

Environmental sustainability guidance

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[Landscapes, parks and nature](#)

What we expect from our projects – advice and ideas on how your project can help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies.

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“At the Heritage Fund we have a crucial role to play in ensuring that our impact, and the impacts of our projects, are **no longer damaging the world around us**, and are **enhancing, protecting and benefiting** the places and people we support.”

Drew Bennellick, Heritage Fund Head of Land and Nature Policy

Introduction

[Climate change is here](#). Globally, temperatures are rising as a result of greenhouse gas emissions caused by human activity. Science tells us that we have just a few decades to prevent an unpredictable and potentially dangerous future.

Furthermore, our natural world has never been under such intense pressure. Species are declining at an alarming rate and habitats are being degraded.

If we want future generations to be able to enjoy and benefit from our natural and cultural heritage, then we must make responsible environmental choices now about how we live, work and care for it. We need to be part of [Raising the UK's climate ambitions for 2035 and changing the UK for the better](#).

What we expect

As a major investor in conservation, the Heritage Fund has a significant role to play through the projects we fund. This varies from recycling historic buildings

with all their embodied energy to funding peatland conservation – an efficient store of carbon.

We expect the **highest standards** of environmental sustainability to be delivered by all the projects we fund.

We want **all our projects** to do their very best to help mitigate against and adapt to the effects of climate change and to help nature recover.

We expect the **highest standards** of environmental sustainability to be delivered by all the projects we fund.

We want all of our applicants and grantees – of **all kinds of heritage projects**, large and small – to:

- limit any potential damage on the environment
- make a positive impact on the environment and particularly for nature

Of course, projects must ensure that any environmental measures do not have a negative impact on your heritage.

Including environmental sustainability within your projects right from the beginning will mean your project is likely be more resilient, financially sustainable and have multiple benefits for people and community.

Fit for the Future

The National Lottery Heritage Fund is working with [Fit for the Future](#) to help our applicants embed environmental sustainability within their projects.

Fit for the Future is a UK-wide environmental sustainability network. It brings together organisations from the not-for-profit, heritage, public, cultural and commercial sectors to share ideas and knowledge.

What should you do?

- We recommend that all applicants join Fit for the Future. This will help ensure your project achieves the very best standards for environmental sustainability and will **strengthen your application**.
- You can join six months in advance of submitting your application and include the [membership fee](#) as an eligible project cost in your application. Don't forget to calculate how many years' membership you will need: this

fee will then be included in any grant.

- We cannot cover fees if your application is unsuccessful, if your organisation is already a member of Fit for the Future or if you joined in advance of the six months before submitting your application.

For further information, email info@fftf.org.uk.

Where to start

Follow these three steps when putting together your application.

Step 1: Read the guidance below and do your own research before you start planning: think locally, nationally, globally.

- What could your project achieve for the environment?
- What are the possible negative environmental impacts it might have?

Think short and long term: consider the whole lifecycle of any materials, products or services used or created. For example, the journey from raw materials to when things become waste and beyond.

Step 2: Work from a baseline.

Start by setting a baseline of how things currently are.

Think about the improvements you want to make. How will you monitor your progress? What are you going to measure and when?

Don't forget to think about the resources that might be needed to sustain the project in future – this is called "full life costing".

Step 3: Rethink your project if necessary.

Monitor progress and constantly review your project to make sure you deliver what you set out to achieve for the environment.

As your project progresses you may need to make adjustments to designs, content or delivery plans. Please tell us if these changes might reduce the environmental benefits or increase negative environmental impacts.

Guidance, research and toolkits:

Energy

We expect all projects we fund to think about their energy usage and to aim to reduce or minimise it.

If energy usage is likely to increase as a result of your project, then we expect you to buy renewable energy and/or to consider creating new energy via renewable technologies. If your energy use is likely to stay the same then you should plan to further reduce it in future and consider buying renewable energy.

Think about: 1. What type and how much energy (electricity, gas, oil, renewables etc) your project is likely to use, what it might cost and how you could save energy and money in future.

Useful links:

- [UK Government - guide to energy metering and monitoring](#) for SMEs
- [Ofgem - guide to understanding your gas and electricity bills](#)
- [Carbon Trust - Energy Benchmarking Tool](#) for SMEs
- [Historic England - Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings](#)
- [Guidance for Energy Use Wales](#)
- [Energy efficient Scotland user guide SME](#)
- [Monitoring and Metering your energy use Northern Ireland](#)

2. How much carbon/CO₂ is likely to be emitted as a result of the energy your project will use. For larger projects you could calculate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and your carbon footprint.

