# Nature Networks Fund (round six)

See all updates

Awarding grants from £250,000 to £1million, this fund aims to strengthen the resilience of Wales' network of protected land, freshwater and marine sites and build organisations' capacity to accelerate nature's recovery and engage communities.

## Is this the right programme for you?

- Are you an 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 £250,000 and £1million?
- If you answered **yes** to these questions, then the **Nature Networks Fund** is for you.

## Overview

We're delivering the Nature Networks Fund 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, freshwater 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, freshwater 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 sites enables 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

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.

Eligible organisations can submit a maximum of one application as the lead applicant to the Nature Networks Fund. You may be involved in additional projects as a partner.

### Things you need to know

- **You must first submit an Expression of Interest** to tell us about your idea. 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 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 six) on **Thursday 16 July, 2–3.30pm**.

Register for the webinar.

## 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.

### 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 10% 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 and so on.

Projects can operate on land/freshwater/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 Invasive Non-Native Species (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.

### 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.

### Citizen Science

Citizen science activities should clearly identify any licences, permissions or consents required, including site access and protected species considerations where applicable. Projects should ensure volunteers are appropriately trained and operate within legal and safety requirements. Applicants must demonstrate how data collection aligns with recognised good practice. Projects should review the guidance on Natural Resources Wales' Citizen Space. Any projects requesting support from Natural Resources Wales in regards to data quality, storage and alignment with evidence needs, ensuring outputs are robust and suitable for informing environmental management should complete a citizen science collaboration request.

## Application deadline and key dates

- Expressions of Interest deadline: **12noon** on **5 August 2026**
- Application deadline: **12noon** on **3 November 2026**
- Decisions will be made: **February 2027**
- Your project completion date: **31 March 2030**

## Who can apply?

The scheme is open to all  organisations working with natural heritage in Wales. You must demonstrate that you are aware of and have, or will 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.

### 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.

## What costs can you apply for?

For round six of the Nature Networks Fund, we are looking to fund projects with a focus on capital delivery.

Projects should include a majority of capital funding and should focus on capital works. You can include revenue costs to support delivery of these works.

Projects which put a greater emphasis on revenue activity must clearly justify the need for this approach to meet the outcomes of the fund.

It is important that you identify in your application which of your project costs are capital and which are revenue.

### 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 ecological surveying
- 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, 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)
- inflation funding to allow for staff cost increases in future years of project delivery

### Ineligible costs

You may not include costs for:

- ongoing maintenance or running costs beyond the duration of the project
- acquisition of land or buildings
- construction of new, large scale buildings (eg: visitor centres)
- 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 an Expression of Interest so we can provide you with early feedback on your project proposal. You may then be invited to submit a full application.

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 5 August 2026.**

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.

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 5 November 2026.**

Go to our online service to apply.

## Supporting documents

You will need to provide relevant supporting documents, listed below, as part of the application process. Please visit our Application questions: Nature Networks Fund (round six) 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:** Some of the supporting documents required for this programme are different to those stated in the online application form.

All projects must provide the following **mandatory** documents:

- a governing document (unless exempt)
- Audited or verified accounts. You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts for the last three years and your management accounts for the current year. If your organisation's 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 and risk register (please use our template available here, completing all tabs)
- a cost template (please use our project costs template available here and you **must** separate costs into Capital and Revenue)
- land ownership documents, such as Land Registry or lease or Heads of Terms
- a map showing the location of the site(s) on a regional scale
- at least one map showing the locations of project works, with protected sites/features labelled.
- 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 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 (**mandatory** if you are commissioning work as part of your project)
- calculation of Full Cost Recovery (if applicable)
- evidence of support, such as letters, emails or videos of support (optional)

## How we assess you 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
- 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

## 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 by the end of February 2027.

**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 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. If your application is unsuccessful, we will tell you why.

## 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 10 years following the Project Completion Date.

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.

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

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

09/07/2026

See all updates

We ask all applicants requesting a Nature Networks Fund (round six) 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 5 August 2026.

**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 six).
- 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.

By doing so, you will become our main contact for your organisation. It is important to make sure you have the authority to complete the EOI and submit any future application on behalf of your organisation, if invited to apply.

The deadline to submit your EOI **is 12noon on 5 August 2026**.

## 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 six).

## 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.

You have 50 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 .

You have 200 words.

## Do you have a title for the project?

Give us a title or name we can refer to your project by. You can change this at any time.

