Species Recovery Programme

Invitation to Apply Guidance for Applicants

Grant Scheme: C32276

Table of Contents

SECTION A: PARTICULARS AND CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION

Glossary

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions used within this Invitation to Apply shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

TERM	MEANING
"Agreement"	means the agreement (set out in Annex A and Annex B) to be entered into by the Authority and the Applicant if its Application is successful.
"Applicant(s)" or "you" or "your"	means the organisation(s) who submits a completed application in accordance with this ITA.
"Application"	means an Applicant's formal proposal in response to this ITA.
"Application Process"	means the process by which Applicants apply for a Species Recovery Programme grant and responses to the qualification questions and the technical questions.
"Authority" or "We"	means Natural England acting as part of the Crown
"Atamis"	means the e-system used by the Authority for awarding grant funding agreements to successful applicants https://defra-family.force.com/s/Welcome
"Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants"	means the code of conduct all government grant applicants and recipients are required to follow. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771152/2019-01-15_Code_of_Conduct_for_Grant_Recipients_v._1.01.pdf
"Conditions of Application"	means the terms and conditions set out in this ITA relating to the submission of an Application.
"Conflict of Interest"	means an actual or potential conflict of interest on the part of the Applicant in connection with the ITA or the Agreement.
"Double funding"	means funding provided by a third party to the Grant Applicant, which is for the same purpose for which the Grant Application is made but has not been declared to the Authority.
"EIR"	means the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (as amended) together with any guidance and/or codes of practice

	issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant government department in relation to those Regulations.
"Find a Grant"	means the application platform used by the Authority for conducting this Application Process, which can be found at https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/
"FOIA"	means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended) and any subordinate legislation made under such Act from time to time together with any guidance and/or codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner or relevant government department in relation to that legislation.
"Grant Recipient"	means a successful Applicant who subsequently receives funding from this scheme.
"ITA"	means this invitation to apply and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to Applicant(s).
"Match Funding"	means the financial or in-kind contributions that applicants (or their partners) commit to a project alongside the grant funding provided by Natural England.
"Partnership"	means an informally or formally constituted group of organisations who will be working together to deliver the project as described in the grant application.
"Project"	means the project for which grants are being made available.
"Standard Qualification Questions"	means questions used to perform due diligence checks before the Application can progress to the technical evaluation stage.
"Technical Questions"	means project specific questions located in the Technical Application Form and used to decide the technical merit of the application.
"Unique Reference Code"	means the reference provided by the Authority on your Call For Ideas outcome letter.

General

1. The Authority is looking to award grants via the Species Recovery Programme to address the Environmental Improvement Plan target to reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, as compared to 2022 levels.

2. The Authority is using Find a Grant for this grant Application Process. The ITA is only available in electronic form, accessed via the Find a Grant platform. https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/

3. Applicants are required to complete the on-line questionnaire including the technical questions and budget plan, in accordance with the instructions set out in Find a Grant.

4. It is important that Applicants provide all the information asked for in the ITA in the order and format, and using the file naming convention specified. This enables the Authority to consider applications fairly and equally.

5. Applicants should read this ITA carefully before submitting an Application. The ITA sets out:
   - the timetable and process for the Application
   - sufficient information to allow Applicants to submit a compliant Application
   - information regarding the evaluation criteria which will be used to assess the Applications
   - the administrative arrangements for the receipt of Applications

6. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they understand the requirements for this Application Process. If any information is unclear or if an Applicant considers that insufficient information has been provided, it should raise a query via the clarification process described below.

7. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they have submitted a complete and accurate Application and that costs quoted are arithmetically correct.

8. By applying, Applicants accept the terms and conditions in the ITA and the Code of Conduct for Recipients of Government General Grants. Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the ITA or the provision or false, inaccurate or misleading information, may result in the Applicant's exclusion from this Application Process.

9. If there is any conflict between the information set out in the ITA and the information displayed in Find a Grant, the information set out in the ITA shall take precedence over the information displayed in Find a Grant.

Proposed Timetable

10. The timetable below is subject to change by the Authority. Applicants will be informed accordingly.

Issue Invitation to Apply (ITA) on Find a Grant		05/01/2026
Deadline for clarification questions from Applicants	Date	06/02/2026
	Time	12:00 GMT
Deadline for submission of Applications	Date	27/02/2026
	Time	17:00 GMT
Applicant Due Diligence Prior to Evaluation		March 2026
Evaluation of Applications		March/April 2026
Post Evaluation Enhanced Applicant Due Diligence		May 2026
Funding award notification		from June 2026
Funding start date		from July 2026
Monitoring and Reporting Period	Start	from July 2026
	End	31/03/2029

Funding end date		31/03/2029
Submission of final reporting including grant usage certificate		28/04/2029

Completion of Application

11. By applying, Applicants agree to be bound by the terms of the ITA if the Authority accepts the Application via Find a Grant.

12. The Authority may amend or withdraw all or any part of this ITA at any time. All applicants will be notified of any such amendment or withdrawal. In order to give Applicants reasonable time in which to take into account an amendment in preparing their Applications, the Authority, at its discretion, may extend the deadline for the submission of Applications and/or any other stages of the Application Process.

13. During the period of this competition all communications from Applicants (including their Partnership members, consultants and advisers) must be undertaken by email to SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk unless stated otherwise by the Authority. The Authority will not respond to communications made by other means.

Submission of Applications

14. Applicants must complete all parts of the Application form in Find a Grant in accordance with the instructions therein.

15. As part of an Application, in accordance with the instructions in Find a Grant, the Applicant must read and confirm acceptance of the Eligibility Question when starting the online application.

16. The Application and any documents accompanying it must be in English and submitted in accordance with the ITA.

17. Costs must be submitted in £ Sterling, inclusive of irrecoverable VAT, but excluding recoverable VAT.

18. Only Applications verified as complete and compliant, in accordance with the Conditions of Application, will be evaluated. You will be notified if your application has not qualified for technical evaluation.