Useful links:

- [UK Government - small business user guide: how to measure and report your greenhouse gas emissions](#)
- [Carbon Trust - Carbon Footprint Calculator](#) - Steps to energy saving
- [Carbon Trust - free carbon calculators](#) For individuals and small businesses

3. What energy-efficiency measures you could plan. How might you measure and monitor them?

Useful links:

- [Energy Saving Trust - energy-saving quick wins](#)
- [Carbon Trust - better business guide to energy saving](#)

- [Carbon Trust – buildings energy efficiency guide](#)
- [Carbon Trust – office energy efficiency guides](#)

4. Whether your project could generate renewable energy and/or purchase renewable energy.

Remember that if the Heritage Fund supports the creation of renewable energy it cannot be sold back to the National Grid or others for income.

Useful links:

- [Ofgem – Environmental Programmes](#)
- [UK Government – community energy guidance](#) - A guide aimed at local groups who are interested in setting up a community energy project
- [Carbon Trust – renewable energy guide](#)

5. Some energy-using equipment such as lighting, heating, cooling, insulation or renewable technologies may be eligible for a tax break and/or funding support.

Useful links:

- [Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme for energy-saving technologies](#)
- [Carbon Trust – SME guide to financing energy efficiency](#)

Nature

We expect all projects we fund to make a positive contribution to saving nature in the UK.

Every project should aim to improve nature, for example by:

- including nesting boxes for bat and birds
- creating a wildlife pond
- converting grass areas to meadows
- planting trees
- providing places for people to enjoy nature
- avoiding the use of chemicals and using natural solutions instead

Unavoidable loss of nature

In some circumstances, your project may require the loss of nature, for example by removing trees or hedges, paving over grass or planted areas, or installing

new lighting.

If that is the case, we need to understand why this action is unavoidable, and we will expect the loss to be compensated for with, for example: new planting either on or off site, a reduction in other areas of hard surfacing or creation of new habitats for wildlife.

Think about:

1. What impact your project will have on habitats, species and the overall greenness of your site.

Useful links:

- [The National Lottery Heritage Fund - 10 ways to make a difference to the natural world](#)
- [State of UK Nature report](#)
- [The Wildlife Trusts - in-depth information on habitats](#)
- [RSPB - creating a Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

2. Are there any protected or designated sites or species on or near your project? If so you will need to show us you understand why they are important and how they will be protected.

Some may also be protected by law and it is your responsibility to ensure you comply with any legal requirements.

Useful links:

- [Protected sites and species in the UK](#)
- [Species which can be protected in Marine SPAs?](#)
- [A brief guide to nature designations](#)
- [Scotland's protected areas and species](#)
- [Wales protected areas of land and sea](#)
- [Northern Ireland protected area](#)

3. Whether your project could help to reconnect people to nature.

Connecting people to nature not only helps communities to value nature more, it also helps to improve people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Useful links:

- [Wildlife Trusts - Bringing people closer to nature](#)

- [Woodland Trust – adventures for children and families](#)
- [Europarc – webinar connecting people & nature](#)
- [Mind – nature and mental health](#)
- [The social benefits of urban green spaces](#)
- [How green spaces can improve our wellbeing](#)

4. Some habitats and species are protected by law – find out if any exist on your project or site area.

- [Wildlife Trusts – UK Wildlife Law](#)

5. Is your project aligned with current developments in “valuing” nature and the natural environment?

- [Ecosystems Knowledge Network – helping to understand the real value of nature across the UK](#)

Resources and materials

We expect all projects we fund to consider how natural resources such as stone and timber are used. Please avoid using materials that might have damaging impacts on the environment.

Timber

All timber used in your project must be from a sustainable source certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). We may ask you to provide certification.

Construction materials

Stone, brick and materials such as gravels should ideally be recycled or locally sourced, even if costs may be higher.

Think about:

1. Using only FSC-certified timber.

- [What is FSC-certified timber?](#)

2. The key materials your project will use and where they will come from. This includes plastics, paper, wood, glass, metal, plants and soil improvers.

You may need skilled staff and/or consultants.

- [Sustainable materials for construction](#)
- [Eco-friendly Building Materials](#)
- [Historic England - Materials for historic building repairs](#)

Plastics

Many types of plastic take over 400 years to decay, they pollute our natural environment and are filling up landfill sites.

Try to reduce plastic usage by avoiding single-use plastics.

We encourage all projects to reduce plastic usage by:

- avoiding single-use plastics
- ordering in bulk to reduce packaging
- only using plastics that can be recycled efficiently
- carrying out audits to check the amount and types of plastics being used.

We will not support projects that include installing artificial grass or plants. Specialist play safety surfacing and professional sports surfaces are allowed.

Soils and peat

We expect all projects we fund to protect soils and not to use any peat for horticultural or landscape purposes. Soil is a precious resource that filters our water, provides essential nutrients to our forests and crops, and helps regulate the Earth's temperature as well as many of the important greenhouse gases.