If your application is successful, it 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.

You **must** include the prefix #NNF6 in your project title.

For example, #NNF6 Dragonfly nature reserve improvements, being clear and succinct on project activity and location if possible.

## 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, or 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/or details of the people/organisations who manage them) and why it is important (for both biodiversity/wildlife and people).

Tell us:

- Where will the work take place? Provide a postcode or grid reference if possible.
- 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 Fund?
- 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 2030** 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. Please provide the estimated costs you will apply for. These costs must be separated into capital and revenue.

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 3 November 2026.**

# Templates: Nature Networks Fund (round six)

09/07/2026

See all updates

Use these templates to help prepare your application to the Nature Networks Fund (round six).

| Attachment | Size |
| --- | --- |
| FILE<br>View Nature Networks Fund project costs template as FILE(6.65 KB) | 6.65 KB |
| XLSX<br>View Nature Networks Fund project plan template as XLSX(33.01 KB) | 33.01 KB |

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

09/07/2026

See all updates

Questions from our National Lottery Heritage Grants £250,000 to £10m application.

Page last updated: 9 July 2026.

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 12noon on 3 November 2026.

Use this page to:

- see what questions appear in the application form for a Nature Networks Fund (round six) grant between £250,000 and £1million.
- get guidance on how best to answer the application questions

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.

**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.

**Important:** You **must** include the prefix #NNF6 in your project title. For example, **#NNF6 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, freshwater and 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 have you 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 Fund (round six) 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 Fund 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, freshwater 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
- 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. 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
- 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
- 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 six) 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 and previous rounds of the Nature Networks Fund, explain the relationship (if any) between projects. How would you deliver more than one project if successful?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

### 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]

### 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 2027.

[Select date]

### Delivery end date.

You must complete your project by 31 March 2030, 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 Networks Maps to evidence how the location of activities outside of protected sites will develop connectivity. The links to this can be found under ’Identifying potential sites for 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:

- how your project will mitigate and adapt to threats such as climate change, invasive non-native species, or pollution
- 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. For each cost line, start the description with CAP: or REV: as applicable. For example: CAP Contractor to complete new fencing.

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 land 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 for the last three years and your management accounts for the current year.

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 Fund 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

**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.
- I consent to my personal data being used as described and understand that should the requirement change from that described I will be informed at the earliest convenience.

# Receiving a grant: Nature Networks Fund (round six)

09/07/2026

See all updates

This guidance sets out how you will receive your Nature Networks Fund grant. It also explains what we expect of you before, during and after receiving it.

## Introduction

When you receive a grant from us, it is important that you understand the steps you will need to take throughout your project. Our funding is public money from the Welsh Government, so you must read and understand all our guidance to make sure you are compliant with our requirements. This includes:

- this receiving your grant guidance

- your full application
- the Nature Networks Fund (round six) application guidance
- the grant contract

The grant contract is made up of:

- the grant notification letter
- the standard terms of grant
- any additional grant conditions
- your signed permission to start form

The standard terms of grant include defined terms which may appear capitalised or not and which will apply and have the same meaning wherever they are included in this guidance. If you do not comply with our requirements, you may be in breach of the grant contract, which could have an impact on your grant and your grant payments.

Additional guidance is available in the Funding and Good practice guidance sections of the website. You can also explore our position and advice on using artificial intelligence (AI) tools during project delivery.

If you have any questions or concerns after you have read this guidance, please contact natur@heritagefund.org.uk for support.

If you have already been awarded a grant, you should contact your Grant-in-Aid Manager, who is there to support you throughout your project. They will work with you in a way which is proportionate and appropriate to your grant, and you should keep in regular contact with them.

## Project timeline

There are several key stages you will go through as you deliver your project. As you work with us, you will:

- attend your start up meeting
- submit your permission to start form within six months of receiving your grant notification letter

- complete the give us more project information task
- deliver your project activity, including the approved purposes, and give us regular project updates
- request your grant payments and give evidence about how you have spent the money
- submit your final project update and completion report, and request your final payment, by 31 March 2030

## Providing evidence of your project

Throughout your project delivery, we will expect you to collect evidence to show:

- how you are achieving the approved purposes
- how you are complying with the grant contract
- how you are spending the grant
- the impact of our funding

You should make sure to follow good practice and keep records throughout your project to help you answer any questions we may ask.

Find out more about providing evidence of how you are spending your grant.