19. Applicants must be explicit and comprehensive in their Application as this will be the single source of information used to score and rank Applications. The Authority will only take account of information specifically asked for in the ITA.

20. Where a length of response is stipulated, for example, a word count or page limit, only the information within the set limit will be evaluated.

21. Failure to provide the information required or supply documentation referred to in the Application within the deadline for Applications may result in rejection of the Application.

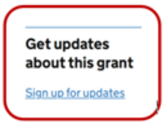
22. Applicants should only refer to general marketing or promotional information/material if specifically required by the question. General marketing or promotional information / material not deemed specifically relevant to the question may not be accepted.

23. Multiple project applications are only allowed where the Authority has provided more than one unique reference code to the applicant. In this case the applicant need only make one on-line organisational application on Find a Grant. Any documents required for each additional project application must be submitted on-line when prompted to do so. All attachments for each project application should be uploaded as a zipped file using the correct naming convention for each document. You may only submit one organisational application on Find a Grant. If the Authority has issued you a condition to work collaboratively with other projects, you should aim to return as one strategic project at full application and select one of the constituent projects' unique reference codes and use this.

Clarifications sought by Applicants

24. Any request for clarification regarding the ITA should be submitted at the earliest opportunity via email to SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk with the subject heading 'ITA clarification question and unique reference code' and in any event no later than the deadline for clarifications set out in the Timetable. The Authority shall be under no obligation to respond to queries raised after the clarification deadline.

25. The Authority will respond to all clarifications as quickly as possible but cannot guarantee a minimum response time. The Authority will publish all clarifications and its responses to all Applicants on Find a Grant other than in exceptional circumstances. Clarification updates will be added to the Find a Grant opportunity as a Q&A document. **To receive an alert that the Q&A document has been updated you will need to have selected 'sign up for updates' on the front page of the Find a Grant advert.**



26. If an Applicant believes that a request for clarification is commercially sensitive or that publishing the same together with the Authority's response as set out above would reveal confidential information, disclosure of which would be detrimental to the Applicant, the Applicant should clearly state this when submitting the clarification request. However, if the Authority considers that:

    - the clarification is not commercially sensitive or confidential; or
    - all Applicants may benefit from its disclosure

    The Authority will inform the Applicant via email, and the Applicant will have an opportunity to withdraw the request for clarification. If the request for clarification is not withdrawn within 48 hours of the notification, the clarification request and Authority's response will be published to all Applicants.

27. The Authority may not respond to a request for clarification or publish such a request where the Authority considers that the response may prejudice the Authority's commercial interests or be contrary to public interest. In such circumstances, the Authority will inform the Applicant of its view.

Changes to Applications

28. Applicants may modify their Application prior to the deadline for Applications. No Applications may be modified after the deadline for Applications. In the event that an

Applicant submits early but wishes to modify their Application before the deadline please contact the Authority by email SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk.

29. Applicants may withdraw their Applications at any time by submitting an email to SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk. Unless withdrawn, Applications shall remain valid and open to acceptance by the Authority for 120 days from the deadline for Applications.

Receipt of Applications

30. Applications must be uploaded onto Find a Grant no later than the time and date set out in the Timetable as the deadline for Applications. Applications received before that deadline will remain unopened until that deadline or such time thereafter when all Applications are opened together. The Authority will not consider Applications received after the deadline. The Authority may, however, at its own discretion, extend the deadline and in such circumstances, the Authority will notify all Applicants of any change.

31. If an Applicant is experiencing problems when uploading its Application, they should contact the Find a Grant helpdesk for assistance at findagrant@cabinetoffice.gov.uk and inform the Authority via SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk.

Acceptance of Applications

32. By issuing this ITA, communicating with an Applicant or an Applicant's representative or agents or any other communication in respect of this competition, the Authority shall not be bound to accept any Application or award any of the funding for which Applications are invited. The Authority reserves the right to withdraw or terminate the competition at any time.

Costs of Application

33. Applicants shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of their Applications. The Authority will not be responsible or liable for those costs regardless of the outcome in relation to individual Applications, even if the Authority amends or terminates the competition.

Clarifications sought by the Authority

34. The Authority reserves the right (but is not obliged) to seek clarification of any aspect of an Application and/or provide additional information during the evaluation phase in order to carry out a fair evaluation. Failure to respond in a timely manner and/or to provide an adequate response to such a request may result in rejection of the Application.

Confidentiality of the ITA and related documents

35. The contents of this ITA and of any other documents or information published or provided by the Authority in respect of this competition are provided on condition that they remain the property of the Authority and are kept confidential (save in so far as they are already in the public domain). The Applicant shall take all necessary precautions to ensure that they remain confidential and not disclosed, save as described below.

36. Applicants may disclose information relating to the grant Application Process to their advisers and sub-contractors in the following circumstances:

- disclosure is for the purpose of enabling an Application to be submitted and the recipient of the information undertakes in writing to keep it confidential on the same terms as the Applicant;

- the disclosure is made for the purpose of obtaining legal advice in relation to the competition; or

- the Applicant is legally required to disclose the information.

37. No Applicant will undertake any publicity activities with any part of the media in relation to this ITA without the prior agreement of the Authority, including agreement on the format and content of any publicity. For example, no statements may be made to the media regarding the nature of any Application, its contents or any proposals relating to it without the prior written consent of the Authority.

38. All central government departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies are subject to control and reporting within government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure.

39. For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within government any of the Applicant's documents and information (including any that the Applicant considers confidential and/or commercially sensitive) provided in its Application. The information will not be disclosed outside government during the Application Process. Applicants consent to these terms as part of the Application Process.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations

40. In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the FOIA and the EIR, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies, the Authority may disclose information submitted to it by an Applicant.

