FAQs: Nature Networks Fund (round four)

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Answers to questions raised by attendees during a pre-application webinar for the Nature Networks Fund (round four), held on Thursday 11 July 2024.

The speakers

- Emma Jane Wells, Senior Investment Manager, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Sian Regan, Investment Manager, National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Zelda Baveystock, Head of Green Recovery Challenge Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund

FAQs arising from the webinar

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

The answers to several questions raised can be found by reading the guidance. Please also read the application questions for grants from £50,000 to £250,000 and/or application questions form grants from £250,000 to £1million carefully before applying.

Are there any restrictions on how many applications an organisation can partner on?

No, but we will look at your overall capacity to deliver. You can be part of several partnerships but you can only apply as the lead organisation on one project in each funding bracket. Do bear in mind the balancing criteria, as we want to fund a range of organisations.

Are there any restrictions on how many Project Enquiries/Expressions of Interest an applicant can submit, so that the applicant can explore various options with the National Lottery Heritage Fund?

One Project Enquiry and one Expression of Interest is permitted per organisation.

Do all licenses (for example planning permission) need to be in place before submitting an application?

No, but they need to be identified and a plan needs to be in place to address them. We ask you to detail this on the project plan spreadsheet and we will monitor this throughout the project.

Can funding be used to expand an existing project? Are current grantees excluded?

We will consider each application on its own merits. There must be no overlap of existing project work or double funding, and it would need to be presented as a discrete project.

Agricultural land and farms receive government subsidies. Are they therefore ineligible?

To constitute a subsidy the funding would have to provide a competitive advantage. You must take your own legal advice regarding subsidy control if you are in any doubt.

If we need to look into subsidy control do we need to do this before completing a Project Enquiry or Expression of Interest?

No, we ask for this at application.

Is there a prescribed capital/revenue costs split?

Not on a project basis. We have an overall programme split which we will manage on a programme-wide basis. You must indicate which costs are revenue and which are capital in your application costs by adding REV or CAP as a prefix to each cost name.

Would you consider a project aimed at controlling invasive non-native species across an area with different sites?

Yes, if it relates to protected sites and there is a clear ecological rationale. However we would normally look for a project to focus on more than just the removal of invasive non-native species. It is up to you to make the case for the work and the benefit to habitats/species.

Can we use funding for purchase of equipment which can be used for future maintenance and do we need to decide on who will own the equipment?

You can purchase equipment and it would be up to you to decide who owns it as long as they are part of the partnership.

Some of the sites cross into England. Can projects cross the border?

This fund is for Wales only and you can only work in the Welsh areas of sites which span the border.

Do the grants have to take the full three years?

No, the project can take less time according to your needs. The deadline given of March 2028 is the latest date all projects must be fully complete by, including all financial reporting and evaluation.