
Nature Networks Fund project costs template	6.56 KB
Nature Networks Fund project plan template	33.01 KB
Cronfa Rhwydweithiau Natur - costau prosiect	6.78 KB
Cronfa Rhwydweithiau Natur - cynllun prosiect	33.26 KB

Application questions: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £50,000 to £250,000

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
Questions from our National Lottery Heritage Grants £50,000 to £250,000 application.

Before you can apply for a grant of £50,000 to £250,000, you **must** submit a Project Enquiry to tell us about your idea. If you are successful, we will invite you to apply. After you are invited to apply, you will have until 12noon on 26 September 2025 to submit an application.

- You **must** use this guide to assist you in completing an online application form for a Nature Networks (round five) grant under £250,000.

Important: The National Lottery Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of programmes that we deliver. When completing your application form, you must follow the guidance below as some questions need to be answered differently for this programme. You **should not** use the help icons embedded in the online form as they do not relate to this funding.

Each question has a word limit; however, you don't need to reach this. Only include the information we ask for that is relevant to your project.

Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your grant application.

About your vision

Describe what your organisation would like to achieve through your project.

We will use your answer to tell people about your project, including our decision makers, Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government.

We publish details of applications and grant awards on our website and in public databases. This is in line with our commitment to transparency and open data principles. We will use the information you have provided when answering this question to describe your project.

Tell us what you hope to achieve and what you hope the legacy of your project will be in contributing to Resilient Ecological Networks in Wales.

[Text field – 150 words]

About your heritage focus

Tell us about the heritage you will focus on as part of this project.

For this programme, heritage refers to the site(s) or species the project will work on. Tell us:

- the site name(s)
- if there is any official recognition or formal designations of the site(s), for example, a site may be a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- what habitats or species are included, their current condition and usage
- how the site(s) or species relate to Wales' network of protected land and marine sites

Do not use this section to tell us about your project, or about what will happen during your project. We will ask you about this later in the application.

[Text field – 500 words]

Is this heritage at risk?

Explain why the heritage is under threat, and what actions have been taken (if any) to minimise the risk.

For example, it could be at risk of loss through physical damage or neglect, or financial shortfalls. Public access to the heritage may also be at risk of loss.

Tell us if the landscape, habitat or species is at risk and in what way (for example, identified in a Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority).

Tell us:

- how the heritage is currently managed and by who
- how people currently engage with the heritage

Answer:

- No, it is not at risk [Tick box]
- Yes, it is at risk [Tick box]

If yes, explain why the heritage is at risk.

[Text field – 500 words]

About your project

What is the title of your project?

Give us a title or name we can refer to your project by.

This will be seen by our decision makers, and if your application is successful, will be used in any public posts made about your project and will be published on our website. Make sure you choose a title that you are happy for a wide range of people to see.

We encourage you to keep your title short and descriptive.

You **must** include the prefix #NNF5 in your project title. For example, **#NNF5 Dragonfly nature reserve improvements.**

[Text input – 255 characters]

When will your project happen?

Enter the date you expect to start your project**.** This should not be before 1 January 2026.

Your project **must** end by the Project Completion Date of 30 January 2029, including all financial reporting and evaluation. We anticipate that most project planning projects will be shorter in duration than projects delivering capital works.

- start date of project [Enter date]
- end date of project [Enter date]

Where is your project taking place?

Your project may be taking place somewhere different than your organisation. Tell us where that is. If your project is taking place at more than one site, tell us the address where most of your project will take place.

- the same place as my organisation address [Tick box]
- somewhere else [Tick box]

If somewhere else:

Tell us your project's address.

[Enter postcode > select an address > edit selected address details]

We understand that you might not have a postcode. Tell us the closest postcode to your project's location.

Do you want to add a grid reference?

Please add a grid reference if your project is taking place across a large area, at more than one site or in a place which is difficult to find using a postcode.

Please provide a six-digit Ordnance Survey grid reference number for the mid-point of your project area (for example: SK510072). If you are working on multiple sites, separate each grid reference with a semicolon (for example: SK510072; SX163777; TQ317842).

- Do not include any additional text with your grid references. No, we do not want to add a grid reference [Tick box]
- Yes, we want to add a grid reference [Tick box]

If yes: Add a grid reference [Text field – 20 characters]

If you would like to add another grid reference, you will be able to add more on the next page.

Further information:

Provide more information about the grid reference. For example, the name of the site or a description of the area it covers.

[Text field – 50 words]

Have you received any advice from us about this project?

If you have spoken to anyone from The National Lottery Heritage Fund about your project, tell us about the advice you received and how you have used that advice to develop your project.

- No, we have not received any advice from you [Tick box]
- Yes, we have received advice from you [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us more about the advice you received from us about this project

[Text field – 500 words]

Have you received any advice from anyone else about this project?

Tell us if you have received any specialist advice about your project. This could be experts in the heritage your project focuses on or other organisations who will support you to deliver your project.

This could include:

- any project proposal advice, such as from Natural Resources Wales or ecologists
- any consultation you have done with your local community and those who will be involved in your project, such as local landowners

- any pre-application advice on planning or consents, such as from your local authority or Natural Resources Wales
- advice about how to address wellbeing for your project participants, such as from a charity or local group who can provide support which is relevant to their lived experience

Answer:

- No, we have not received any advice [Tick box]
- Yes, we have received advice [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us more about the advice you have received from anyone else about this project

[Text field – 500 words]

Tell us what you will do during your project.

Provide an overview of what you will do during your project. You should use the following two sub-headings, depending on whether your project is capital and/or development/capacity building.

Capital projects:

- Which protected sites(s) or Priority Ecological Networks will your project have an impact on?
- What works will you undertake for habitats and species?
- Who will be involved and how (staff, volunteers, general public, target audiences)?

Development/ capacity building projects:

- What work will you undertake during the project (for example, what surveys, consultations or planning activities)?
- Who will be involved and how (staff, volunteers, general public, target audiences, partners)?

Your project plan should provide more detailed information about each element of your project.

- [Text field – 500 words]

Will capital works be part of your project?

Details on what we consider to be capital works can be found in the application guidance.

- Tell us if any capital works will be part of your project, even if this is a small part of your overall project.
- No, capital works will not be part of our project [Tick box]
- Yes, capital works will be part of our project [Tick box]

If capital works are part of your project, you will need to tell us who owns the heritage. If you have them, we need to see any ownership documents, leases and condition surveys.

If your organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

- if your organisation has the freehold of the building or land, or own the heritage items outright
- if your organisation has the lease of the building or land and how many years are left to run on the lease
- If your organisation has, or is planning to take out, a mortgage or other loans secured on the building or land, or heritage item. If so, give us details of the lender and the amount of the mortgage or loan. If you

have one, upload an ownership document.

If a partner organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

- the name of the partner organisation
- if the project partner has the freehold of the building or land, or own outright the heritage items
- if the project partner has the lease of the building or land and how many years are left to run on the lease
- if the project partner has, or is planning to take out, a mortgage or other loans secured on the building or land, or heritage item
- if so, give us details of the lender and the amount of the mortgage or loan
- If you do not currently meet our ownership requirements, tell us the date when you expect to do so.

Tell us who owns the heritage.

[Text field – 500 words]

Upload ownership document.

[Choose file]

If you select 'Yes, capital works will be part of your project', you will also need to answer these next five questions:

Do you need any permission to carry out the capital works?

Examples of what might need permission:

- agreement from the owner of a heritage asset
- access rights from a landowner
- planning permission from the council
- licenses and permits from Natural Resources Wales
- consent to record audio or take photographs of individuals

If you don’t know if you need permission, choose the ‘We are unsure if we need permission’ option.

- No, we do not need permission [Tick box]

If no: Tell us why you do not need permission to carry out the capital works [Text field – 500 words]

- Yes, we do need permission to carry out the capital works [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us who you need permission from [Text field - 500 words]

- We are unsure if we need permission [Tick box]

Has a condition survey taken place in the last five years?

Tell us about any ecological surveys or Environmental Impact Assessments that have been completed

If you have had any type of condition survey done, we would like to see it. You can upload a condition survey here.

- No, a condition survey has not taken place [Tick box]

If no: Tell us why you have not had a condition survey

[Text field – 500 words]

- Yes, a condition survey has taken place [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us more about the condition survey

[Text field – 500 words]

Upload condition survey.

[Choose file]

- We're unsure if a condition survey has taken place [Tick box]

If unsure: Tell us why you are unsure if there has been a condition survey

[Text field – 500 words]

Are there any legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage which may affect your project?

Tell us if the register of title or other ownership documents contain any restrictions or limitation on its use or ownership, or if it requires any consents for any dealings. If so, you will need to give us the full details and evidence that these are satisfied.

This could include:

- a Restrictive Covenant limiting the type of use for the land or property
- a restriction giving another party a right to be notified of any dealing or state conditions that would need to be resolved before the property is sold

Answer:

- No, there are no legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage [Tick box]
- Yes, there are legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us more about any legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage which may affect your project

[Text field – 500 words]

- I am not sure if there are any legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage [Tick box]

Is this heritage on the at Risk Register?

- Answer: No, it is not on the at Risk Register [Tick box]

Will you be creating any digital works as part of your project?

By digital outputs we mean anything created in a digital format with our funding, which is designed to give access to heritage or to help people engage with and learn about heritage.

Tell us if you will be creating any digital outputs as part of your project. The digital outputs you create will need to meet our digital requirements, and be available, accessible and open. You can read more about our digital requirements on our website.

Your digital outputs might include:

- photographs, sound and video recordings
- electronic documents and databases
- website and app content
- software and code
- 3D models
- No, we are not creating any digital works [Tick box]
- Yes, we will be creating digital works [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us how you will make sure these digital works meet our digital requirements.

[Text field - 500 words]

End of extra questions for projects doing capital works.

Will you be acquiring any buildings, land or heritage items as part of your project?

Land and building acquisition is not an eligible cost for the Nature Networks fund. You should tick No.

- No, we will not be acquiring any buildings, land or heritage items [Tick box]

Our funding is subject to the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Tell us whether you consider the funding applied for to be a Subsidy within the Act and any advice you may have taken.

If your application is successful, it is important to remember our grant comes from public funds and may be subject to the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Find out more about subsidy control in the Legal and policy requirements section of the programme guidance .

[Text field – 500 words]

How will you maintain the benefits of your project and meet any related costs?

Tell us how you will manage the benefits of your project after the funding ends.