41. If an Applicant considers any information which it supplies to be commercially sensitive or of a confidential nature, the Applicant should:

    - clearly identify such information as commercially sensitive

    - explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information

    - provide an estimate of the period of time during which the Applicant believes that such information will remain commercially sensitive

42. The Authority will endeavour to maintain confidentiality of information identified by an Applicant as being confidential in nature and/or commercially sensitive. Pursuant to a request for this information under FOIA and/or EIR, the Authority where practicable, will consult with an Applicant before disclosure.

43. However, even where information is identified by an Applicant as being confidential or commercially sensitive, Applicants acknowledge that there may be circumstances in which the Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FOIA or the EIR (in addition to any other transparency obligations). In particular, the Authority is required to form an independent judgment concerning whether the information is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. Accordingly, the Authority cannot guarantee that any information marked "confidential" or "commercially sensitive" will not be disclosed and accepts no liability for any loss or prejudice caused by the disclosure of information.

44. If an Applicant receives a request for information relating to this competition under the FOIA or the EIR during the competition, this should be passed immediately on to the

Authority and the Applicant should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting the Authority.

Disclaimers

45. Whilst the information in this ITA and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to the Applicants by the Authority have been prepared in good faith, the Authority does not warrant (expressly or impliedly) or represent that this information is comprehensive, reasonable nor accurate, or that it has been independently verified.

46. Neither the Authority nor its respective advisors, directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents:

    - makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the ITA or of any other written or oral communication transmitted (or otherwise made available) to any Applicant;
    - accepts any liability for the information contained in the ITA or any other written or oral communication (including any communications via Find a Grant) transmitted (or otherwise made available) to any Applicant, or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or
    - shall be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

47. Any party considering entering into an Agreement with the Authority following receipt of the ITA should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

48. Neither the issue of the ITA nor any of the information presented in it should be regarded as a commitment or representation on the part of the Authority to enter into a grant funding agreement. Nothing in the ITA or in any other communication made between the Authority and any other party, should be interpreted as constituting an agreement or representation between the Authority and any other party (save for a formal award of grant funding) or as constituting an agreement or representation that grant funding shall be offered.

Canvassing

49. Any Applicant which directly or indirectly canvasses any officer, member, employee, or agent of the Authority or its members or any other relevant body or any of its officers or members concerning the Agreement or this Application Process or who directly or indirectly obtains or attempts to obtain information from any such officer, member, employee or agent concerning any other Applicant, Application or proposed Application will be excluded from this competition and its Application rejected.

50. The Applicant shall not contact any other employee, agent or consultant of the Authority who is in any way connected with the Project during this Application Process, unless instructed otherwise by the Authority.

Conflicts of Interest

51. The concept of a Conflict of Interest includes any situation where relevant staff members of the Authority, involved in this grant Application Process have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise

their impartiality and independence in the context of the grant Application Process and/or affect the integrity of the grant offer.

52. Where the Applicant is aware of any circumstances giving rise to a Conflict of Interest or has any indication that a Conflict of Interest exists or may arise it should inform the Authority of this as soon as possible (whether before or after submission of an Application). Applicants should remain alert to the possibility of conflicts of interest arising at all stages of the grant Application Process and should update the Authority if any new circumstances or information arises, or there are any changes to information already provided to the Authority. Failure to do so, and/or to manage properly any conflicts of interest may result in rejection of an Application.

Changes to an Applicant's circumstances

53. The Authority may:

- reject an Application where there is a change of identity, control, financial standing or other factor which may affect the Authority's evaluation of the Application; or
- revisit information contained in an Application at any time to take account of subsequent changes to an Applicant's circumstances; or
- at any point during the Application Process, require an Applicant to certify there has been no material change to information submitted in its Application and in the absence of such certificate, reject the Application.

Joint Applications, Collaboration and Subcontracting

54. Where a Partnership Application is proposed, Applicants are required to complete the relevant questions in the Standard Qualification Questions section of the on-line application. This must include a completed Partnership Form Annex F and include information of all Partnership members including the lead applicant. Note that a Partnership agreement will need to be provided to the Authority if the Partnership is made a grant offer.

55. Relevant information should be provided in the Application in respect of each organisation that will play a significant role in the delivery of the Project.

56. Where an organisation in a joint Application change at any time during the competition, the Applicants should inform the Authority immediately via SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk. In such circumstances, the Authority reserves the right to take such action, including excluding the organisation from participation in the competition, where the change in membership is material to the Authority's evaluation of the Application.

57. The Applicant shall ensure that its sub-contractors and advisers abide by the terms of the ITA.

Costs

58. As stated above, costs and any financial data provided must be submitted in £ Sterling, inclusive of irrecoverable VAT, but excluding recoverable VAT. Where official documents include financial data in a foreign currency, a Sterling equivalent must be provided, calculated at the exchange rate at the time you submit the Application.

59. The relevant question in the Technical Questionnaire in Find for a Grant sets out the minimum cost information required for the Application. The Authority may request a more detailed breakdown of any cost information provided as part of an Application.

60. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure their Application accurately reflects their VAT liabilities. If the application is successful and it subsequently transpires there has been an error in the Application, the Authority shall be under no obligation to increase Grant Funding to meet any VAT liability of the Applicant.

61. Please don't forget, if you're a UK Taxpayer, you'll receive your grant or subsidy payments without tax taken off. You may need to tell HMRC about these. For more information go to Business Income Manual 40451[1]. You may wish to discuss this with your accountant.

Notification of Award

62. The Authority will notify successful and unsuccessful Applicants via email of the results of their Application. Successful applicants will then be asked to register on Atamis from where the grant agreement will be issued and managed.