Think about: 1. Will your project involve stripping, removing or relocating soil?

Useful links

- [Soil Association - Save Our Soil campaign](#)
- [Defra - managing soil on construction sites](#)

2. Ensuring any plants or trees you buy are grown in compost that does not contain peat. How will you check? We may ask for proof that all plants, shrubs and trees have been grown on non-peat-based composts.

- [Plantlife - Why we need to keep peat in the ground](#)

- [Royal Horticultural Society – Horticulture without peat](#)
- [Protecting our Peatlands](#)
- [UK Peatlands](#)

Tree planting

For projects that involve tree planting, it is important to source biosecure planting stock, preferably grown in the UK to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading harmful plant pests and diseases.

We would encourage the use of plants from Plant Healthy certified nurseries where possible. Plant Healthy is a certification scheme designed to ensure that people who grow and handle plants have suitable biosecurity standards in place.

- [Plant Healthy](#) Certification Scheme

Transport

We expect all projects we fund to consider how they can reduce the environmental impacts of people travelling to work, volunteer at or visit the project.

Think about: 1. How people will get to your project.

Can you encourage them to use public transport, car share, cycle or walk?

- [How to create a green travel plan](#)
- [Netregs – reducing vehicle emissions](#)
- [Energy Saving Trust – travel advice for greener journeys](#)

2. Parking.

Who will it be for, and how many spaces? Could you encourage people to car share or use alternative forms of travel?

Think about how the car park will be surfaced. Will water be allowed to drain away naturally rather than via drains?

- [Netregs – environmental guidance for car parking](#)

3. Whether your project will require purchase of a vehicle. If yes do you know how much CO²e is will emit?

- [transport carbon footprint calculator](#)
- [UK Government advice on grants for plug-in vehicles](#)

4. Ways to reduce transport usage within your organisation.

For example:

- staff car share schemes
- offering incentives not to drive every day
- subsidised public transport
- having a home-based project team using virtual meetings

Useful links:

- [Resurgence - carbon footprint calculator](#)
- [Energy Saving Trust Low Carbon Travel](#)
- [UK Government - cycle to work scheme](#)
- [Sustrans - alternative ideas to car use](#)

Waste

We expect all projects we fund to consider the amount and types of waste produced both during and after the project. All projects should consider how to reduce and recycle any waste.

Think about: 1. Depending on your project and organisation, waste might come from construction, old electrical and electronic goods, green waste, food, paper, timber, plastics etc.

Try to calculate how many kilogrammes or tonnes of waste your project might potentially create and how much of that cannot be recycled.

- [UK Government - how to classify your waste](#)

2. The cost of getting rid of waste and how much you could save by reducing it. Some types of waste also have value.

- [Letsrecycle - recycling material prices](#)

3. What type and how much hazardous waste your project might produce.

- [How to tell if your waste is hazardous](#)

4. How you can reduce your project's waste.

Consider the five waste hierarchy principles of waste elimination, reduction, reuse, recycling or recovery. It can also help contribute to the development of a "circular economy" while saving your project and organisation money.

Useful links:

- [UK Government - waste hierarchy guidance](#)
- [Recycle now - guide to what you can recycle and where](#)
- [Guide to waste electrical and electronic equipment](#)
- [Wrap - Opportunities for recycling and reprocessing](#)
- [Wrap - waste management in office buildings](#)
- [Ellen MacArthur Foundation - designing waste out: what is a circular economy?](#)
- [WWF - ten tips to reduce your plastic footprint](#)

Water

We expect all projects we fund to consider how they use water and to aim to reduce or minimise water usage. We also expect projects to consider water recycling, saving and utilising rainwater, and installing sustainable drainage schemes.

Think about:

1. How much the project will spend on water provision and disposal **per annum**.

What is the likely volume (in litres) that will be used and returned?

Useful links:

- [UK Government - water and sewerage rates for businesses and organisations](#)
- [Ofwat - understanding your non-domestic water bill](#)
- [Netregs - analyse how much water you use](#)

2. How you could use water-saving measures.

Useful links:

- [Guide to improving water efficiency](#)
- [CIWEM - Domestic Water Efficiency](#)
- [Waterwise - save water](#)

3. Whether there any opportunities to reuse water or enhance water quality.

Useful links:

- [Environment Agency - grey water reuse](#)
- [Netregs - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems \(SUDS\)](#)

4. The risk of water shortages or flooding. How will you overcome these problems?

Useful links:

- [UK Government - flooding and extreme weather advice](#)
- [UK Government - drought management for England](#)
- [UK Government - check your flood risk](#)
- [UK Government - water supply, wastewater and water quality](#)
- [CIWEM - managing drought in the UK](#)

Country-specific advice and tools:

England

The [Climate Change Act 2008](#) is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change.

In England, the Climate Change Act commits the UK Government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by **2050**.

