

See all updates

Awarding grants from £50,000 to £1million, this fund aims to strengthen the resilience of Wales' network of protected land and marine sites and build organisations' capacity to accelerate nature's recovery and engage communities.

Page last updated: 8 January 2026.

Important

Nature Networks Fund (round five) is no longer accepting applications.

Explore our available funding.

Is this the right programme for you?

- Are you an individual or 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 £50,000 and £1million?
- If you answered **yes** to these questions, then the **Nature Networks Fund** is for you.

Overview

We're delivering Nature Networks 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 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 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 sitesenables 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;

The protection and long-term resilience of sites is reliant on strong organisations, good governance and robust project planning. Therefore, the Nature Networks Fund will also **support project development and capacity building** for future nature recovery projects. This work may include (but is not restricted to):

- partnership development
- landowner/community consultation and engagement
- ecological surveying
- feasibility studies
- scheme design
- skills development for green finance
- other preparatory work for future capital projects

Capacity building can help organisations and partners to demonstrate outcomes, create robust business models that have the potential to attract investment and provide an evidence base to support effective management approaches.

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.

You can submit a maximum of **two** applications to the Nature Networks Fund: one for a grant of between £50,000 and £250,000 and one for a grant of between £250,000 and £1million.

Things you need to know

- For projects of £50,000 to £250,000 **you must first submit a Project Enquiry**. You may then be invited to make a full application.
- For projects of £250,000 to £1million **you must first submit an Expression of Interest**. 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 individual or 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 five) **on Tuesday 1 July 2025 10am–11:30am** by registering here.

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.
- Development activity that enables organisations to build their capacity and evidence base to plan future nature recovery projects. This could include building capability to continue reaching under-served communities or to attract financial investment (including green finance) into scaling up delivery of nature recovery projects.

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 20% 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, governance reviews and so on.

Projects can operate on land/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 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.

Application deadline and key dates

For grants of between £50,000 to £250,000:

- Project Enquiry deadline: **12noon** on **14 July 2025**
- Application deadline: **12noon** on **26 September 2025**
- Decisions will be made: **December 2025**
- Your project completion date: **30 January 2029**

For grants of between £250,000 to £1million:

- Expressions of Interest deadline: **12noon** on **12 August 2025**
- Application deadline: **12noon** on **18 November 2025**
- Decisions will be made: **February 2026**
- Your project completion date: **31 March 2029**

Who can apply?

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

Private owners of heritage

As a private owner of heritage you must demonstrate that the public benefit of your project outweighs any private gain.

- If the owner of the heritage is not making the application, we will ask them to sign up to the terms and conditions of your grant.

We will not fund:

- works that can reasonably be considered as the statutory duty of the owner
- the purchase of buildings or land
- construction of new, large-scale buildings

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.

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.

What costs can you apply for?

If you are applying for a project under £250,000 you can apply for a Development/Capacity building project, a Capital project or a combination of both in a single application. You may not make more than one application under £250,000.

Applications over £250,000 should be for Capital projects only. You may not make more than one application over £250,000.

It is important that you identify in your application which of your project costs are capital and which are revenue. Across the whole portfolio of projects, we are looking to fund a balanced combination of capital and revenue activity.

Development/ Capacity building projects

These projects should contain a majority of revenue funding. You can include some capital costs, but capital work should not be the focus of the project.

Capital projects

These projects should include a majority of capital funding and should focus on capital works. You can include some revenue costs within these projects.

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 fees related to environmental sustainability
- 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, ecological surveying or baselining, 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)

Ineligible costs

You may not include costs for:

- ongoing maintenance or running costs beyond the duration of the project.
- acquisition of land
- 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 a Project Enquiry or an Expression of Interest so we can provide you with early feedback on your project proposal.

Grants of between £50,000 and £250,000

For grants between £50,000 and £250,000, you must submit a Project Enquiry. Please visit our Project Enquiry page for more information on how to complete your form.

The deadline for Project Enquiries is **12noon on 14 July 2025.**

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.

If your Project Enquiry is successful, you must submit your full application by **12noon on 26 September 2025**.

Go to our online service to apply.

Grants of between £250,000 and £1million

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 12 August 2025.**

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 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 18 November 2025.**

Ewch i'n gwasanaeth ar-lein i wneud cais.

Supporting documents

You will need to provide relevant supporting documents, listed below, as part of the application process. Please visit our Application questions: £50,000 to £250,000 or Application questions: £250,000 to £1million 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 that some of the supporting documents required for this programme are different to those stated in the online application form.

All projects of between £50,000 and £1million must provide the following **mandatory** documents:

- a governing document (unless exempt)
- Audited or verified accounts (mandatory if you are an organisation). You must provide your most recently audited or accountant verified accounts. If your organisations 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 (please use our template)
- a cost template (please use our project costs template and you **must** separate costs into Capital and Revenue)
- land ownership documents, such as Land Registry or lease or Heads of Terms (mandatory for **capital projects only**)
- a map showing the location of the site(s) on a regional scale
- at least one map showing the locations of capital works, with protected sites/features labelled. ShapeFiles, Tab Files or KML showing your project site(s) as polygons (mandatory for **capital projects only**)

For projects of between £250,000 and £1million, you must provide the following **additional mandatory** documents:

- 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 of between £50,000 and £1million 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 (if applicable)
- calculation of Full Cost Recovery (if applicable)
- evidence of support, such as letters, emails or videos of support (optional)

How we assess your 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
- the number of jobs/apprenticeships/traineeships offered, especially for young people
- 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
- provide a balanced combination of capital and revenue projects across the portfolio

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 of £50,000 to £250,000 by the end of December 2025, and on projects of £250,000 to £1million by the end of February 2026

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 under £250,000 will be paid in three instalments. You will receive 50% of your grant once you have received permission to start your project. You will receive the next 30% at the midpoint of your project, when the first 50% has been spent. We withhold the final 20% of your grant until the project is completed.

Grants of £250,000 and over 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.

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 five years following the Project Completion Date for projects below £250,000, and 10 years following the Project Completion Date for projects over £250,000.

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.

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



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