[1] Business Income Manual 40451

SECTION B: THE SPECIES RECOVERY PROGRAMME

Natural England's Species Recovery Programme (SRP) has provided support for England's threatened native species since 1991. Working with partners across the country, the Species Recovery Programme has saved many of England's (and the UK's) most threatened species from extinction. Historically, this includes the Cirl Bunting and Large Blue Butterfly, and more recently it has contributed to conservation efforts for species such as the Turtle Dove and Fen Orchid.

The Species Recovery Programme delivers targeted action for threatened species with bespoke needs, above and beyond what other delivery mechanisms can address.

'Targeted action' broadly comprises the following activities, enabling 'improved prospects' for species and moving them along the Species Recovery Curve:

- fundamental ecological research to diagnose causes of decline and develop prescriptions for recovery
- essential survey to establish the current status of species under threat of extinction
- solution trialling of new approaches
- conservation translocations
- highly targeted species and habitat management to secure the immediate future of threatened species

Policy Priorities

The main policy driver of the Species Recovery Programme is:

- The Environment Act 2021 target to reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022, as set out in The Environmental Targets (Biodiversity) (England) Regulations 2022.

Other policy drivers are:

- The target for in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats to be restored or created Environment Act Habitat Target – Definitions and Descriptions - TIN219.
- The Environmental Improvement Plan goal for restored nature. Commitment 14: take targeted action to conserve and recover threatened species
- Natural England's new strategy: Recovering Nature for Growth, Health and Security, where the SRP is a key mechanism for achieving Outcome 1 (Recovering Nature).

Through the SRP, Natural England seeks to offer funding across a range of taxonomic groups and threat statuses (albeit with prioritisation of the most threatened species at risk of imminent national extinction); action encompassing research and delivery; good geographical coverage of projects; and a range of applicant organisations, within the total programme budget available.

Species Priorities

The Species Recovery Programme will focus its funding on projects that address the needs of those species which are listed in the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TSRA) dataset Threatened Species Recovery Actions 2025 baseline - JP065 as needing conservation or recovery in England AND that their recovery/conservation depends on species-specific actions. Within these 1908 species, those most at risk of imminent national extinction will be prioritised.

A minority of species which are not listed on TSRA have been approved for inclusion during this SRP phase on the basis of there being a greater than 50% chance of extinction in Great Britain in the next 10 years or 3 generations of the species, whichever is longer.

Eligibility

Eligible Location

This grant is for activities in England. Although we will consider cross-border projects for research only, we will determine applications based on the benefits to species in England, either through direct delivery, or the transfer of knowledge through research that is directly applicable. We will not fund on-the-ground delivery outside of England.

SRP will not fund options covered through pre-existing agri-environment scheme agreements. SRP should be focused on funding highly bespoke actions that TSRA species require which are above and beyond most agri-environment agreements and options. For instance, we can fund action where additional management tailoring or coordination of activity across multiple landholdings is required.

A SRP-funded project can take place on land which is included in other government schemes (e.g. Environmental Land Management), on the basis that the SRP funding provides clear additionality. You must ensure you declare any other sources of funding that you receive for relevant works at your project location. We cannot provide duplicate funding.

Eligible Applicants

Applications can only be submitted if the applicant was invited to apply following the SRP Call for Ideas (CFI) in October to November 2025. **Your unique reference code which was provided to you when invited must be used in your application**. Applications from Partnerships need to identify the lead partner in the application. Partnerships will be required to complete a Partnership form (Annex F).

If the NE SRP Team has issued you a condition to work collaboratively with other project(s) you should aim to return as **one strategic project** at full application and select **one** of the constituent projects' unique reference codes to use. Projects that have been conditioned to work collaboratively with other projects **must** adhere to the following principles:

- delivery and management of the project must be fully integrated, and not multiple separately managed and delivered projects listed in one application form
- the total funding requested of the collaborative project should exhibit resource efficiencies and cost savings and therefore should be lower than the combined indicative funding requested at CFI stage across the constituent projects

Eligible organisations can lead or be partners in multiple projects provided they have the capacity and capability to deliver to acceptable standards within the time available.

You **cannot** apply for funding if:

- you have not been formally invited to apply

- the applicant organisation which was invited to apply has ceased to operate, has filed for bankruptcy etc
- your organisation is not formally constituted, registered with the charities commission or companies house
- you are a company applying for profit or gain
- you are a private individual applying for private gain

Ineligible organisations or individuals may be 'supporting' partners in applications but cannot be the lead applicant and cannot be in receipt of funding from the SRP.

Scheme Criteria

Essential criteria against which applications will be assessed are:

- the applicant/lead partner must be an eligible organisation within the terms of this scheme
- projects must focus on action for those species detailed in the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TSRA) dataset which have been determined need species-specific conservation action; or a small number of species where an exception has already been agreed
- the project proposed and the methods of delivery must be suitable to achieve species recovery improvements and significantly address the chosen TSRA actions
- value for money - projects must represent good value for money and create a sustainable legacy
- degree of threat and urgency of action will be used to help prioritise projects, as will the capacity of the project to materially improve the conservation prospects of the species concerned

In addition, it is desirable that projects:

- work strategically to deliver highly targeted action at the scale most appropriate for the target species
- deliver added value by either:
    - addressing multiple TSRA actions for the same species to achieve a bigger impact on its overall recovery
    - or undertaking action for multiple species (recovery assemblages or integrated package of actions) where this is ecologically appropriate
- mobilise support or public engagement for their target species

Funding Criteria

The funding available for SRP this phase is a combination of capital and resource. Capital funding can only be used to deliver work which enhances or creates tangible assets (e.g. property and equipment, heritage assets such as nature reserves) or intangible assets like new scientific knowledge. Resource funding is money that is spent on day-to-day resources and administration costs. There are strict rules pertaining to eligible expenditure. You must ensure you read and understand the Funding Criteria as set out here before applying. Requests for funding towards ineligible costs will be removed from application budgets before being approved and any applications which do not sufficiently meet the funding criteria will be rejected.