### Complying with our requirements

When updating us on your project, we will ask you questions to help us understand how you are complying with the grant contract and our requirements. You may also need to send us evidence of this.

For example, we will ask you about:

- any staff you have recruited to help you deliver your project
- any goods, works or services you have procured

Evidence of this could include:

- a report on the recruitment process for a staff member
- a report on a service you have procured

If you are unable to provide the evidence we ask for, you may be in breach of the grant contract and this could have an impact on your grant and your grant payments.

You should keep all evidence for seven years after the grant contract has finished.

### Your project's impact

We will also ask you questions throughout your project to help us gather data on the impact of our funding. This is because we want to learn from and share information about the projects we fund. It also helps inform our practice and how we deliver our strategy.

For example, we will ask you about:

- jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities created as a result of your project
- any volunteers you had and the hours they spent supporting your project
- people who benefitted from your project, such as the number of people who have visited your project

Evidence of this could include:

- a log of any training staff have undertaken as a result of your project
- the number of hours volunteers have spent supporting your project each year and in total across your project
- the number of people who have visited your project online and onsite each year and in total across your project

## Publicising and acknowledging your grant

During your project we will work with you on publicising your grant and will support you in acknowledging our funding. You should also tell us about any key project events and openings, so we can send a representative to attend where possible.

If you are creating publicity or marketing materials, make sure you share these with us so we can approve them first. For example, press releases or signage.

Every project which receives funding from us must publicly acknowledge our support. You should think about how you will acknowledge your grant from the very start of your project. We expect acknowledgement to be prominent and proportionate to the size of your grant.

Find out more about acknowledging your grant and our acknowledgement toolkit.

We also want to celebrate the impact our funding makes across the UK. As part of this, we may contact you about opportunities to feature your project in our own and Welsh Government promotional activity.

This could include, but is not limited to:

- displays in retail outlets
- inclusion in campaigns
- being highlighted as an example of how funding benefits local communities

Taking part can help raise awareness of your project, inspire others and demonstrate the impact made possible by Welsh Government funding.

## Before starting your project

You will receive an email from your Grant-in-Aid Manager, providing information about your grant award and your grant notification letter. It will detail what needs to be done before you can start your project and will ask you to complete the following tasks.

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 and we will not cover any costs incurred.

### Receiving the grant notification letter

Once we've let you know you have been awarded a grant, we will send you a grant notification letter. This letter contains information about:

- your project, including the approved purposes, approved usage and grant expiry date

- the standard terms of your grant
- any additional grant conditions
- any other bespoke requirements that apply to your project, for example subsidy control, compliance or joint grantees

The email will also ask you to sign in to your account to complete your permission to start form and the give us more project information task.

We normally expect you to complete your permission to start form and the give us more project information task, as well as submit the documents requested at this stage, within three months of the date of the grant notification letter. If there are substantial delays and the information we need has not been received within six months, we may decide to withdraw the offer of your grant.

## Attending your startup meeting

Soon after you've received your grant notification letter, we will arrange a startup meeting with key members of your project team. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- clarify the permission to start process
- clarify the project work
- agree project management, procurement and programme of work
- set out the reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements of your project
- discuss any legal points, such as ownership, security (for example, legal charge), licences for work or subsidy control?
- talk you through the additional information we need to help gather data on the impact of our funding

At this meeting you may be introduced to a consultant from our Register of Support Services (RoSS), who will support you in developing aspects of your project and support us with monitoring your project.

A RoSS consultant may provide advice on general project management, or on specific areas such as:

- construction management

- business planning
- natural environment
- public engagement
- digital assets

The consultant is appointed and paid for by us and will report to us throughout the duration of your project or during a specific part of your project.

## Completing permission to start

When completing your permission to start form, it’s important you check the details of your grant notification letter against the information we have in the permission to start form. If there are any errors, you must get in touch with your Grant-in-Aid Manager before moving forward.

Before we can give you permission to start, 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). This might include confirmation that your lease meets the requirements set out in the application guidance or that you have acquired a freehold interest in the property.
- details of statutory permissions and licences required and obtained, if applicable. If any of these are outstanding, then please complete our Outstanding Permissions Template and record when you expect to receive each statutory permission/license.
- evidence of secured cash contributions as outlined in your application
- cost breakdown and cashflow report outlining your project, as applicable
- an outline of your organisation’s project management structure and a document outlining your approach to choosing consultants, contractors and suppliers
- a project timetable or work programme outlining your project, as applicable
- a proposal for how you will manage procurement taking place in your project, as applicable

- any other details that we feel may be relevant to your project, including subsidy control considerations, as applicable

- proof that any conditions regarding security over the property, such as legal charges and restrictions, have been complied with

You must tell us if there are any changes to your project since you submitted your application. For example if there are changes to your project partners or cash contributions. You'll also need to provide updated evidence if needed.