For example:

- how you will manage and monitor the project site(s) in the future, for example if you will keep employing staff or how you will support volunteer groups to help maintain a site you have restored.
- how you will deal with any costs related to maintaining and monitoring the site(s) once the project ends

For Development projects:

- Tell us who will be responsible for taking the project forward into delivery. What will be required to do this?

[Text field – 500 words]

About the need for your project

Why does your project need to happen?

Tell us why your project needs to happen, why it needs to happen now and what opportunities your project will address.

For example, tell us:

- how your project supports the delivery of the Welsh Government's wider Nature Networks Programme and contributes to the 30 by 30 Targets
- how this project builds on previous or current actions that have been taken to minimise risks to the heritage.
- how you have used the Nature Networks maps to inform your plans
- about any partnership funding that is available to you now, that won't be in the future
- what will happen if you do not get a grant from us
- why your project is important to your local community and why they want this project to happen
- if there are any barriers to people engaging with the heritage and how your project will help remove these

[Text field – 500 words]

Is there a specific community your project is dedicated to serving? Select any that apply.

We use the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Data Standard to help us understand who our funding is reaching. If you think 75% or more of the people who could potentially be supported or benefit from your project come from one or more of these specific communities, tell us who they are.

Please select from the list below to reflect who your project will support. Choose any and all that apply, or choose 'none of the above' if this does not apply to your project.

If you are working with vulnerable people as part of your project, you will need to have safe-guarding policies and practices in place. You should also ensure that wellbeing for project staff, participants and visitors is considered throughout your project.

You should make reasonable adjustments to the way you deliver your project or services so that everyone can participate.

- Communities experiencing ethnic or racial inequity, discrimination or inequality [Tick box]
- Faith communities [Tick box]
- People who have migrated and/or have experience of the immigration system [Tick box]
- d/Deaf, disabled, blind, partially sighted and/or neurodivergent people [Tick box]
- Older people (65 and over) [Tick box]
- Younger people (under 25) [Tick box]
- Women and girls [Tick box]
- LGBTQ+ people [Tick box]
- People who are educationally or economically disadvantaged [Tick box]
- Specific groups that are not included already [Tick box]
- None of the above [Tick box]

Who else have you approached about funding your project?

Tell us about any other funding:

- you have secured to help towards the cost of your project
- you are planning to apply for to support this project
- you will raise through fundraising or crowdsourcing

Tell us if you have raised any non-cash contributions to help you deliver your project.

While we can fund the total cost of a project, you should explain why you are not able to raise any other funding from either your own resources or other sources.

[Text field – 500 words]

Our investment principles

Our four investment principles will guide all our grant decision making under our 10-year strategy, Heritage 2033.

Our investment principles are:

- saving heritage
- protecting the environment
- inclusion, access and participation
- organisational sustainability

We have explained below how the criteria of the Nature Networks Fund fits with the investment principles. You may focus more on some investment principles than others.

Explain how your project will save heritage.

Explain how your project will improve the condition and connectivity of the protected sites network, even if this will be in the future.

For example describe what specific actions you will undertake to improve the condition through management of the habitats and species and what impact this will have over the course of the project on the designated feature.

If your project is not taking place directly on a protected site, please explain how your project will enhance connectivity and condition to add value to the network in the long term and support the building of resilience including that of the designated habitats and species.

You may find it useful to refer to the Nature Network Maps to evidence how the location of activities outside of protected sites will develop connectivity. The links to this can be found under Identifying sites for potential connectivity in the application guidance.

[Text field – 500 words]

Explain how your project will protect the environment.

Explain how the actions you will take will mitigate the impacts of climate change and/or enhance capacity to adapt to the climate crisis.

This may include:

- what ecosystem services you will work to conserve or restore.
- how your work will contribute to ecosystem resilience on a landscape scale.

[Text field – 500 words]

Explain how your project will increase inclusion, access and participation.

This fund supports the active involvement of communities in and around protected sites.

Your answer should explain how your staff, audience or volunteer profile will have changed through the project or if this is a project planning application how it would change in a future project. This may include:

- improvements to the accessibility of a site
- working with partners or other organisations to reach under-served audiences
- supporting new individuals into the sector through jobs, training and/or apprenticeships

[Text field – 500 words]

Explain how your project will improve your organisational sustainability.

The protection of sites is reliant on strong organisations, good governance and robust project planning. The Nature Networks Fund can support project development and capacity building for future nature recovery projects. This work may include (but is not restricted to):

- partnership development
- landowner/community consultation and engagement
- ecological surveying
- feasibility studies
- scheme design
- skills development for green finance
- other preparatory work for future capital projects

Your answer should explain how your organisation will develop and sustain skills and capacity to ensure a long-term future for protected sites in Wales.

[Text field – 500 words]

Delivering your project

How is your organisation best placed to deliver this project?

Tell us why specifically your organisation should run this project.

This may include:

- any experience your organisation has in running similar projects
- staff and/or Board members and Trustees' knowledge and skills
- your organisation's capacity to deliver the project at the same time as your usual work
- your connections with other relevant projects or organisations

[Text field – 500 words]

How will you manage running your project?

Tell us how your project will be managed day to day and about the people involved.

This should include telling us:

- who will make decisions, the experience of the people involved and their roles in the project
- about staff posts, apprentices, traineeships, or any other paid opportunities, that your project will create
- about any volunteering opportunities your project will create. Volunteers are people who give up their time for free to help deliver your project
- if you are moving an existing staff member into a post created by this project or are extending the hours of an existing staff member to work on the project, tell us how they are qualified for the role

Remember, you must openly advertise all new staff posts, unless you are moving an existing staff member into a post created by this project or are extending the hours of an existing staff member to work on the project.

[Text field – 500 words]

Will your project be delivered by a partnership?

Tell us who your partners are, the nature of your partnerships and how you will work together.

If you are working with any other organisations to carry out your project, we would like to see your partnership agreement. If you have one, you will be able to upload it here.

This document should outline all partner's roles and responsibilities and should be signed by all parties. This agreement should reflect the needs of your project and you may need to seek independent advice.

You do not need to provide a partnership agreement unless another organisation is delivering a significant part of your project.

- No, the project will not be delivered by a partnership [Tick box]
- Yes, the project will be delivered by a partnership [Tick box]

If yes: Tell us about your partners

[Text field – 500 words]

Upload partnership agreement.

[Choose file]

How will you evaluate your project?

You must evaluate your project and provide a written evaluation report once you finish your project.

You will need to create an evaluation plan at the start of your project. This will be an outline of how you are going to collect data to measure, analyse and understand what you are doing and ultimately to provide evidence about what your project has achieved.

Tell us who will carry out your evaluation. This could be staff within your organisation or an individual or organisation who you will need to employ. You should provide a brief for this work as a supporting document.

We expect to see costs for your evaluation included in your project costs.

[Text field – 500 words]

Will any of your project take place in Wales?

All Nature Networks projects must take place in Wales. Tick Yes.

- No, none of our project will take place in Wales [Tick box]
- Yes, all or some of our project will take place in Wales [Tick box]

You must include the Welsh language in all aspects of your work.

Please tell us how you will use the Welsh language in your project, and make sure that this information is included in your project budget and plan. Please include budget for translation costs under the 'Other' costs category in the project costs section.

[Text field – 500 words]

Tell us about any key challenges or potential risks to your project that you have identified.

We know that all projects face challenges and risks. Tell us about the challenges or risks you have identified, which could have an impact on your project.

Your risk register should provide more detailed information about these challenges or risks and how you will manage these.

We would expect to see contingency within your project costs to help manage these identified challenges or risks.

[Text field – 500 words]

Project costs

Tell us how much it will cost to deliver your project.

You should include all costs relating to your project. You **must** tell us which costs are capital and which are revenue. Please refer to the application guidance for detail on what we consider to be capital and revenue costs.

Please use the template below to outline your costs as revenue or capital, in addition to detailing these costs here.

Project costs template

You will need to add a new cost for each separate project cost.

For example, if you are recruiting three new staff members to manage your project, you will need to add three different new staff costs. Each cost will need to have its own description and amount.

VAT

- If you are claiming VAT on any of your project costs, make sure it cannot be reclaimed through other sources first. We cannot cover the costs of VAT that you can reclaim.
- If your VAT status changes during your project we will reduce our contribution to the costs where you have been able to claim back the VAT.
- Cost type [drop down list]

New staff

- Include costs for staff who will be working on your project. Make sure to also include any applicable on-costs.
- This could include new fixed-term contracts, secondments, apprenticeships and the costs of freelance staff to help deliver your project. Do not include the costs of paying trainees here.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to include costs for maternity leave and/or redundancy payments. We expect your organisation to keep to good human-resource practice and follow all relevant laws, including paying at least National Living Wage to all project staff members.

Professional fees

- Include costs for any services you will need to pay for during your project. For example, an ecologist or landscape architect.
- Fees should be in line with professional guidelines and based on quotes from the professional or professional body you are paying.

Recruitment

- This can include the cost of advertising and any travel expenses for interviews.
- We expect your organisation to keep to good human-resource practice and follow all relevant laws.

Purchase price of heritage items

- Do not use this cost heading. Acquisition of land is not eligible under the Nature Networks Fund.

Repair and conservation work

- This includes costs of work to repair, restore or conserve a heritage item or site.

Event costs

- Costs for any events, for example, refreshments or room hire.

Digital outputs

- Costs for creating any digital works and meeting our digital requirements.

Equipment and materials, including learning materials

- Costs for purchasing equipment and material, for example materials for creating leaflets and publications.

Training for staff

- Existing and new staff may need training to carry out your project.

Training for volunteers

- Existing and new volunteers may need training to carry out your project.

Travel for staff

- To help staff travel to sites.
- This could include costs for using public transport, or hiring a bicycle or car.
- We encourage sustainable transport where possible (such as using an electric vehicle over a diesel vehicle), but understand that this may not always be possible.
- Travel costs by car should be based on 45p a mile.

Travel for volunteers

- To help volunteers travel to sites. Offering to pay for travel can help remove barriers that may stop people from volunteering.
- This could include costs for using public transport, or hiring a bicycle or car.
- We encourage sustainable transport where possible (such as using an electric vehicle over a diesel vehicle), but understand that this may not always be possible. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to hire a minibus if a large number of volunteers are travelling to the same place.
- Travel costs by car should be based on 45p a mile.

Expenses for staff

- Include costs for staff expenses. You should cover any costs staff incurred as a result of delivering your project.
- For example, this could include costs for refreshments or accommodation.