The Natural England financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March, the quarters are therefore Q1 April to June, Q2 July to September, Q3 October to December, Q4 January to March. Funding approved at grant award in each financial year cannot be moved into a different financial year. Yearly budget and total budget approved at grant award are maximums and may reduce according to your eligible approved expenditure.

We expect funding offers to be made and funding agreements to be in place by the end of quarter 1, with project delivery beginning in quarter 2 of 2026/27.

It is important that you identify in your application which of your project costs are capital and which are resource. Across the whole portfolio of projects, we are looking to fund a combination of capital and resource activity at a ratio of 2:1 capital to resource. The Budget Plan Template (Annex D) categorises different expenditure types into either capital or resource as shown below together with some definitions and examples. You should use the correct cost category for each item on your budget plan. These will be checked as part of the application evaluation and will need to be corrected if wrongly categorised.

Cost Category	**Type of Funding**	**Definition / Example (some are described in more detail below)**
Audit costs	Resource	Grants only - cost of external auditors for mandatory project auditing.
Conservation translocation	Capital	Costs associated with a conservation translocation (e.g. captive breeding/propagation, Disease Risk Assessment, release/planting).
Consumables	Resource	Sundries, research consumables etc, items which cannot be capitalised.
Contractor fees	Capital	Costs paid to supplier via a contract for capital works or research including consultant fees, site surveys and technical designs (proper procurement procedures must be evidenced)
Equipment/machinery hire	Resource	Equipment or machinery hire costs necessary to deliver the project
Equipment/machinery purchase	Capital	Purchase of equipment or machinery necessary to deliver the project (this includes information panels and purchase or development of computer software required for project delivery)
Habitat creation	Capital	Habitat expansion, enhancement, defragmentation, improved connectivity (e.g. stepping stones, wildlife corridors), ecologically coherent networks (and associated materials)
Habitat management	Resource	Targeted (site level) habitat management, focussing on maintaining or restoring seral stage/s, habitat structure and/or species composition (and associated materials)
Land purchase	Capital	Cost of purchasing land. Conveyancing/legal fees should be assigned to Professional fees
Monitoring (targeted)	Resource	Monitoring the species or its habitat; associated data management and evaluation. Monitoring or testing the effectiveness of work you have delivered.

		Development of novel monitoring methods should be classified as scientific research.
Overheads/FCR (Full Cost Recovery)	Resource	Organisational overheads, usually a set amount per full time equivalent member of staff
Professional fees	Capital	Including fees incurred for statutory permissions, licences and consents where essential for the delivery of the project
Project travel & subsistence	Resource	Mileage rate for staff travel (not exceeding HMRC standard rates). Subsistence allowances for staff working away from their employment base.
Publicity & promotion	Resource	Project specific communications. General communications, newsletters, webpages, social media posts etc cannot be funded by our grant and should be match funded
Recruitment	Resource	Costs associated with employing new project staff - advertising, interviewing
Scientific research	Capital	e.g. Evidence gathering/sharing, evidence reviews, literature searches, taxonomic/genetic research, identification traits, autecological studies, feasibility studies, investigating drivers of decline or blockers of recovery, experimental management (trials/pilots) etc
Site infrastructure	Capital	For instance: gates, fences, visitor management structures, water control structures such as sluices & culverts
Staff costs - education /awareness raising	Resource	Demonstration sites, delivering training, production of management guides, case studies, species accounts
Staff costs - finance/admin	Resource	Salary costs specifically for managing finance and administration relating to project expenditure and claims
Staff costs - landowner advice & support	Resource	Salary costs for advising and supporting site owners and managers to implement site-level actions for target species
Staff costs - project delivery & management	Capital	Salary costs for staff directly delivering research, land management and species recovery activities
Survey costs	Resource	Baseline surveys, DNA detection, red list assessments, population data collation/curation
Training	Resource	Staff training, whether formal training course or informal on the job training, specifically required for the project. General training, not specific to the project, cannot be funded by our grant and should be match funded

Eligible and Ineligible Expenditure

Please refer to the Grant Funding Agreement (Annex A or Annex B) for further details about eligible and ineligible expenditure.

Please note that inflation funding to allow for cost increases in years two and three of delivery should be included within the above costs, not itemised separately.

Staff Costs

Staff costs are eligible for funding where they work directly on the eligible components of the project. Staff costs must be divided into the following different kinds:

- Staff costs - education/awareness raising (Resource): this includes:
  - promoting understanding of the target species and its requirements
  - producing species identification guides
  - raising awareness of species needs
  - producing management guidance
  - training land managers
  - producing information boards
- Staff costs - finance/admin (Resource), this includes:
  - producing purchase orders for suppliers
  - invoicing partners
  - paying project costs
  - minuting project meetings
  - collating information for grant reports and claims
  - completing grant claims
- Staff costs - landowner advice & support (Resource), this includes:
  - providing targeted land management advice
  - advising and supporting site owners and managers to implement site-level actions for target species
- Staff costs - project delivery & management (Capital), this includes:
  - project management
  - project design
  - planning and communication of plans with landowners, partners, contractors and other affected parties
  - project delivery (conducting surveys, research, solution trialling or on-site work)
  - writing briefs procuring and managing contractors
  - supervising the work of others (contractors, staff, partners, volunteers)
  - follow up monitoring to ensure effectiveness of the activities completed

For each staff role included in your application, you need to provide information on:

- the cost of employment comprising gross salary, employers National Insurance contribution, employers pension contribution, paid leave and other contractual employee benefits

For part time staff you should calculate staff costs pro-rata, e.g. for a member of staff who works two days a week on your project, costs should be two-fifths of their full-time costs.