You will then be required to provide details of two legal signatories for your organisation. They will need to read and agree the grant contract.

Once we have processed and approved the information you have provided, we will send you a countersigned permission to start form and an email confirming that you have permission to start. If you do start any work before receiving permission to start, 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, you will be able to give us more information about your project. These questions are not part of your application and your answers will not affect your grant award. The information you provide helps us to understand the impact of our funding.

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.

## During your project

As you deliver your project, we encourage you to keep in touch with us. This is so we can hear about the things you are achieving and support you with any issues that may come up. You can always contact your Grant-in-Aid Manager for advice on managing our funding at any point during your project.

### Updating us on your project

Throughout your project, you must give us regular updates about how it's going. We will use these updates to:

- monitor the progress of your project and support you as needed
- make sure you are complying with our requirements
- gather information about the impact of our funding

Over the life of your project delivery, you will need to submit:

- a project update every three months
- a separate yearly project update once a year
- a final project update and completion report when you complete your project

If a different project update schedule is needed, your Grant-in-Aid Manager will discuss this with you.

## How we will pay your grant

Your grant will be paid in arrears. To claim a payment you will need to submit a payment request, usually every three months. You'll also need to have recently submitted a project update.

We will pay your grant as a percentage of your project costs. We describe this as the payment percentage. This is explained in your grant notification letter.

For example, if you provide evidence of expenditure totalling £50,000 and your grant percentage is 85%, your payment will be £42,500.

We will pay the final 10% of your grant after you have completed your project and provided:

- a final project update and completion report
- a final payment request and evidence of how the rest of your grant was spent

For all payments, we aim to pay you within 10 working days of having all the information we need.

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

If you spend less on your project delivery than the money we have paid you, you will need to return any money you have not spent. We will agree with you the amount to be returned when we process your completion report.

## Providing evidence of what you have spent

When requesting a payment, you'll need to tell us how you've been spending your grant. You must provide individual invoices for all expenditure over £500. They should also be clear, readable and not damaged or tampered with.

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 of the organisation submitting the payment request
    - email address
    - telephone number
    - company number
    - VAT registration number, if VAT registered
- a description of the services provided
- if applicable, the gross amount with VAT, or the net amount with the VAT amount included separately

You do not need to submit invoices for costs under £500, but you must tell us about these costs when you submit a payment request.

Salaries for project staff should be evidenced by providing payslips or a letter signed by a member of your organisation with financial authority.

If you are claiming full cost recovery, you can evidence this by providing a letter signed by a member of your organisation with financial authority.

We will only cover costs which we have agreed to fund. 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.

## Changes to your project

We understand that challenges can arise during a project. This could include:

- issues within your organisation
- changes to your project costs
- delays to your timeline
- difficulty delivering the project or achieving the approved purposes

It is important that you let us know about any challenges you are facing, so we can provide advice and support. If any of these challenges mean there could be substantial changes to your project, you must discuss this with us as soon as possible. This is because any changes will need to be agreed and approved by us before they are made.

This includes any changes to your agreed budget, including moving costs between cost headings or using contingency, and any changes to your approved purposes.

Please note that you cannot move funds between the capital and revenue cost headings as outlined in your application.

The Nature Networks Fund is unable to accommodate extensions to your grant expiry date. If you experience delays in delivering your project, you must discuss this with us as soon as possible.

If the cost of your project increases, 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.

Any requests for changes to your project must be made in writing. This can either be an email or we may ask you to complete a separate form if there are substantial changes.

You will need to tell us how any changes will impact:

- 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 decide to re-assess your project or take any other action we consider necessary. We cannot guarantee we will agree to your request and we may only do so if you agree to additional terms and conditions. We will discuss any decision we make with you.

If we do agree to any substantial changes to your project, including offering you a grant increase, the Grant-in-Aid team will contact you confirming the changes offered. You will need to confirm you accept this by replying to the email within five working days.