Expenses for volunteers

- Include costs for volunteer expenses. Offering to pay for expenses can help remove barriers that may stop people from volunteering.
- For example, this could include costs for refreshments, care of dependents and support worker costs.

Do not use this cost type to pay for volunteer time. Remember volunteers are people who give their time for free, and you should not include costs to reimburse volunteers for any time they spend on your project.

Other

- Include costs that do not fit within any of the other cost headings. Please make sure you give a clear description of what these costs are.
- Make sure you include sufficient costs for translation into the Welsh language here.
- You may also wish to include costs for reasonable adjustments here.

Publicity and promotion

- Include costs for promotional materials that relate directly to your project.
- Make sure you also include sufficient costs for acknowledging the support of the Welsh Government.

Evaluation

- This cost heading is mandatory as all projects must be evaluated.
- Include costs for evaluating your project from the beginning. You may wish to employ an individual or organisation to support you with this.
- We recommend the costs are proportionate to the scale of your project.

Contingency

- This cost heading is mandatory. Contingency is used to pay for unexpected costs required to deliver your project.
- We would expect the amount of contingency included to help manage your identified challenges or risks. It should also reflect the scale of your project.
- Make sure that you only include your required contingency here and not within the other cost headings in your application.

New build work

- Include the costs of any new building work which might be taking place as a result of your project.

Community grants

- You can include costs for any payments to third party owners, including private owners, for activities and capital works that contribute to achieving your overall aims for your project.

Full cost recovery

- Full cost recovery is a cost type used to cover indirect costs of a project. Indirect costs include overheads, or costs which are not directly related to the project your organisation is delivering, but which are essential for the running of your organisation.
- If you are an organisation in the voluntary sector, we can cover a proportion of your organisation's overheads, which must be appropriate to the time or resources used for your project. By voluntary sector we mean organisations that are independent of government and whose governance, finance and resources have a voluntary focus. For example, a voluntary sector organisation might:
    - have a Board of Trustees
    - be funded by grants and donations
    - rely upon volunteers to carry out their aims
    - Include any costs for full cost recovery here.

Inflation

- Include any appropriate costs which will adequately cover predicted inflation. You should budget appropriately for inflation based on the project timescale, plus other factors such materials used, labour demands and location.

Description of cost [Text field – 50 words]

Amount [Number input, 1 or above]

VAT Amount [Number input, which can be 0]

Are you getting any cash contributions to support your project?

Cash contributions are other funds you expect to receive towards the cost of your project. This includes any cash contribution from your own organisation.

- No, we are not getting cash contributions [Tick box]
- Yes, we are getting cash contributions [Tick box]

If yes: Description of cash contribution [Text field]

Is this contribution secured? [options]

By secured we mean the cash in your bank account reserved specifically for this project, or the money has been formally offered.

- Yes, and we can provide evidence [Tick box]

If yes: Upload evidence. This could be a letter confirming the offer or a copy of bank statements showing the funds in your account.

Upload evidence [Choose files]

- Yes, but we do not have evidence yet [Tick box]
- No [Tick box]
- Not sure [Tick box]

Amount [Number input, 1 or above]

Are you getting any non-cash contributions to support your project?

Non-cash contributions are things that you need for your project that you do not have to pay for.

For example, the use of a room in a local business or materials being donated by a local company.

- No, we are not getting non-cash contributions [Tick box]
- Yes, we are getting non-cash contributions [Tick box]

If yes: Description of non-cash contribution [Text field]

Estimated value [Number input, 1 or above]

Provide an estimate of how much this would have cost if your project had to pay for it.

Supporting documents

You will need to provide relevant supporting documents as part of the application process. The complete list from the full application guidance is referenced below. Please download and complete the necessary templates.

Important: Our Nature Networks Fund programme uses our standard application form, and you will need to upload some of your supporting documents under the 'Evidence of support' section detailed below. You can upload up to six documents under this section. Please ensure you use clearly labelled file names.

Accounts

Upload your organisation's accounts.

You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts.

Accounts need to be:

- in the **legal name** of your organisation
- **dated**
- signed with a **handwritten signature**. This does not include digital signatures
- Include the **title** of the person who is signing them. This person must be a director, trustee, accountant, or other senior figure in your organisation.

If your organisation's accounts are older than 18 months, you must also provide three months of your most recent bank statements. This should be the three months before the date you submit your application.

If your organisation was set up less than 14 months ago and does not have a set of audited accounts, you must provide your last three bank statements or a letter from your bank confirming that your organisation has opened a bank account.

We do not need to see your accounts if you are a public organisation, for example a local authority or university.

Upload your accounts [Choose file]

Project plan and risk register

Upload your project plan and risk register.

All projects must submit a project plan and risk register. You must use the Nature Networks project plan template.

This template also includes tabs for you to tell us about your engagement plan and any outstanding permissions.

Upload your project plan and risk register [Choose files]

Job descriptions

Upload job descriptions for any new staff or apprentices.

If you plan to recruit new staff or apprentices to help you deliver your project, you need to provide a job description for each new post. If you are moving a current member of staff into a project role, or extending their hours to support the project, you still need to provide a job description.

Each job description should include the proposed salary and working hours.

Upload any job descriptions [Choose file]

Briefs

Upload briefs for any commissioned work.

Briefs describe any work you plan to commission during your project.

If you are commissioning work, for example from an artist or ecologist, then you should provide a brief. The brief should describe the works, how long they will take, and how much they will cost.

You can find a template brief on our website.

Upload any briefs for work [Choose file]

Full cost recovery

Upload calculations for full cost recovery

If you have included full cost recovery as a cost heading in your project costs, you must provide a document that shows how you have calculated this.

Costs should be proportionate to the time or resources used for your project. We can also cover a proportion of the cost of an existing member of staff, as long as they are not working exclusively on the funded project in a new post.

Upload your full cost recovery calculation [Choose file]

Images

Please provide:

- a map showing where the site is located on a regional scale
- at least one map showing the locations of capital works, with protected sites/features labelled. ShapeFile, Tab File or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons (mandatory for **capital projects only**)
- Other Images of the site are not required.

[Choose file]

Evidence of support

Please use this section to upload any additional Nature Networks Fund (round five) specific supporting documents. Mandatory documents (relevant to your grant request amount) that you should upload here include:

- a cost template (please use our project costs template and you must separate costs into Capital and Revenue)
- a document that outlines your **project management structure**, so we know who will make decisions and how you will control change during your project (**mandatory** for grant requests of over £250,000 only)

- a document that outlines the **main risks** facing the project after it has been completed and how they will be managed (**mandatory** for grant requests of over £250,000 only)
- evidence of support documents from other organisations or individuals who are committed to helping you deliver your project or are key to your project's success (optional)

We do not need to see general statements in support of your project.

Upload any evidence of support [Choose file]

Check your answers

You will be shown a summary of all your answers.

You will also have the option to go back and change an answer if needed.

Confirm declaration

You will be asked to read and agree with our declaration.

Now that you're happy with your application, you are ready to apply for funding.

We run qualitative user research to help us to develop our products and services. This could be from a 20-minute survey to a two-hour interview.

Tick this box if you would like to be involved in our research, or find out more. [Tick box]

We may contact you from time to time to keep you informed about the work of The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Tick this box if you wish to be kept informed of our work [Tick box]

I have read and agreed with the declaration. [Tick box]

Declaration

a) Data Protection

We are committed to being as open and transparent as possible. This includes being clear about how we assess and make decisions on our grants and how we will use your application form and other documents you give us. We follow all data protection laws and regulations that are applicable and in force from time to time (the 'Data Protection legislation'). As defined by the Data Protection legislation the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (who administer the National Lottery Heritage Fund) is a data controller. Our Privacy Policy contains additional information including contact information for our Data Protection Officer. It can be found on the National Lottery Heritage Fund website.

As part of the application process we will collect your name and position at the organisation you represent as well as any additional personal information you supply about you or others involved in your project. We may share this information with one of the consultants on our Register of Support Services if they are appointed to help support you on your project. We do not transfer your data to any third parties based outside of the EU.

We may use your application form and other documents you give us:

- To decide whether to give you a grant.

- To provide copies to other individuals or organisations who are helping us to assess, monitor and evaluate grants.
- To share information with organisations and individuals working with us with a legitimate interest in National Lottery applications and grants or specific funding programmes.
- To hold in a database and use for statistical purposes.
- If we offer you a grant, we will publish information about you relating to the activity we have funded, including the amount of the grant and the activity it was for. This information may appear in our press releases, in our print and online publications, and in the publications or websites of relevant Government departments and any partner organisations who have funded the activity with us.
- If we offer you a grant, you will support our work to demonstrate the value of heritage by contributing (when asked) to publicity activities during the period we provide funding for and participating in activities to share learning, for which we may put other grantees in contact with you.

b) Freedom of Information

As a public organisation we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 which give the public a right of access to the information that we hold, unless any exemptions apply. This includes any recorded information provided to us by our applicants and grantees.

When you complete the Declaration at the end of the application form, you are confirming that you have no objection to us releasing the application form and any other information you provide to us to anyone who asks to see them once your application has completed the assessment process. If there is any information that you don't want made publicly available, please explain your reasons below:

[Text box]

If we receive a request for information we will always consult you first and will take your comments into account and will apply the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. However, the decision to release or withhold your information is our decision and we will not be responsible for any loss or damage you suffer as a result of our meeting these responsibilities.

- I confirm that the organisation named on this application has given me the authority to complete this application on its behalf.
- I confirm that the activity in the application falls within the purposes and legal powers of the organisation.
- I confirm that the organisation has the power, if awarded a grant, to accept and pay back the grant.
- I confirm that, as far as I know, the information in this application is true and correct.

Application submission

Your application has been submitted!

What happens next?

1. We will send you an email soon with a project reference number.
2. We will check your application and the information provided, to make sure we have everything we need to assess your application. This will include checking you have provided all the appropriate supporting documents.
3. We may contact you to request more information or documents if needed.
4. We will check your application and once we have everything we need to assess your application, we will let you know our decision within eight weeks.

Application questions: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £250,000 to £1million

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
Questions from our National Lottery Heritage Grants £250,000 to £10m application.

Page last updated: 24 June 2025.

Before you can apply for a grant over £250,000, you must submit an Expression of Interest to tell us about your idea. If you are successful, we will invite you to apply. After you are invited to apply, you will have to submit an application by noon on 18 November 2025 .

