Application questions: Nature Networks Fund £250,000 to £1million

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

Page last updated: 8 July 2024. See all updates.

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 12 noon on 8 November 2024.

You **must** use this guide to assist you in completing an online application form for a Nature Networks Fund (round 4) grant between £250,000 and £1m.

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.

Tell us the title of the project. You **must** include the prefix #NNF4 in your project title.

For example, #NNF4 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.

Tell us what you hope to achieve and what you hope the legacy of your project will be.

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 condition and resilience of Wales' network of protected land or marine sites.

- Which site/s will you be working 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?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Why does your project need to happen now?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Who else have you approached about funding your project?

There is no mandatory requirement for cash contributions to Nature Networks (round four) 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 consultation you have done with your local community and those who will be involved in your project
- any project proposal advice, such as from ecologists or Natural Resources Wales
- any pre-application advice on planning or consents, such as from your local authority or Natural Resources Wales
- advice about how to address wellbeing for your project participants, such as from a charity or local group who can provide support which is relevant to their lived experience

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Will your project be delivered by a partnership?

[Select yes or no]

If yes: Who are your partners?

Provide a named contact from each organisation.

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

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

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

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Will any of your project take place in Wales?

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

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

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

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

[Text field – 500 words]

About the heritage

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

Provide factual information about the heritage. Tell us:

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

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

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Is the heritage considered to be at risk?

[Select yes or no]

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

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

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

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

Tell us:

- the current condition of the heritage
- how it is currently managed and by who
- how people currently engage with the heritage

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

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

[Select yes or no]

If yes: Please provide details.

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

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

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

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

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

Please provide details about your capital works owner.

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

If your organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

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

If a partner organisation owns the heritage, tell us:

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

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

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Are there are 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 4) as a lead applicant or a partner, please supply the reference numbers of the other applications and tell us which project is most critical to your organisation at this time. How would you deliver more than one project if successful?
- If you are currently delivering projects under rounds 2 or 3 of Nature Networks, explain the relationship (if any) between projects. How would you deliver more than one project if successful?

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

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

Answer N/A for this question

[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.

[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 2025.

[Select date]

Delivery end date.

You must complete your project by 31 March 2028, including all 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.

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 run. You may find it useful to refer to Natural Resources Wales' map of protected areas of land and sea to evidence how the location of activities outside of protected sites will develop connectivity.

[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.

[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 the heritage in the future, for example if you will keep employing staff to help maintain a site you have restored
- how you will deal with any costs related to maintaining the land 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 would expect to see costs for your evaluation included in your project costs.

[Text field – 5,000 characters]

Project costs and income

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

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

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

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.

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 the delivery phase

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

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

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

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

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

[Upload files]

List of supporting documents for the delivery phase

Accounts

Upload your organisation’s accounts.

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

Accounts need to be:

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

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

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

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

Project plan and risk register

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

Upload your project plan and risk register

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 architect, then you should upload a brief. The brief should describe the works, how long they will take, and how much they will cost. Template brief for commissioned work. 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)
- a map showing the location of the site(s) on a regional scale
- a ShapeFile, Tab File or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons

Management and maintenance plan (if applicable)

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

Partnership agreements

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

Ownership documents

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

Declaration

Confirm declaration

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

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

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

a) Data Protection

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

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

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

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

b) Freedom of Information

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

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

[Text box]

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

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

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

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