## Procurement

In all projects, whenever you use your grant to purchase goods, works or services, we will ask you to give us details of how you procure them. This 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 written permission from us first.

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.

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.

**£10,000 or under (excluding VAT)**

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

**More than £10,000 and up to £50,000 (excluding VAT)**

You should get at least three competitive tenders or quotes for all goods, works and services worth more than £10,000 and up to £50,000 (excluding VAT) that we have agreed to fund.

**More than £50,000 (excluding VAT)**

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.

**Considerations for procurement**

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 £10,000 or under (excluding VAT)

- 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 wellbeing

- 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. You must also 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.

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 community grant recipient 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.

## Completing your project

Once you have finished your project, you'll need to complete a final project update and completion report and request your final payment. You'll also need to send us all the necessary documents we ask for.

### Completion Report

The final project update and completion report helps us to understand how successful your project has been. It also allows us to make sure you have complied with our requirements. It will be similar to your regular project updates and will include questions about how your project went.

For your project to be complete, you will need to make sure:

- your project is finished and you have achieved your approved purposes
- if applicable, you have met any additional grant conditions
- you have submitted a final project update and completion report
- you have appropriately?acknowledged your grant
- you have evaluated your project and sent us your evaluation report
- you can supply high resolution images documenting your project, and have secured all individual consents for use of those images

- 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 database, and shared the details of this with your Grant-in-Aid Manager
- if applicable, evidence of recording and sharing habitat and species data with local environmental record centres and/or to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN)

We must receive your report before your grant expiry date. You cannot receive your final payment until your report has been approved by your Grant-in-Aid Manager.

After we have reviewed all your information, and processed any final payment, we will confirm with you that your project is complete. The date we confirm this with you will be known as the project completion date.

## Requesting your final payment

After you have submitted your final project update and completion report, you will be able to request your final payment. To do this, you must provide evidence of how your remaining grant was spent.

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 any contractors and suppliers before requesting your final payment.

If you have spent less on your project than the money we have paid you, your final payment may be reduced or you may need to return any money you have not spent. If this happens, we will agree the final amount with you before making the payment.

## After your project has completed

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

The standard terms of grant will continue to apply for a number of years, as set out in the grant notification letter, after you have achieved the approved purposes. During this time you must comply with the approved usage. You must continue to monitor this and get in touch with us if anything may affect your ability to keep to the approved usage.

## 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.

# FAQs: Nature Networks Fund (round six)

03/08/2026

See all updates

Answers to questions raised by attendees during a pre-application webinar for Nature Networks Fund (round six), held on Thursday 16 July 2026.

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.

## Key / summarised questions

### What is the minimum capital/revenue split for projects?

There is no prescribed minimum or maximum capital-to-revenue split for individual projects. The Nature Networks Fund (round six) is primarily focused on delivering capital investment alongside activity which supports the active involvement of communities. We recognise that the balance between capital and revenue costs will vary depending on the nature of the project, and some projects may require a higher proportion of revenue funding to achieve their objectives. Applications will therefore be considered on how well the proposed budget supports the delivery of project outcomes, rather than against a fixed capital/revenue ratio.

### How much development work can be included within a project?

The Nature Networks Fund (round six) is primarily focused on project delivery rather than project development. Applicants are therefore expected to have a well-developed proposal and be able to deliver outcomes within the funding period. However, some development work can be included where it is necessary to enable delivery. For example, it is acceptable to undertake some development activities in the first year of the project and then move into implementation in years two and three. Applicants should ensure that any development work is proportionate and that they are confident the project can be completed within the programme's fixed timescales, as funding cannot be extended beyond the published end date.

### What does a ‘joint grantee’ mean and can they receive funding directly?

A joint grantee means another body that is jointly responsible for meeting the terms of grant. This is usually the owner of the land or property where they are different to the organisation delivering the project. Joint grantees may be joined in to the full terms of grant or only certain terms where that is appropriate (such as the terms that relate to property).

While we use the term joint grantee, there will be a lead grantee which is the organisation to who we pay the grant and has responsibility overall for delivering the project. If a joint grantee is also involved in delivering a significant part of the project, we expect those arrangements to meet our guidance on delivering the project in partnership, formalised with a partnership agreement.

## Are formal landowner agreements required at Expression of Interest stage?

No.

Signed landowner agreements need to be in place before a project receives Permission to Start. You cannot start capital work on land in third party ownership until you have entered into legally binding agreements with the respective third parties.