You **must** use this guide to assist you in completing an online application form for a Nature Networks (Round 5) grant between £250,000 and £1m.

Explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in your grant application.

Important: The National Lottery Heritage Fund uses the same forms across a variety of programmes that we deliver. When completing your application form, you must follow the guidance below as some questions need to be answered differently for this programme. You **should not** use the help icons embedded in the online form as they do not relate to this funding.

About the project

Project title.

Give us a title or name we can refer to your project by.

This will be seen by our decision makers, and if your application is successful, will be used in any public posts made about your project and will be published on our website. Make sure you choose a title that you are happy for a wide range of people to see.

We encourage you to keep your title short and descriptive.

You **must** include the prefix #NNF5 in your project title. For example, **#NNF5 Dragonfly nature reserve improvements.**

Is this your organisation's first application to us?

[Select yes or no]

If no:

Please tell us the reference number of your most recent application. [Text field – 255 characters]

Please tell us the project title of your most recent application. [Text field – 255 characters]

Describe what your organisation would like to achieve through your project.

We will use your answer to tell people about your project including our decision makers, Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government.

Tell us what you hope to achieve and what you hope the legacy of your project will be in contributing to Resilient Ecological Networks in Wales.

We publish details of applications and grant awards on our website and in public databases. This is in line with our commitment to transparency and open data principles. We will use the information you have provided when answering this question to describe your project.

[Text field – 150 words]

Tell us what you will do during your project.

Summarise what your project aims to do and how it will improve the resilience of Wales' network of protected land or marine sites.

- Which protected site(s) or Priority Ecological Networks will your project have an impact on?
- What works will you undertake for habitats and/or species?
- Who will be involved and how (staff, volunteers, general public, target audiences)?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Where will your project take place?

- Project street [Text field – 255 characters]
- Project city [Text field – 255 characters]
- Project county [Text field – 255 characters]
- Project post code [Text field – 100 characters]

If your project will take place across different locations, please use the postcode where most of the project will take place.

Please provide a six-digit Ordnance Survey grid reference number for the mid-point of your project area (for example: SK510072). If you are working on multiple sites, separate each grid reference with a semicolon (for example: SK510072; SX163777; TQ317842).

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Explain what need and opportunity your project will address.

What are the needs of the site(s) you have identified and how will your project address these needs?

How does this project build on previous or current actions that have been taken to minimise risks to the heritage?

How you have used the Nature Networks maps to inform your plans?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Why does your project need to happen now?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Who else have you approached about funding your project?

There is no mandatory requirement for cash contributions to Nature Networks (round five) projects. However, any cash contributions you provide can add to the impact and value for money of your project, which will be considered in assessment. Tell us about any funding:

- you have secured to help towards the cost of your project
- you are planning to apply for to support this project
- you will raise through fundraising or crowdsourcing

Tell us if you have raised any non-cash contributions to help you deliver your project.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Tell us what advice you have received in planning your project and from whom.

If you have spoken to anyone from The National Lottery Heritage Fund about your project, tell us about the advice you received and how you have used that advice to develop your project.

Tell us if you have received any specialist advice about your project from anyone else. This could be experts in the heritage your project focuses on or other organisations who will support you to deliver your project.

This could include:

- any project proposal advice, such as from Natural Resources Wales or ecologists
- any consultation you have done with your local community and those who will be involved in your project, such as local landowners
- any pre-application advice on planning or consents, such as from your local authority or Natural Resources Wales
- advice about how to address wellbeing for your project participants, such as from a charity or local group who can provide support which is relevant to their lived experience

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Will your project be delivered by a partnership?

[Select yes or no]

If yes: Who are your partners?

Provide a named contact from each organisation.

Tell us who your partners are, the nature of your partnerships and how you will work together.

If you are working with any other organisations to carry out your project, we need to see your partnership agreement. This document should outline all partner's roles and responsibilities and should be signed by all parties. This agreement should reflect the needs of your project and you may need to seek independent advice.

You do not need to provide a partnership agreement unless any other organisations are delivering a significant part of your project.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Will any of your project take place in Wales?

All Nature Networks projects must take place in Wales. Tick Yes.

- If yes: Tell us how the Welsh language will be used in your project.

You must include the Welsh language in all aspects of your work.

Please tell us how you will use the Welsh language in your project, and make sure that this information is included in your project budget and plan. Please include budget for translation costs under the 'Other' costs category in the project costs section.

[Text field – 500 words]

About the heritage

Tell us about the heritage in your project and why it is important to your organisation and community.

For this programme, heritage refers to the site(s) or species the project will work on. Tell us:

- the site name(s)
- if there are any official recognition or formal designations, for example, a site may be a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- what habitats are included and their current condition
- how the site(s) or species relate to Wales' network of protected land and marine sites

Do not use this section to tell us about your project, or about what will happen during your project. We will ask you about this later in the application.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Is the heritage considered to be at risk?

[Select yes or no]

If yes: Explain why and how you consider the heritage to be at risk.

Explain why the heritage is under threat, and what actions have been taken (if any) to minimise the risk.

For example, it could be at risk of loss through physical damage or neglect, or financial shortfalls. Public access to the heritage may also be at risk of loss.

Tell us if the landscape, habitat or species is at risk and in what way (for example, identified in a Biodiversity Action Plan as a priority).

Tell us:

- how the heritage is currently managed and by who
- how people currently engage with the heritage

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Will you be undertaking any capital work as part of your project?

[Select yes or no]

If yes: Please provide details.

Details on what we consider to be capital works can be found in the application guidance.

- Tell us if any capital works will be part of your project, even if this is a small part of your overall project. Give us a breakdown of the work you intend to carry out.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

If you are undertaking any capital work (including repair or refurbishment) to land, buildings or heritage items, tell us who owns it.

- your organisation
- project partner
- neither
- N/A

Please provide details about your capital works owner.

If capital works are part of your project, you will need to tell us who owns the heritage. If you have them, we need to see any ownership documents. You can upload these later on in the application.

If your organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

- if your organisation has the freehold of the building or land, or own outright the heritage items
- if your organisation has the lease of the building or land and how many years are left to run on the lease
- If your organisation has, or is planning to take out, a mortgage or other loans secured on the building or land, or heritage item. If so, give us details of the lender and the amount of the mortgage or loan. If you have one, upload an ownership document.

If a partner organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

- the name of the partner organisation
- if the project partner has the freehold of the building or land, or own outright the heritage items
- if the project partner has the lease of the building or land and how many years are left to run on the lease
- if the project partner has, or is planning to take out, a mortgage or other loans secured on the building or land, or heritage item
- if so, give us details of the lender and the amount of the mortgage or loan

If you do not currently meet our ownership requirements, tell us the date when you expect to do so.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Are there legal conditions, restrictions or covenants associated with the heritage asset which may affect your project?

[Tick box]

Please provide details.

Tell us if the register of title or other ownership documents contain any restrictions or limitation on its use or ownership, or if it requires any consents for any dealings. If so, you will need to give us the full details and evidence that these are satisfied.

This could include:

- a Restrictive Covenant limiting the type of use for the land or property
- a restriction giving another party a right to be notified of any dealing or state conditions that would need to be resolved before the property is sold

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Does your project involve the acquisition of a building, land or heritage items?

Land acquisition is not an eligible cost for the Nature Networks Fund. Please tick no.

Managing your project

Has your organisation taken on a project of this scale in the last five years?

Please provide details.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Tell us why this is the most appropriate project for your organisation to take on at this time.

- What other options have been considered?
- What will be the impact on your organisation if the project does not go ahead?
- If you are involved in more than one application to the Nature Networks Fund (round 5) as a lead applicant or a partner, please supply the reference numbers of the other applications and tell us which project is most critical to your organisation at this time. How would you deliver more than one project if successful?
- If you are currently delivering projects under rounds 2, 3 or 4 of Nature Networks, explain the relationship (if any) between projects. How would you deliver more than one project if successful?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Does your organisation need to undertake any capacity building activity to better deliver your project?

For example, do you need to review your financial or human resources system, develop your business plan or build fundraising capacity? Do you need to bring in any extra skills or expertise?

Tell us whether you will be making changes to the governance of your organisation to enable you to deliver your project more effectively.

What work have you undertaken to strengthen the capacity of your organisation to deliver this project?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Tell us about any jobs or apprenticeships that you will create to deliver your project.

Tell us about any jobs and/or apprenticeships that will be created and will be directly involved in delivering your project. Tell us what their main roles will be and whether they are full-time or part-time positions.

If you are moving an existing member of staff into a post created by this project or extending the hours of an existing member of staff, tell us how they are qualified for the role created by the project. Tell us how you will manage the work they are currently doing, or if this is coming to an end.

You will need to provide a job description for each role created for your project as a supporting document to your application.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Who are the main people responsible for the work during the delivery phase of your project?

Provide detailed information about the team that will work on your project, including the person who will take overall responsibility.

Tell us if you will need extra support from consultants or new staff.

Explain who is responsible for making decisions and approving changes to your project. Describe the reporting structure and how often meetings will take place.

Describe how you will choose the services and goods needed during your delivery phase.

You will also need to send us:

- project management structure
- briefs for any consultants

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

What work will you do during the delivery phase of your project?

Provide a brief, high-level outline of works to be carried out in each year of project delivery. This should be supported by further detail in the project plan. We have provided a template project plan for Nature Networks.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

How do you plan to cash flow the delivery phase of your project?

Grant payments are made in arrears. You therefore need to ensure you are able to successfully cash flow the expenditure of your project in order to avoid experiencing financial difficulties.

You will need to provide a cash flow with your application.

Tell us about any financial reserves, income from your organisation or other sources of funding you will access to cash flow the delivery of your project.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Delivery start date.

Your start date should not be before 1 April 2026.

[Select date]

Delivery end date.

You must complete your project by 31 March 2029, including all financial reporting and evaluation.

[Select date]

Are there any fixed deadlines or key milestones that will restrict your project's timetable?

Please tell us about any immovable dates that will affect your project and are beyond your control.

For example:

- any statutory permissions or consents required to undertake your project and when you anticipate receiving these
- seasonal restrictions to any habitat works
- dates when partnership funding offers expire or secured funds must be spent by
- external events that are key to your project’s success

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Our investment principles

Our four investment principles will guide all our grant decision making under our 10-year strategy, Heritage 2033.