Overheads

We are now able to contribute towards necessary organisational overheads using the resource element of our budget. If you would like to include this in your grant request you must provide evidence of how your overheads are calculated and what is included, for instance a breakdown showing each component (i.e. management time, HR, IT support) and cost per full time equivalent staff member. Overheads should be pro rata for part-time staff. The amount we will pay will be based on the evidence you provide. If your overhead rate exceeds 20% of staff wage costs, we will cap our contribution at 20% and you must contribute the remainder as match funding.

Audit Costs

Fees charged or to be charged to the Grant Recipient by external auditors/accountants for reporting/certifying that the grant paid was applied for its intended purposes are eligible costs. Please note that all Grant Recipients need to engage an auditor to conduct an examination of their project accounts as part of the grant closure procedure. If these costs are not included in your budget plan at application and grant offer stage, these costs must be borne by the grant recipient when incurred.

Scope of Audit

The audit should be conducted in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). Key standards to be adhered to include:

- ISA (UK) 200: Overall Objectives of the Independent Auditor and the Conduct of an Audit in Accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK)
- ISA (UK) 210: Agreeing the Terms of Audit Engagements
- ISA (UK) 315: Identifying and Assessing the Risks of Material Misstatement
- ISA (UK) 240: The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements

Audit Requirements

- Segregation of Funds: identify separately the value and purpose of the Grant Funding in audited accounts and annual report.
- Compliance with Grant Terms: ensure that the Grant has been used solely for the delivery of the Funded Activities as specified in the grant agreement.
- Review of Financial Statements: verify the final statement of expenditure and income submitted to the Authority.
- Internal Controls: assess the adequacy of internal controls related to the management and use of the Grant funds.
- Fraud Risk Assessment: report on the adequacy of internal financial controls to safeguard against fraud.

For further details on UK auditing standards, please refer to the Financial Reporting Council's website: [FRC Auditing Standards]

Ineligible Costs

The types of costs which are **not eligible** for SRP funding in any circumstance and should **not** be included in your project budget include:

- general staff training or volunteer training which is not specific to the delivery of the project (e.g. new staff induction, generic staff training, DSE assessment, staff appraisals)
- general (non-project) team meetings
- general communications and engagement work that is not essential in order to deliver the project (e.g. web pages and digital content creation, social media content creation, newsletters, press releases, media interviews and filming)

- buying out tenancy agreements
- landowner compensation for inconvenience or loss of income
- activities related to discharge of contractual or legal obligations
- recoverable VAT
- costs incurred before the grant is awarded
- paid for lobbying, which means using the Grant to fund lobbying (via an external firm or in-house staff) in order to undertake activities intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, government or political activity; or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action
- using the Grant to directly enable one part of government to challenge another on topics unrelated to the agreed purpose of the grant
- using the Grant to petition for additional funding
- expenses such as for entertaining, specifically aimed at exerting undue influence to change government policy
- payments for activities of a political or exclusively religious nature

SRP Definitions

Conservation Translocations

Work associated with conservation translocations can be included provided the project follows the 'Reintroductions and other conservation translocations code and guidance for England' which can be found here: [Reintroductions and conservation translocations in England: code, guidance and forms - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)]

Projects proposing conservation translocations will be prioritised where:

- the species is threatened nationally or globally
- the species creates or restores habitats and generates conditions that serve many other species as well as ecosystem functions
- extending the geographical distribution of a species' population to support the health of metapopulation systems and/or guard against the risk of population extinction (e.g. assisted colonisation to help species adapt to climate change)
- the project has a clear legacy plan for resourcing future population reinforcement where necessary

The following is out of scope of SRP:

- not ordinarily resident species or regular visitors, vagrant strays
- Wildlife & Countryside Act Schedule 9 (part 1) species (except those already subject to NE-endorsed reintroduction programmes in England)
- translocations where the proposed donor stock to be used is deemed inappropriate by Natural England

You will be expected to complete a disease risk assessment for your conservation translocation and include these costs within your project budget. Applicants are encouraged to read the following Natural England blog on conservation translocations before applying. [Using species conservation translocations as a tool for nature recovery]

Invasive Non-Native Species

The control or eradication of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) can play a key part in the approach to species recovery. In many circumstances this is ongoing work, in which case this activity cannot be funded by capital expenditure. However, where carried out as a time-limited intensive activity aimed at local elimination (e.g. island rats impacting on nesting seabirds; mink control to aid water vole recovery), and directly attributable to target species reintroduction or recovery work, INNS removal can be eligible for capital funding. This must be part of the work required to enhance the location or site so that the habitat has enhanced ecological function. We require reasonable assurance that the species in question would not re-populate to the same level from surrounding areas, therefore subsequent lower-level INNS control and maintenance activity will need to be included in your legacy plans.

Wildlife Rich Habitat

The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP23) published on 31 January 2023 sets out government targets and commitments on habitats. This includes the long-term legally binding Environment Act habitat target to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside of protected sites by 2042. A new interim target was also set within the EIP23 to restore or create 140,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats outside protected sites by 2028.

Creating or restoring wildlife-rich habitat for the direct purpose of conserving eligible target species increases the ecological value of that land in line with Natural England's objectives. Please refer to the Environment Act Habitat Target Definitions and Descriptions document here: Environment Act Habitat Target – Definitions and Descriptions - TIN219

Specific Guidance

Research & Development (R&D)

Research and Development (R&D) is defined by the European System of Accounts 2010 (ESA10) as: "Creative work undertaken on a systematic basis to increase the stock of knowledge, and/or use of this knowledge for the purpose of discovering or developing new or improved versions of products, goods or services, or discovering or developing new or more efficient processes of production". This includes activities aimed at providing decision makers with a thorough knowledge about social, economic or natural phenomena.
The term R&D covers three types of activity: (a) basic research (b) applied research (c) experimental development.