For advice on how the Climate Change Act works, visit the [Committee on Climate Change \(CCC\)](#) website. The CCC ensures that emissions targets are evidence-based and independently assessed. [A Green Future: Our 25 year plan to improve the environment](#) sets out Government action to help the natural world regain and

retain good health.

Advice - built and cultural heritage

- Historic England [advice on the impacts of climate change on built heritage](#)
- [Museums & Climate Change Network](#)
- Arts Council report: [How culture is combating climate change](#)
- [Julie's Bicycle](#): a London-based charity that supports the creative industry to act on climate change and environmental sustainability
- [The Construction Leadership Council UK](#) has set up the Green Construction Board to drive forward environmental sustainability in the UK construction industry.

Advice - landscapes and nature

- [Natural England and RSPB Climate Change Adaptation Manual](#)
- [The Wildlife Trust response to climate change](#) - UK
- [Committee for Climate Change report on land-use policies required to achieve net zero in the UK](#)
- [Environment Agency guidance](#) including flood risk assessment
- [Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Plan](#) for the UK
- [Government calls for 30 per cent of world's oceans to be protected by 2030](#)
- [UK's 30by30 Initiative to save the world's ocean](#)

Toolkits and advice

- Ashden and Friends of the Earth: [Sustainable Towns and Cities](#)
- [Farmers and Growers carbon calculator](#)

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland does not currently have any separate climate change legislation. Greenhouse gas emissions from Northern Ireland contribute to the UK total under the Climate Change Act 2008 (net zero by **2050**).

Find out more in the [Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024](#) and [Civil Society and Local Government Adapts supporting document](#).

There is more information in the [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 for Northern Ireland](#) and [UK Climate Change projections](#).

Advice - built and cultural heritage

- [Advice on cutting carbon emissions](#)

Toolkits and advice

- [Climate Northern Ireland](#) climate change network and e-newsletter
- [Northern Ireland Environment Link](#)
- Committee on Climate Change [advice on reducing emissions](#)

Scotland

Scotland has declared a climate emergency and set world-leading targets to become a net-zero emission country by **2045**. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets these targets, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040.

Climate change policy in Scotland responds to both UK and Scottish frameworks. Scotland's legislation requires a delivery plan for meeting targets to be published at least every five years.

The Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) addresses the impacts identified for Scotland in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA). It published [Climate Ready Scotland: Second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024](#) in September 2019.

Advice - built and cultural heritage

- Historic Environment Scotland: [Climate Action Plan 2020–2025](#)
- Historic Environment Scotland: [Climate Change Adaptation for Traditional Buildings](#)
- [Built Environment Forum Scotland case studies](#)

Advice - museums and collections

- Museums Galleries Scotland guidance: [environmental monitoring](#) and [air pollution](#)

Advice - landscapes and nature

- Scotland's Nature Agency: [Communities and landscape](#), [Environmental assessment](#), and [Natural Capital Asset Index](#)

Toolkits and advice

- [Adaptation Scotland](#) helps the public sector, businesses and communities to understand what climate change means across Scotland
- [Sustainable Scotland Network](#) for public sector professionals
- [Resource Efficient Scotland](#)
- [National Performance Framework: Carbon Footprint indicator](#)
- [Greener Scotland](#)
- [Promoting sustainable business tourism | Green Tourism - Green Tourism \(green-tourism.com\)](#)

Wales

Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. In June 2019, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs set a target for Wales to achieve net zero emissions by **2050**.

The [Environment Act \(Wales\) 2016](#) provides a legal framework to manage Wales' natural resources. In March 2019, Welsh Government launched [A Low Carbon Wales](#). The plan sets out the Welsh Government's approach to cut emissions and increase efficiency in a way that maximises wider benefits for Wales. In November 2019, Welsh Government published: [Prosperity for all: A climate-conscious Wales](#), setting out a five-year climate change adaptation plan [and infographic](#).

Advice - built and cultural heritage

- [Historic Environment and Climate Change in Wales Sector Adaptation Plan](#)
- [Yr Amgylchedd Hanesyddol a Newid Hinsawdd: Cynllun Addasu'r Sector](#)
- [A Strategic Approach for Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change on the Historic Environment 2012](#)

Advice - landscapes and nature

- [CADW Flooding and Historic Buildings in Wales](#)
- [CADW Llifogydd ac Adeiladau Hanesyddol yng Nghymru](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales Guidance and Advice](#)
- [Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Canllawiau a chyngor](#)
- [Tree species](#) - how to improve the resilience of your woodland
- [Rhywogaethau coed](#)

Toolkits and advice

- [Cynnal Cymru/Sustain Wales](#)

You might also be interested in...

[How to consider environmental sustainability in your heritage project](#)

[How we're tackling climate change](#)

The importance of funding nature