£20m to help conserve and protect UK's precious landscapes

20/02/2013

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced a commitment of £20m over the next year to conserve distinctive landscapes across the UK. This investment will support schemes that will ensure a boost for rural areas and provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.

HLF's Landscape Partnership (LP) programme – which has been running for nine years - is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects. To date, a total of £132m has been invested in 83 different areas - stretching from Orkney's Scapa Flow to the Isle of Wight's 'Needles' - helping forge new partnerships between public and community bodies and ensuring people are better equipped to tackle the needs of their local landscapes in a co-ordinated and practical way.

Following consultation with the landscape and natural heritage sectors, the application process has been simplified with new guidance materials available online. Greater flexibility has been built into the programme and awards will now start at £100,000 (previously £250,000) with the upper limit rising from £2m to £3m. The recommended scheme area size will continue to be between 20km² and 200km² but flexibility has been introduced to allow partnerships to cover a greater area depending on the scale and nature of the landscape.

Drew Bennellick, Head of Landscape and Natural Environment at HLF, said: "HLF's Landscape Partnership programme has gone from strength to strength, stimulating long-term partnerships and innovative ways of working. The result has been greater access, appreciation and understanding of landscapes and nature for the people living, working and visiting these areas.

"The UK's beautiful countryside is a precious asset and under ever increasing pressure. This investment will leave a lasting legacy of landscape conservation and management, from national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the less well-known landscapes that make our local neighbourhoods special and distinctive."

First-round LP applications must be received by 31 May 2013 for decisions in October 2013. For an application pack go to the Landscape Partnership page.

LP benefits - fast facts
• Over 5,000 trees have been planted
• 401 wildlife surveys have been undertaken
• 34km of hedgerows have been restored
• 34,000 pupils/students have benefited
• 14,000 volunteers have been involved equating to 20,000 working days

Notes to editors

• HLF's Landscape Partnership programme aligns closely with the European Landscape Convention and it is set to run for another five years. One of its successes has been to bring a variety of partner organisations and communities together with a shared objective to conserve and improve the landscapes they care about. Several schemes have won

national awards, acknowledging the impact funding has made to the area and local people.

• Landscape Partnership programme data – as at February 2011.

• To date, HLF has awarded £392m to 3,126 natural heritage projects.

Further information

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