Our investment principles are:

- saving heritage
- protecting the environment
- inclusion, access and participation
- organisational sustainability

We have explained below how the criteria of the Nature Networks Fund fits with the investment principles. You may focus more on some investment principles than others.

Explain how your project will save heritage.

Explain how your project will improve the condition and connectivity of the protected sites network.

For example, describe what specific actions you will undertake to improve the management of the habitats and species and what impact this will have over the course of the project on the designated feature.

If your project is not taking place directly on a protected site, please explain how your project will bring value to the network in the long term and support the building of resilience including that of the designated habitats and species.

You may find it useful to refer to The Nature Network Maps to evidence how the location of activities outside of protected sites will develop connectivity. The links to this can be found under 'Identifying sites for potential connectivity', in the application guidance.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Explain how your project will protect the environment.

Explain how the actions you will take will mitigate the impacts of climate change and/or enhance capacity to adapt to the climate crisis.

This may include:

- what ecosystem services you will work to conserve or restore.
- how your work will contribute to ecosystem resilience on a landscape scale.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Explain how your project will increase inclusion, access and participation.

This fund supports the active involvement of communities in and around protected sites.

Your answer should explain how your staff, audience or volunteer profile will have changed through the project. This may include:

- improvements to the accessibility of a site
- working with partners or other organisations to reach under-served audiences
- supporting new individuals into the sector through jobs, training and/or apprenticeships

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Explain how your project will improve your organisational sustainability.

Your answer should explain how your organisation will develop and sustain skills and capacity to ensure a long-term future for protected sites in Wales.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

After the project ends

How will you maintain the benefits of your project and meet any related costs?

Tell us how you will manage the benefits of your project after the funding ends.

For example:

- how you will manage and monitor the project sites in the future, for example if you will keep employing staff or how you will support volunteer groups to help maintain a site you have restored
- how you will deal with any costs related to maintaining and monitoring the sites once the project ends

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

How will you evaluate the success of your project and share the learning?

You must evaluate your project and provide a written evaluation report once you finish your project.

You will need to create an evaluation plan at the start of your project. This will be an outline of how you are going to collect data to measure, analyse and understand what you are doing and ultimately to provide evidence about what your project has achieved.

Tell us who will carry out your evaluation. This could be staff within your organisation or an individual or organisation who you will need to employ. You should provide a brief for this work as a supporting document.

We expect to see costs for your evaluation included in your project costs.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Project costs and income

Tell us how about the costs and income for your project.

You should include all costs and income relating to your project. You **must** tell us which costs are capital and which are revenue. Please refer to the application guidance for detail on what we consider to be capital and revenue costs.

Please use the template below to outline your costs as revenue or capital, in addition to detailing these costs here.

Project costs template

There are different headings for each cost type you can choose from, and for each type of income you might receive to support your project.

Choose the income type which best suits each source of income you will be receiving.

Delivery phase costs:

Please refer to the application guidance for examples of eligible costs.

Capital costs:

Purchase price of heritage items

- Do not use this cost heading, acquisition of land is not eligible under the Nature Networks Fund.

Preliminary works

- This includes any preliminaries or pre-construction archaeology.

Repair and conservation work

- This includes costs of work to repair, restore or conserve a heritage site.

New building work

- This only relates to new building work (for example, an extension to a building or work to install an exhibition). If you are a commercial organisation, you cannot include costs here.

Other capital work

- Include any other costs for capital work here.

Digital outputs

- Costs for creating any digital works and meeting our digital requirements.

Equipment and materials (capital)

- This might include the purchase of machinery and equipment to undertake conservation works.

Other costs (capital)

- Please use ‘other’ for any costs that do not fit within the given cost headings. Give a clear description of these costs.

Professional fees (capital)

- This includes any person appointed for a fixed term to help with planning and delivering capital work in your project. This may include a project manager, ecologists or a quantity surveyor.

Activity costs:

New staff

- Include costs for staff who will be working on your project. Make sure to also include any applicable on-costs.
- This could include new fixed-term contracts, secondments, apprenticeships and the costs of freelance staff to help deliver your project. Do not include the costs of paying trainees here.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to include costs for maternity leave and/or redundancy payments. We expect your organisation to keep to good human-resource practice and follow all relevant laws, including paying at least the National Living Wage to all project staff members.

Training for staff

- This includes the cost of all trainers and resources needed to deliver activities to help staff gain new or increased skills.

Paid training placements

- This includes the cost of all placements and resources needed to deliver activities to help staff gain new or increased skills.

Training for volunteers

- This includes the cost of all trainers and resources needed to deliver activities to help volunteers gain new or increased skills.

Travel and expenses for staff

- This may include the cost of travelling to a site or venue. Travel costs by car should be based on 45p a mile.

Travel and expenses for volunteers

- This may include food, travel and any other expenses. Travel costs by car should be based on 45p a mile.
- This also includes the purchase and hire of all vehicles, equipment and materials relating to the activities that your volunteers deliver during your project.

Event costs

- This includes any costs associated with the running of events, including room hire, refreshments and equipment.

Equipment and materials (activity)

- Examples may include hard hats to give site access, art materials or leaflets and publications. Do not include materials relating to training or volunteers here.

Other costs (activity)

- Include any other costs such as food for events, learning activities or premises hire. Please give a clear description.
- Make sure you include sufficient costs for translation into the Welsh language here.

Professional fees (activity)

- This includes any person appointed for a fixed fee to help with planning and delivering the activities of your project. This may include consultants or artists and storytellers.

Other costs:

Recruitment

- This can include the cost of advertising and any travel expenses for interviews.
- We expect your organisation to keep to good human-resource practice and follow all relevant laws.

Publicity and promotion

- We can fund promotional materials that relate directly to your project.
- Make sure you also include sufficient costs for acknowledging the support of the Welsh Government.

Evaluation

- This cost heading is mandatory as all projects must be evaluated.
- Include costs for evaluating your project from the beginning. You may wish to employ an individual or organisation to support you with this.
- We recommend the costs are proportionate to the scale of your project.

Other

- Include any other costs here. Provide a clear description of each cost.

Full cost recovery

- Full cost recovery is a cost type used to cover indirect costs of a project. Indirect costs include overheads, or costs which are not directly related to the project your organisation is delivering, but which are essential for the running of your organisation.
- If you are an organisation in the voluntary sector, we can cover a proportion of your organisation's overheads, which must be appropriate to the time or resources used for your project. By voluntary sector we mean organisations that are independent of government and whose governance, finance and resources have a voluntary focus. For example, a voluntary sector organisation might:
    - have a Board of Trustees
    - be funded by grants and donations
    - rely upon volunteers to carry out their aims
- Include any costs for full cost recovery here.

Community grants

- You can include costs for any payments to third party owners, including private owners, for activities and capital works that contribute to achieving your overall aims for your project.

Contingency

- This cost heading is mandatory. Contingency is used to pay for unexpected costs required to deliver your project.
- We would expect the amount of contingency included to help manage your identified challenges or risks. It should also reflect the scale of your project.
- Make sure that you only include your required contingency here and not within the other cost headings in your application.

Inflation

- Include any appropriate costs which will adequately cover predicted inflation. You should budget appropriately for inflation based on the project timescale, plus other factors such materials used, labour demands and location.

Non-cash contributions

- This is anything you need for your project that you do not have to pay for (for example, room hire or equipment). We can only accept non-cash contributions if they are direct project costs that could have been part of your project budget.
- Non-cash contributions must be included in both the cost and income section of your application form. This is because we recognise the value of this contribution.

Volunteer time

- This is the time that volunteers give to support the delivery of your project. This could include administrative work, clearing a site or working as a steward at an event.
- You should not include costs for the time of people who will take part in your activities (for example, people who attend a workshop or go on a guided tour).
- We use a standard rate of £20 per hour to calculate volunteer time.
- Volunteer time must be included in both the cost and income section of your application form. This is because we recognise the value of this contribution.

Delivery phase income:

- local authority
- other public sector
- central government
- private donation – individual
- private donation – trusts/charities/foundations
- private donations – corporate
- commercial/business
- own reserves
- other fundraising
- loan/finance
- non-cash contributions
- volunteer time

Supporting documents required for during the delivery phase

Before we assess your application, we need to see your supporting documents.

Please note the supporting documents required for this programme are different to those stated on the application form.

Some supporting documents are mandatory – these are documents which every project must provide for their delivery phase application. Other supporting documents are only mandatory if they apply to your project: for example, if you are commissioning any work, we will need to see briefs for that work.

Choose a clear, descriptive file name for each supporting document so we can easily identify each one.

Supported file types: .jpg, .doc, .docx, .pdf, .xls, .xlsx, .ppt, .pptx, .zip, .kml

[Upload files]

List of supporting documents for the delivery phase

Accounts

Upload your organisation's accounts.

You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts.

Accounts need to be:

- in the **legal name** of your organisation
- **dated**
- signed with a **handwritten signature**. This does not include digital signatures
- Include the **title** of the person who is signing them. This person must be a director, trustee, accountant, or other senior figure in your organisation.

If your organisation's accounts are older than 18 months, you must also provide three months of your most recent bank statements. This should be the three months before the date you submit your application.

If your organisation was set up less than 14 months ago and does not have a set of audited accounts, you must provide your last three bank statements or a letter from your bank confirming that your organisation has opened a bank account.

We do not need to see your accounts if you are a public organisation, for example a local authority or university.

Project plan and risk register

All projects must submit a project plan and risk register. You must use the Nature Networks project plan template.

This template also includes information on your engagement plan and outstanding permissions.

Cash flow

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

Project management structure

Outline your project management structure so we know who will make decisions and how you will control change during your project.

Detailed cost breakdown

Mandatory spreadsheet detailing the cost breakdown in the Project costs section of the application, separating costs into capital and revenue.

Please use the Nature Networks Fund project costs template.

Risks for the delivery phase

You do not need to submit a separate risk register if you have used the risk register worksheet included in the Nature Networks project plan template.

Main risks document for after the project is completed

Outline the main risks facing the project after it has been completed and how they will be managed.

Calculations of full cost recovery

If you have included full cost recovery as a cost heading in your project costs, you must provide a document that shows how you have calculated this. Costs should be proportionate to the time or resources used for your project. We can also cover a proportion of the cost of an existing member of staff, as long as they are not working exclusively on the funded project in a new post.

Briefs for commissioned work

Briefs describe any work you plan to commission during the delivery phase of your project. If you are commissioning work, for example, from an artist or an ecologist, then you should upload a brief. The brief should describe the works, how long they will take, and how much they will cost. For fees over £10,000 you should get three competitive tenders or quotes. For fees over £50,000 we will expect you to provide proof of the competitive tendering process.