Research refers to original and planned investigations undertaken with the prospect of gaining new scientific or technical knowledge and understanding.

The activity must meet all five of the following criteria which define R&D:

- aimed at new findings (**novel**). This includes acquiring new knowledge directed primarily towards a specific aim or objective. It also encompasses experimental development projects, aimed at creating knowledge in support of the development of new concepts and ideas related to the design of new products or processes
- based on new concepts or ideas with the objective of improving on existing knowledge (**creative**). This includes R&D to improve methods or ways of doing things

- uncertain about its final outcome (**uncertain**)
- systematically performed. R&D is conducted in a planned way, with the process and outcomes documented (**systematic**)
- lead to results that have the potential to be reproduced (**transferable and/or reproducible**)

Obligation Period

You must:

- maintain any capital items funded through the scheme for a period of five years from the date of final grant payment for the capital items. This is called the Obligation Period of the grant
- have management control of the land where capital intervention occurs for the length of the Grant Funding Period to undertake the capital work and ongoing maintenance during the Obligation Period
- if you do not have management control, you must get the written agreement of all other parties who have management control of the land to undertake these activities for the duration of the Grant Funding Period and Obligation Period

Due to restrictions on our funding, we are unable to pay for any costs you may incur during the Obligation Period; therefore, as part of the value for money section of your grant application you should indicate how you will meet this obligation.

Value for Money

Value for Money (VfM) means achieving the best possible outcomes from public funds by balancing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. It is not simply about choosing the lowest cost option, it requires considering quality, sustainability, and long-term benefits. This guidance aligns with HM Treasury's Managing Public Money and Government Grant Standards.

Expectations for Applicants:

- demonstrate how your proposal delivers VfM across the project lifecycle
- provide evidence that costs are reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the benefits
- show consideration of alternative options and why your chosen approach is optimal

To ensure VfM in procurement:

- competitive process - obtain multiple quotes or tenders for goods and services wherever possible
- transparent evaluation - use clear criteria considering price, quality, sustainability, and supplier reliability
- documentation - keep records of procurement decisions, quotes, and evaluations for audit purposes
- conflict of interest - declare and manage any potential conflicts in supplier selection.

Applicants should consider environmental impact and alignment with sustainability objectives and any opportunities to deliver wider social benefits (e.g., local employment, community engagement).

All costs should be proportionate, justifiable and ensure good value for money. Outline costs of project ideas submitted in response to the Call for Ideas should not simply be copied across, all costs need to be justified. Where Natural England feedback and/or conditions included removing elements of your idea, the costs in your application should decrease accordingly. Where ideas shortlisted at the Call for Ideas stage have been combined into single projects at application stage, we expect there to be cost efficiencies as a result.

Your application should provide evidence of how costs have been derived. Note that you will be required to provide evidence that you have followed proper procurement procedures during the Funding Period. If quotes are not available at the time of submitting your application, then you should provide an accompanying narrative explaining how you have derived your budget costs. Staff costs must be based on actual employment costs incurred, i.e. employer's gross salary cost, plus employer's pension contribution, plus employer's National Insurance contribution.

Natural England will assess the value for money for your project based on:

- total grant requested from the SRP
- intended outputs and outcomes
- appropriateness of costs provided
- evidence of proper procurement
- value of match funding provided
- value of in-kind and volunteer contributions offered
- plans for maintaining the benefits after the grant

The ITA gives further details and includes a budget plan template (Annex D). You should complete the required information according to the instructions provided in the template.

Enrolment in Other Schemes and Grants

A SRP grant can be applied on land which is entered into another scheme but **cannot pay for a similar activity or outcome on the same area of land at the same time** (known as double funding). This includes but is not limited to: Countryside Stewardship; Environmental Stewardship; Farming in Protected Landscapes; Environmental Land Management (ELM) Sustainable Farming Incentive, Landscape Recovery and Natural England's Conservation Enhancement Scheme.

Grants from the SRP can be active on the same land as agri-environment agreements and Conservation and Enhancement Scheme (CES), if the work is not:

- a commitment under the agreement
- claimed under the agreement
- needed due to a failure to deliver the agreement
- at odds with the aims of the agreement

If there is an existing agreement, the agreement holder must:

- get approval from the RPA before you carry out any works under our grant (if these are clearly on the same land)
- continue to meet the requirements of the agreement and keep the RPA informed

Grants cannot be used to pay for existing obligations from other funding streams such as Species Survival Fund or the Species Recovery Programme Capital Grant Scheme 2023-2025.

Full checks will be carried out to ensure there are no conflicts on record. Applicants who fail to declare existing funding on land they include in this application may be disqualified.

Match Funding

Match funding demonstrates shared responsibility, strengthens Value for Money, and supports sustainability. It can be provided in two forms:

Cash contributions - direct financial contributions from the applicant, partner organisations, or other eligible sources (e.g., other grants, donations).

In-kind contributions - non-cash support with a clear monetary value, such as:

- staff time dedicated to the project
- volunteer hours (valued at the given rate)
- use of equipment, facilities, or materials

Note that all match funding must be necessary, reasonable, and directly related to the project objectives. Double Funding is not permitted. Cash and in-kind contributions must be auditable and valued using a transparent method.

Reporting - Match funding must be:

- recorded in financial reports
- supported by documentation (e.g., invoices, timesheets, valuation statements).
- subject to audit and compliance checks

SECTION C: HOW TO APPLY AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications for our grant are competitive and by invitation only following the call for ideas process conducted in October to November 2025, they must be made through the cabinet office Find a Grant system https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/ Only shortlisted projects with assigned unique reference codes will be assessed. You will need to complete the on-line application process by answering **ALL** the qualification (including eligibility) and technical questions.

