Working together to fund growth in investment in

Boardwalk at RSPB Loch Lomond

We are teaming up with the Scottish Government and NatureScot to support communities and boost local economies through responsible investment.

The FIRNS (Facility for Investment Ready Nature Scotland) programme sees us join with NatureScot and the Scottish Government to ensure that investment in Scotland's natural capital creates benefits that are shared with communities.

FIRNS, which launched on 28 February 2023, is being supported by the Green Finance Institute and builds on a model we developed with Esmée Fairbairn and Nature Scot.

> Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we are delighted to support this programme which will ensure more of Scotland's natural capital can be unlocked for the benefit of the environment and communities.
> *Caroline Clark, The National Lottery Heritage Fund Director for Scotland.*

How it will work

FIRNS is being delivered by NatureScot. It's a partnership between the Heritage Fund and the Scottish Government and could see over £3million invested in landscape and community projects.

You can submit applications to both the Heritage Fund and NatureScot for individual grants of up to £120,000, meaning each FIRNS project can apply for up to £240,000.

Heritage Fund Director for Scotland Caroline Clark said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we are delighted to support this programme. It will ensure more of Scotland’s natural capital can be unlocked for the benefit of the environment and communities.

“FIRNS offers an exciting opportunity to explore ways of diversifying income for Scotland’s nature sector. It will build skills, capacity and resilience for the communities and organisations who are caring for the future of our natural world in a time of immense change.”

> A woodland next to a lake in autumn, with the bright autumn leaves reflected in the water
>
> Abernethy Forest in Scotland

Submit an expression of interest from today

We want to hear from you if your project will:

- engage a wider range of people with nature
- engage communities in project design and activities
- support the restoration of nature and growth of natural capital backed by robust science-based methodologies
- develop effective mechanisms to share benefits with communities and have a positive impact on natural heritage

The first step if you have an idea for a project is to submit an expression of interest form through NatureScot's website.

The site also has information about resources and workshops planned to give applicants advice and the opportunity to ask questions.

Growing natural capital markets

Mairi McAllan MSP, Minister for Environment and Land Reform said: “FIRNS will enable swifter, easier and scaled up development of nature-based investable projects across the country.

“It has the potential to grow natural capital markets that reach across rural, urban, terrestrial and marine settings, and to support a wide variety of natural assets and ecosystem services.”

NatureScot’s Director of Green Economy Robbie Kernahan said: “Scotland’s nature is in crisis: its unique habitats and ecosystems will only continue providing the benefits to our wellbeing if we act now to value it and invest in it.

“FIRNS is a vital opportunity to stimulate that investment and will help us halt nature loss – we must grasp it with both hands.”

Further information

Find our more about the FIRNS programme on the NatureScot website.

Explore our guidance for grants up to £250,000, as well as our Nature and Landscape good practice guidance.

Follow us on social media and sign up to our email newsletter (make sure you tick the Scotland box) to hear more details as we have them.