Job descriptions

If you plan to recruit new staff or apprentices to help you deliver your project, you need to provide a job description for each new post. Each job description should include the proposed salary and working hours.

Images

Provide :

- a map of the project site(s) with protected sites/ features labelled
- a map showing the location of the site(s) on a regional scale (ShapeFile, Tab File or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons)

Management and maintenance plan (if applicable)

You do not need to submit a management and maintenance plan for your Nature Networks Fund application.

Partnership agreements

If you plan to work with a partner to carry out your project, you will need to provide a partnership agreement. This document should outline both partner’s roles and responsibilities and should be signed by all parties. This document should reflect the needs of your project and you may need to seek independent advice on how to best write an agreement. A partner is another organisation or third-party body that is integral to the delivery of your project, for example the owner of an item, building, land or collection that is involved in your project. Partners are not subcontractors. They will take on an active role in the project and will be involved in the project. They will help to report on progress, attend regular partnership meetings and support project evaluation.

Ownership documents

If you are planning any capital works please provide copies of any relevant ownership documents. For example, Land Registry ownership documents or a lease or heads of terms.

Declaration

Confirm declaration

We run qualitative user research to help us to develop our products and services. This could be from a 20minute survey to a two-hour interview.

Tick this box if you would like to be involved in our research, or find out more. [Tick box]

I have read and agreed with the declaration. [Tick box]

a) Data Protection

We are committed to being as open and transparent as possible. This includes being clear about how we assess and make decisions on our grants and how we will use your application form and other documents you give us. We follow all data protection laws and regulations that are applicable and in force from time to time (the 'Data Protection legislation'). As defined by the Data Protection legislation the Trustees of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (who administer the National Lottery Heritage Fund) is a data controller. Our Privacy Policy contains additional information including contact information for our Data Protection Officer. It can be found on the National Lottery Heritage Fund website.

As part of the application process we will collect your name and position at the organisation you represent as well as any additional personal information you supply about you or others involved in your project. We may share this information with one of the consultants on our Register of Support Services if they are appointed to help support you on your project. We do not transfer your data to any third parties based outside of the EU.

We may use your application form and other documents you give us:

- To decide whether to give you a grant.
- To provide copies to other individuals or organisations who are helping us to assess, monitor and evaluate grants.
- To share information with organisations and individuals working with us with a legitimate interest in National Lottery applications and grants or specific funding programmes.
- To hold in a database and use for statistical purposes.
- If we offer you a grant, we will publish information about you relating to the activity we have funded, including the amount of the grant and the activity it was for. This information may appear in our press releases, in our print and online publications, and in the publications or websites of relevant Government departments and any partner organisations who have funded the activity with us.
- If we offer you a grant, you will support our work to demonstrate the value of heritage by contributing (when asked) to publicity activities during the period we provide funding for and participating in activities to share learning, for which we may put other grantees in contact with you.

b) Freedom of Information

As a public organisation we are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 which give the public a right of access to the information that we hold, unless any exemptions apply. This includes any recorded information provided to us by our applicants and grantees.

When you complete the Declaration at the end of the application form, you are confirming that you have no objection to us releasing the application form and any other information you provide to us to anyone who asks to see them once your application has completed the assessment process. If there is any information that you don't want made publicly available, please explain your reasons below:

[Text box]

If we receive a request for information we will always consult you first and will take your comments into account and will apply the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. However, the decision to release or withhold your information is our decision and we will not be responsible for any loss or damage you suffer as a result of our meeting these responsibilities.

We may contact you from time to time to keep you informed about the work of The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

[Tick box if you would like to be kept informed of our work]

- I confirm that the organisation named on this application has given me the authority to complete this application on its behalf.
- I confirm that the activity in the application falls within the purposes and legal powers of the organisation.
- I confirm that the organisation has the power, if awarded a grant, to accept and pay back the grant.
- I confirm that, as far as I know, the information in this application is true and correct.

Receiving your grant: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £50,000 to £250,000

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
This guidance sets out how you will receive your Nature Networks Fund (round five) grant. It also explains what we expect of you before, during and after receiving it.

Introduction

After you have been awarded a grant, it is important to understand the next steps you must take. The funding you will receive is public money from Welsh Government, and it is important that it is managed in an accountable way.

By reading and understanding the requirements outlined in this guidance, your completed application, the application guidance and the terms and conditions (including our definitions), you can make sure that your project will be compliant with our requirements.

If, after reading these documents, you have outstanding questions or concerns, please get in touch for further support. Your first point of contact with The National Lottery Heritage Fund is your Grant in Aid Manager.

Additional guidance is also available in the Good practice guidance section of the website.

Project timeline

1. give us more information about your project **before** you can agree to your grant
2. agree to your terms of grant within **three months** of the date you received the email inviting you to do so
3. deliver your project activity
4. submit your completion report and evaluation by 30 January 2029.
5. comply with agreed terms for the duration of your grant contract, **up to 10 years**

Give us more project information

Once we have told you that you have been awarded a grant, you will be able to sign into your account and give us more information about your project. This will include questions about:

- jobs and training opportunities which will be supported through your project
- any volunteers or visitors your project might have
- your project's environmental impact
- how you will acknowledge and promote your grant

These questions are not part of your application – your answers will not affect your grant award. We ask these questions to help gather data on the impact of our funding. We collect evidence from across our portfolio to help inform our practice and how we deliver our strategy.

To help you to answer these additional questions about your project, read the Give us more project information guidance and questions.

You will need to complete this task before you can agree to the terms of your grant and start your project.

Agreeing to the terms and conditions

Once we have told you that you have been awarded a grant, you will receive an email inviting you to sign into your online account to check and agree your project details, and to agree to and sign the terms and conditions of your grant.

To agree to the grant, you will need to:

- check the details we have about your project are correct
- send us any new evidence for your project, for example cash contributions, permissions or licenses
- tell us if there are any significant changes to your project since you submitted your application, for example changes to project partnerships or cash contributions
- Tell us details of two legal signatories for your organisation, so we can send them a link to download, read, sign and upload the terms and conditions. If you are a legal signatory for your organisation, you will be taken directly to the terms and conditions process at this stage without the need for an email.
- download, read and sign the terms and conditions

You will also need to send us, if applicable:

- proof of property ownership including, for example, up-to-date copies of the Land Registry title register (with plan), leases and evidence of any existing mortgages
- an updated project plan and risk register if there are substantial changes to your project since you applied for your grant
- a project cashflow forecast, showing when you expect to receive any cash contributions and grant payments

Before we can process your terms and conditions, you will need to, if applicable:

- have secured all cash contributions
- have secured all statutory permissions or licenses, and any necessary landowner permissions. If any of these are outstanding, then please complete our Outstanding Permissions Template and record when you expect to receive each permissions/ license.
- met our ownership requirements

You must submit this information within three months of receiving the email.

While we have a standard contract for most projects, we may vary our processes and terms depending on the specific circumstances of your project. If applicable, you will be told about any additional terms at this stage.

Once we have processed the information you have provided, we will confirm this to you in an email. You can then start work on your project. You should not start any work on your project until you have our written permission to do so. If you do start any work before receiving this permission, it is at your own risk.

How we will pay your grant

After you have agreed to the terms of grant, you will be asked to sign into your online account to provide your bank details.

Once you have provided your bank details and they have been verified by us, the first payment is processed and 50% of the grant is paid into the bank account for which you provided details.

After you have spent the first 50% of your project costs, you will be able to submit an online payment request for the next 30% of your grant. You must provide evidence to demonstrate how the first 50% of your project costs were spent.

We will pay the remaining 20% of your grant in arrears once you have spent all of your project costs. You must submit a final payment request and evidence to demonstrate how the previous payment of 30% of your grant and this final 20% were spent. You must also provide the completion report, evaluation and evidence of acknowledgement of your grant as agreed in your contract.

Once you have made your final payment request, we will not accept any further requests for payments from you. You should therefore agree your final accounts with your contractors and suppliers before you apply for the final grant payment.

We aim to release all grant payments within 10 working days of receiving a payment request and the required supporting documents.

If you spend less than your agreed costs and your project completes under budget, you will need to return to us any funds from your grant that have been paid to you and have not been spent. We will agree with you the amount to be returned as part of completing your project.

Completing your project

You will be given a grant expiry date based on the project timescale that you identified in your application. You must complete your project and send us your completion report and evaluation by the grant expiry date.

We may also request additional updates on your progress during the lifetime of your project. We will let you know the frequency that best supports you and reflects the risk of the project. The length of time which your grant contract terms apply **depends on the core activities** carried out in your project.

For **activity** based projects, for example with no digital outputs or capital works, the terms and conditions end on the project completion date.

For projects creating **digital** outputs, for example the creation of a website, the terms and conditions apply until five years after the project completion date. If the lead applicant is a private owner of heritage, the terms will apply for five years from the project completion date.

For **capital** based projects the terms apply until five years after the project completion date. If you are a private individual or for-profit commercial organisation the terms and conditions will apply for 10 years after the project completion date.

When we have received all the necessary documentation to record your project as complete, we will confirm this with you. This will be known as the project completion date.

By complete we mean:

- your project is finished, and you have achieved your approved purposes
- you have appropriately acknowledged your grant as set out in our how to acknowledge your Welsh Government grant guidance
- you have evaluated your project and submitted an evaluation and completion report
- you can supply high resolution digital photographs documenting your project
- if your project involved capital works, you have provided a practical completion certificate
- if applicable, you have listed the project's digital outputs and provided the web address (URL) of the website or websites where they can be accessed
- if applicable, you have filed your conservation plan with the relevant public library, archive and/or database, and shared the details of this with your Grant in Aid Manager

Working with us

We encourage you to keep in touch with us, so we can hear about the things you are achieving throughout your project.

While it is not always possible for us to visit or meet the organisations we fund, please invite us to key project events and openings and we will aim to send a representative where possible.

We understand that problems or significant issues can arise during a project. This could include any issues within your organisation, changes to project costs, serious delays or failure to achieve your approved purposes. You must get in touch with us as soon as possible, so that we can respond and support you as appropriate.

We expect you to respond promptly to any requests for information and to discuss any substantial changes to your project with us. We will keep you updated about any changes to Heritage Fund grant policy or practice that may impact your funding.

You cannot change the approved purposes of your project without our prior written agreement. If you would like us to consider any changes to your approved purposes you must send us written details of the reasons for the request and explain how it will affect:

- the quality of your project
- the cost of your project
- the time you need to complete your project
- the future viability of your project

We may then re-assess the project or take any other action we consider necessary. It may be determined that we give permission for the change only if you agree to additional terms and conditions as required.

Any changes that are agreed with us must be in writing and should also be reported in your project updates and/or completion report as applicable.

If you need to make minor budgetary changes and move funds between the cost headings you provided in your application in order to achieve your approved purposes, you can report on this in your project update. Please note that funds cannot be moved between the capital and revenue cost headings as outlined in your application. You must demonstrate how these changes helped you to deliver your project.

You must get in touch with us in advance if you want to propose any substantial changes to these cost headings and for any major spending of your contingency budget.

If the total project cost increases during the project, we will only consider increasing your grant in exceptional circumstances and if there is budget available from the Welsh Government. In this case you will have to provide further information which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If we agree to any changes to your Project, your local office will write to you via email confirming the changes offered. You will need to confirm you accept this by replying to the email within five working days.

Project updates

When agreeing to the terms and conditions of your grant, we will let you know how many project updates we expect you to provide during the delivery of your project.

Using these updates, we will monitor the progress of your project to confirm that it is delivering the project as detailed in your application and the approved purposes set out in your grant contract.

Your project updates should include:

- photographs showing the progress of your project (mandatory)
- a record of activities or events that you have arranged (mandatory)
- job descriptions/details of recruitment (mandatory if applicable)
- procurement reports (mandatory if applicable)
- progress in reaching key milestones, for example appointment of contractors or staff
- issues arising so that we can respond and support you as appropriate

You will need to sign into your online account and select the project you would like to provide an update for. You will then need to answer a series of questions to provide an update on how your project is progressing.

Once you have provided this information and uploaded any supporting evidence, you will be able to submit your project update.

You will also be able to submit a payment request if needed.

Providing evidence of expenditure

You must provide invoices for all expenditure over £500. All invoices submitted to us should be for eligible works towards the project we have agreed to fund. They should also be clear, readable and not damaged or tampered with.

The invoice should be addressed to the organisation submitting the payment request.

Invoices must have:

- an invoice number
- the date they were raised
- the date payment is expected and the payment terms
- how payment is made and to who
- company details, including name, address, email address, telephone number, company number, VAT registration number (if VAT registered)
- a description of the services provided
- the gross (without VAT), VAT amount if VAT registered and the net (total) amount due

You may provide a separate table detailing costs under £500, including this total as one line of expenditure in your payment request.

Salary costs should be evidenced by providing payslips or a letter signed by a member of your organisation with financial authority.

If your project involves an acquisition of heritage, you will need to provide us with an invoice for the full purchase price.

All grant funds spent on the project should be reported against the cost headings in your application.

We cannot cover the costs of VAT that you can reclaim. It is your responsibility to seek appropriate advice about reclaiming VAT.

If your VAT status changes during your project we will reduce our contribution to the costs where you have managed to claim back the VAT.

Community grants

As part of your project, you may have asked us to contribute towards a pot of money that you can use to fund other groups or organisations, who we call community grant recipients, to complete pieces of work that will contribute to the overall aims of your project. This is called a community grant.

Before you launch your community grant scheme, you will need to send us details about your application, decision making and progress monitoring processes. This should be sent to your Grant in Manager who will review and approve it.

When making a payment request to us, you must include a list of community grant recipients as evidence of expenditure. The list must include how much each grantee was awarded, the date of the decision to award the grant and must be signed by two people from your community grant decision panel.

You are responsible for monitoring the progress of community grants and ensuring compliance with the terms you have agreed to during your project application. You will need to decide how you will keep in touch with each community grant recipient and what information you want to see from them. This can be proportionate depending on the size of the grant and what it was awarded for.

You should tell us how the community grant scheme is progressing in your project updates to us and evaluate the overall effectiveness of community grants within your project in your completion report.

Managing your data

The Heritage Fund and Welsh Government will be joint data controllers for any personal data you provide in relation to your grant application or request for grant funding. We will process it in line with our public task and the official authority vested in us to prevent fraud and money laundering, and to verify identities.

Your personal and grant related data will be shared with another data controller, Welsh Government, and any contractor appointed by Welsh Government to undertake external evaluation of Nature Networks to review the impact, performance and costs of the scheme. You will be informed when an external evaluation is taking place and will have the opportunity to opt out.

Guidance updates

We will regularly 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.

Receiving your grant: Nature Networks Fund (round five) £250,000 to £1million

24/06/2025
24/06/2025
See all updates
This guidance sets out how you will receive your Nature Networks Fund (round five) grant. It also explains what we expect of you before, during and after receiving it.

Introduction

After you have been awarded your Grant, it is important to understand the next steps you must take. The funding you will receive is public money from the Welsh Government, and it must be managed in an accountable way.

You will need to read and understand the requirements outlined in:

- this Receiving a Grant guidance
- your completed Application
- the Nature Networks (round five) application guidance
- relevant Other Guidance in the Good practice section of our website
- the Grant Contract (including our definitions)

Your Grant Contract is made up of:

- your Grant Notification Letter
- our Standard Terms of Grant
- any Additional Grant Conditions
- your signed Permission to Start document

This will help you make sure that your Project will be compliant with our requirements.

If, after reading these documents, you have outstanding questions or concerns, please contact natur@heritagefund.org.uk for support. Your first point of contact with The National Lottery Heritage Fund is your Grant in Aid Manager.

Please note, the capitalised words in this guidance reflect the definitions in the Standard Terms of Grant.

Project timeline

1. attend start-up meeting
2. submit your Permission to Start documents within three months of award
3. complete the Give us more information about your project task
4. deliver your Project as agreed
5. submit Completion Report and Evaluation by 31 March 2029.
6. comply with your Grant Contract for the term as set out in your Grant Notification letter

After your Grant has been awarded

We will contact you to arrange a start-up meeting. The purpose of a start-up meeting is to:

- clarify Work
- agree project management, procurement and programme
- set out the reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements of your Project
- discuss any legal points, such as ownership, licenses for work or subsidy control
- make sure funding is in place for the project
- discuss organisational resilience

We will agree a reporting structure of when you should submit Project updates

Permission to start

You should not start any work on your Project until you have our written permission to do so.

You will receive an email asking you to sign into your online account and provide information we need to allow you to start your Project.

We normally expect you to submit the documents requested at this stage within three months of the date of your Grant Notification Letter. If there are substantial delays and the documents have not been received within six months, we may decide to withdraw the offer of your Grant.

Before we can grant you Permission to Start your Project and release your Grant funds, you will need to provide the following information as required:

- proof of freehold or leasehold ownership (for all capital projects, if any changes have taken place since your Application)
- details of landowner permissions, statutory permissions and/or licenses required and obtained. If any of these are outstanding, then please complete our Outstanding Permissions Template and record when you expect to receive each statutory permission/ license.
- confirmation of partnership funding as outlined in your Application
- a cost breakdown and cashflow report outlining the project
- an outline of your organisation’s project management structure and methods for choosing consultants, contractors and suppliers
- a timetable outlining the project
- a proposal for how you will manage procurement
- any other details that we feel may be relevant to your Project
- any subsidy control advice you have received

You must tell us if there are any changes to your Project since you submitted your Application, for example changes to project partners or cash contributions, providing updated evidence as applicable.

You will then be required to provide details of two legal signatories for your organisation. They will need to read and agree to the Standard Terms of Grant and any Additional Conditions set out in your Grant Notification Letter.

Once we have processed and approved the information you have provided at this stage, we will send an email confirming that you have permission to begin work on your Project. If you do start any work before receiving this permission, it is at your own risk and we will not cover any costs incurred.

Give us more project information

Once you have submitted your permission to start form and we have reviewed it, you will be able to sign into your account and give us more information about your project. This will include questions about:

- jobs and training opportunities which will be supported through your project
- any volunteers or visitors your project might have
- your project's environmental impact
- how you will acknowledge and promote your grant

These questions are not part of your application – your answers will not affect your grant award. We ask these questions to help gather data on the impact of our funding. We collect evidence from across our portfolio to help inform our practice and how we deliver our strategy.

To help you to answer these additional questions about your project, read the Give us more project information guidance and questions.

You need to complete this task before we can release any payments to you. If you do not provide this information to us as soon as possible after we have given you permission to start, your payments may be delayed.

How we will pay your Grant

You will be asked to provide your bank details within your online account, and these details will then be verified by our finance team.

Grants of over £250,000 are paid in arrears.

We will hold the last 10% of your Grant until we are satisfied that the Project is complete, that the Grant has been spent appropriately, and you have sent us your Evaluation Report and proof of your acknowledgement of the funding.

To claim the last 10% of your Grant you must submit a Completion Report no later than your Grant Expiry Date, which will be 31 March 2029.

We will pay your Grant as a percentage of your Project costs. We describe this as the payment percentage and is explained in your Grant Notification Letter. For example, if you provide evidence of expenditure totaling £50,000 and your Grant percentage is 85%, your payment will be £42,500.

We aim to release your Grant payment within 10 working days of receiving a payment request and the required supporting documents.

Completing your Project

You must submit a Completion Report and Evaluation by the Grant Expiry Date.

When we have received all the necessary documentation to record each phase of your Project as complete, we will confirm this with you. This will be known as the formal Project Completion Date.

By complete we mean:

- your Project is finished, and you have achieved your Approved Purposes
- you have appropriately acknowledged your Grant
- you have appropriately evaluated your Project and submitted a Completion Report
- you can supply high resolution digital photographs documenting your Project
- if your Project involved capital works, you have provided a Practical Completion Certificate
- if applicable, you have listed the project's Digital Outputs and provided the web address (URL) of the website or websites where they can be accessed
- if applicable, you have filed your conservation plan with the relevant public library, archive and/or database, and shared the details of this with your Grant-in-Aid Manager

It is important to understand that your Grant Contract comes into effect once you have signed and we have processed your Permission to Start. The Grant Contract remains in place after the Project Completion Date and the length of time for which it applies depends on the core activities carried out in your Project. This will be set out in your Grant Notification Letter.

For **activity** based projects, for example an exhibition or an event with no digital outputs or capital works, the Grant Contract will end on the Project Completion Date.

For projects creating **Digital** Outputs, for example the creation of a website, the Grant Contract will apply from Permission to Start until 10 years after the Project Completion Date for Grants from £250,000 to £5million or 20 years for Grants from £5million to £10million.

For **capital** based projects, for example new building or restoration works, the Grant Contract will apply from Permission to Start until 20 years after the Project Completion Date.

Once you have made your final payment request we will not accept any further requests for payments for that phase from you. You should therefore agree your final accounts with your contractors and suppliers before you apply for the final Grant payment.

If you spend less than your agreed costs and your Project completes under budget, you will need to return to us any funds from your Grant that have not been spent. We will agree with you the amount to be returned as part of completing your Project.

We will continue to keep in contact with you at intervals after the Project is completed, including through our customer surveys.

Working with us

We encourage you to keep in touch with us, so we can hear about the things you are achieving throughout your Project.

While it is not always possible for us to visit or meet the organisations we fund, please invite us to key project events and openings and we will aim to send a representative where possible.

We understand that problems or significant issues can arise during a Project. This could include:

- any issues within your organisation
- changes to project costs
- serious delays
- failure to achieve your Approved Purposes or deliver against our investment principles
- failure to maintain the Approved Usage

You must get in touch with us as soon as possible, so that we can respond and support you as appropriate.

You must respond promptly to any requests for information and to discuss any substantial changes to your Project with us. We will keep you updated about any changes that may impact your funding.

You cannot change the Approved Purposes or Approved Usage of your project without our prior written agreement. If you would like us to consider any changes to your Approved Purposes or Approved Usage you must send us written details of the reasons for the request and explain how it will affect:

- the quality of your Project
- the cost of your Project
- the time you need to complete your Project
- the future viability of your Project
- future public access to the Property funded by the Grant
- future management and maintenance of the Property funded by the Grant

We may then re-assess the Project or take any other action we consider necessary. It may be determined that we give permission for the change only if you agree to additional terms and conditions as required. This may include requiring you to sign a deed of variation or a deed of transfer of the Grant Contract where there is a change of ownership.

Any changes that are agreed with us must be in writing and should also be reported in your Project updates and/or Completion Report as applicable.

You must get in touch with us in advance if you want to propose any substantial budgetary changes and for any major spending of your contingency budget. Please note that you cannot move funds between the capital and revenue cost headings as outlined in your application.

If the total project cost increases during the Project, we will only consider increasing your Grant in exceptional circumstances and if there is budget available from the Welsh Government. In this case you will have to provide further information which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If we agree to any changes to your Project, your local office will write to you via email confirming the changes offered. You will need to confirm you accept this by replying to the email within five working days.

Project updates

At your start up meeting, we will agree with you how many Project updates we expect you to provide during the delivery of your Project. We will let you know the frequency that best supports you and reflects the risk of the Project.

Using these updates, we will monitor the progress of your Project to confirm that it is delivering the project plan as detailed in your Application and the Approved Purposes set out in your Permission to Start documents.

Your project updates should include:

- photographs showing the progress of your Project (mandatory)
- a record of activities or events that you have arranged (mandatory)
- job descriptions/details of recruitment (mandatory if applicable)
- procurement reports (mandatory if applicable)
- progress in reaching key milestones, for example appointment of contractors or staff
- any issues arising so that we can respond and support you as appropriate

Further details about preparing these documents can be found in the Supporting documents section of the application guidance.

How to submit a Project update

To provide a Project update, sign into our online service and open the Project you would like to provide an update for.

At this stage, you will be able to submit a payment request or provide a Project update. When selecting 'Give a project update', you will be invited to answer questions to provide an update on how your Project is progressing.

Once you have provided this information and uploaded evidence as required, you will be able to submit your Project update.

Providing evidence of expenditure

You must provide invoices for all Grant spend over £500. All invoices submitted to us should be clear, legible, and be for eligible works towards the Project we have agreed to fund. They should not be damaged or tampered with.

The invoice should be addressed to the organisation submitting the payment request.

Invoices must have:

- an invoice number
- the date they were raised
- the date payment is expected and the payment terms
- how payment is made and to who
- company details, including name, address, email address, telephone number, company number, VAT registration number (if VAT registered)
- a description of the services provided
- the gross (without VAT), VAT amount if VAT registered and the net (total) amount due

You may provide a separate table detailing costs under £500, including this total as one line of expenditure in your payment request.

Salary costs should be evidenced by providing payslips or a letter signed by a member of your organisation with financial authority.

We cannot cover the costs of VAT that you can reclaim. It is your responsibility to seek appropriate advice about reclaiming VAT.

If your VAT status changes during your project, we will reduce our contribution to the costs where you have managed to claim back the VAT.

Procurement

In all projects, whenever you use your Grant to purchase goods, works or services, we will ask you to give us details of the procurement (which is the buying, tendering and selection process). If you have already purchased goods, works or services for your Project, you will need to tell us how you did it. We cannot pay your Grant if you have not followed the following procedure.

If you are a public body or your Project is subject to Public Procurement legislation then you must follow the relevant legislation.

Procedures to recruit consultants and contracts must be fair and open and comply with relevant equality and employment legislation. Fees for any consultants or other professionals that you recruit during the Project should be in line with professional guidelines and be based on a clear written specification. If any of the contractors, suppliers or consultants you wish to appoint are linked, for example close friends or relatives, or if there is any financial link such as ownership of these suppliers you will need to obtain our written permission from us first.

If you are unsure about your obligations, we advise you to take professional or legal advice. You can also see our procurement good practice guidance.

Under £10,000

If you are buying goods, works or services for £10,000 or under you do not need to openly tender for these or get multiple quotes. We will expect you to show overall value for money.

Between £10,000 and £50,000

You should get at least three competitive tenders or quotes for all goods, works and services worth £10,000 or more (excluding VAT) that we have agreed to fund.

You do not necessarily need to appoint the contractor, supplier or consultant who provides the lowest quote. When deciding who to appoint for your project, you should look at the overall value for money the tender or quote presents and the skills, experience and financial viability of the contractor, supplier or consultant.

Above £50,000

For all goods, works and services worth more than £50,000 (excluding VAT), you must provide proof of competitive tendering procedures. Your proof should be a report on the tenders you have received, together with your decision on which to accept.

You do not necessarily need to appoint the contractor, supplier or consultant who provides the lowest quote. When deciding who to appoint for your project, you should look at the overall value for money the quote presents and the skills, experience and financial viability of the contractor, supplier or consultant.

In some circumstances, you do not need to undertake a competitive tendering procedure and you can invite only one organisation to tender. This is where:

- the total price of the contract is less than £10,000

- a framework agreement is in place for the supply of goods, works or services which has been previously competitively tendered, and the goods or services are directly relevant to the scope of the project works to be undertaken, there is a project contract in place, which has previously been competitively tendered, and it is logical to extend to cover additional project work. In this case you must confirm that:
    - in the case of capital works the prices of most elements of work, including preliminaries, overheads and profits can be directly applied from the existing contract to the new work
    - the new work is smaller in scale, and is of a similar type to the main contract work
    - the contractor will not claim disruption or prolongation cost to the main contract if the new work is introduced
    - the existing contract restricts work being undertaken by others
- the goods, works or services required are unique as set out in a non-branded requirement specification and it is not possible to obtain them from other sources by competitive tender
- you can demonstrate that you have tried to tender the goods, works or services openly and competitively but had not received sufficient interest. The only tender received was submitted by a service provider who believed they were doing so in competition with others
- emergency work where it can be shown that time taken to obtain tenders would put the project at risk and add considerably to eventual costs
- the company providing the single tender is not connected, either through ownership or through family connections, with senior representatives of the grantee

We will also require you to consider social values in your procurement, including:

- diverse supply chains
- improved employability and skills
- inclusion, mental health and well-being
- environmental sustainability
- safe supply chains

You should make sure any contractor/supplier/consultant or partner who may contribute to the creation of Digital Outputs is aware of our requirement for projects to share these under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence or equivalent, and make sure you have agreement for the resulting work to be shared in this way. Where this is not possible, you must seek written agreement to make alternative arrangements with us, for example to use an alternative open licence, prior to issuing any contract of work.

Community grants

As part of your Project, you may have asked us to contribute towards a pot of money that you can use to fund other groups or organisations, who we call community grant recipients, to complete pieces of work that will contribute to the overall aims of your project. This is called a community grant.

Before you launch your community grant scheme, you will need to send us details about your application, decision making and progress monitoring processes. This should be sent to your Grant in Aid Manager who will review and approve it.

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FAQs: Nature Networks (round five)

See all updates
Answers to questions raised by attendees during a pre-application webinar for Nature Networks Fund (round five), held on Tuesday 1 July 2025.

Attendees at the webinar raised a series of questions, which we have answered below.

The answers to several questions raised can also be found by reading the guidance.

FAQs

Can large projects use year 1 as a development year to work out the best places and methods of capital works for years 2 and 3?

Broadly yes – however this will be a competitive round for all projects. We are looking for projects that are in the best possible shape to start capital works, with a clear understanding of the risks to delivery.

We would therefore expect that if you haven't yet identified specific sites or delivery methods, you tell us why and provide as much information as possible about proposed general areas ie: why they have been selected and provide rationale and assurance regarding the time frame for delivery. You may find it more appropriate to apply for a project development grant up to £250,000 to get these plans in place.

Is there guidance for how much revenue a project could include?

We do not specify a capital/revenue split, as we are looking for a balance of costs across the whole portfolio. Your project revenue costs should be proportionate to your project needs.

Can staff time be included as capital cost if the time is strictly for capital related works?

Yes, if staff are directly delivering capital works ‘on the ground’. Please indicate these costs in detail in the cost template provided.

Are continuation projects acceptable?

A continuation project is acceptable providing you can demonstrate the clear need and build on learning from the earlier project. You should give consideration to long-term sustainability.

For a development project with no capital works, concerning a piece of land that we don't currently own, would the current landowner have to sign up to the terms of grant too?

No, the landowner would not need to sign up to our terms of grant if no capital works are being undertaken. You would need to get a landowner agreement for activities such as surveying and feasibility studies.

Is there a specific geographical area or habitat you are keen to focus on in this round?

We are looking for a range of projects both in terms of geography and habitat. If we receive more good quality applications than we can fund, we will use the balancing principles in making the final decisions. This includes use of the Priority Ecological Network maps as a means of prioritisation.

Will there be an impact or evaluation report for the overall Nature Networks programme?

The Welsh Government is commissioning a programme level evaluation which should get underway this year. We do not have further details on this at present.