You may only submit one organisational application on Find a Grant. If you have been shortlisted for more than one project, there will be the opportunity to submit a Technical Application Form (Annex C) and budget plan (Annex D) for each separate project. In this case, please ensure the documents or zipped files are correctly named using the relevant unique reference code. Failure to do so may invalidate your application.

Where an attachment is required, you must use the following naming convention: [NE unique reference-followed by a short title for the document]. Note that you can submit zipped files but ensure you use the same naming convention for all files.

You will be able to access this Invitation To Apply (ITA) and associated documents through the 'Supporting information' tab in the Find a Grant advert. It is essential that you to read this ITA document and all its annexes thoroughly before submitting your application.

Once you have accessed the opportunity you can send any clarification questions to the SRPGrants@naturalengland.org.uk inbox. Clarification responses will be published on the Find a Grant platform every week (redacting any sensitive information), so that others can benefit.

Application Guidance

Your Application will be assessed in three stages. Applications will not be reviewed until the application window closes.

- **Stage One:** Standard Qualification assessment. This relates to your organisation. The Authority will assess your responses to the standard qualification questions, which operate on a pass/fail basis. Applications will only progress to stage 2 if they have passed stage 1.
- **Stage Two:** Technical assessment. This relates to your project application(s). Each project application is assessed against specified criteria and a moderated score decided.
- **Stage Three:** Balancing principles will be applied.

Standard Qualification Assessment

All Applications will be assessed using the following criteria.

	Application section in Find a Grant	Assessment Criteria
	Eligibility Statement	This is a mandated question. Failure to agree to the statement will prevent you from continuing with your application.
	Your Details	Failure to complete this mandated question will result in a 'fail' and elimination from the Application Process.
	Funding	Failure to complete this mandated question will result in a 'fail' and elimination from the Application Process.
SQ0	Unique Reference Code and funding request	Failure to provide an authentic unique reference code/s may result in a 'fail' and elimination from the Application Process.
SQ1	Lead Applicant	All information requested must be provided. Failure to provide all information will constitute a 'fail' and elimination from the Application Process.
SQ2	Application Model	All information requested, if applicable, must be provided. Information used for due diligence purposes.
SQ3	Financial Information	Financial information is assessed to determine the economic and financial standing of the organisation.
SQ4	Grant Recipient Code of Conduct	Failure to answer 'Yes' to this question may constitute a 'fail' and elimination from the Application Process. Information is assessed to determine whether the application may proceed.
SQ5	Conflict of Interest	The identification of an actual/ potential conflict of interest will be assessed to determine whether it will result in elimination from this Application Process.
SQ6	Legal Obligations	Information is assessed and due diligence undertaken to determine whether the application may proceed.
SQ7	Explanation to any negative responses	Information is assessed to determine whether the application may proceed.

Technical Assessment

SRP funding is an invitation only competitive process to select projects to address actions for species within the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TSRA) dataset.

An ideal application would clearly articulate the rationale for the proposed project and include well-described activities and outputs which are designed to deliver positive outcomes for the target species that will have a sizeable impact on the species' national recovery. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to deliver the project and provide detailed plans around the action they wish to undertake with this funding.

Guidance is provided below for each of the technical questions that form part of the grant application process. All sections of the Technical Application Form (Annex C) must be answered, if not applicable, please enter 'not applicable'. Any sections or sub-sections left blank will be considered incomplete and the application will fail. Examples are given in the application form to help you.

Technical Assessment Summary

Section	Section Subtitle	Scored	Weighting or Pass/Fail
1: Summary of Changes	1a: Required Conditions from Call for Ideas Stage. 1b: Changes You Have Made Since Call for Ideas Stage	No	Pass Pass with Conditions, or Fail
2: Project Summary	2: Project Summary	No	N/A
3: Project Description	3a: Aims and Objectives	Yes	40%
	3c: Activities Table		
	3b: Species and TSRA Actions	No	Pass Fail
4: Strategic Fit	4: Strategic Fit	No	N/A
5: Project Management	5a: Personnel and Skills	Yes	20%
	5b: Approvals: Permissions, Licensing, Consents etc	No	Pass Pass with Conditions, or Fail
	5c: Risk Management	No	
6: Research / Asset Descriptions	6a: Research and Development	Yes	10%
	6b: Asset Creation and Enhancement	Yes	
7: Value for Money	7a: Budget narrative (and accompanying budget plan)	Yes	30%
	7b: Legacy & Maintenance		

The final assessment stage will include a 'Balancing Principles' stage where the SRP Delivery Board will make the final funding decisions based on moderated score and balancing principles, see below for more information.

Section 1: Summary of Changes

Section 1a: Required Conditions from Call for Ideas Stage
When notified of the outcome of your call for ideas response Natural England may have provided a set of conditions which you are required to address in your full application. These must be set out in the table in section 1a, and you must explain how you have addressed each of these conditions.

Projects that have been given conditions to work collaboratively with other SRP projects **must** adhere to the following principles:

- you should aim to return as **one strategic project** at full application, and select **one** of the constituent projects' unique reference codes to use
- delivery and management of the project must be fully integrated, and not multiple separately managed and delivered projects listed in one application form
- the total funding requested for the joined-up project should exhibit resource efficiencies and cost savings and therefore should be lower than the combined indicative funding requested at CFI stage across the constituent projects

If no conditions were given to you by Natural England, then you should enter the text 'not applicable'.

Section 1b: Changes You Have Made Since Call for Ideas Stage
If you have made any material changes to your project other than the conditions stipulated by Natural England, you should summarise them here. Material changes would include: change to lead applicant, changes to partners, changes to species and or TSRA actions, changes to delivery locations, changes to funding amount requested, changes to match funding contributions. If you do not draw our attention here to any changes you have made, this could result in your application being rejected. If the project has been fundamentally changed since invitation to apply, it is likely to be rejected.

If no material changes have been made, then you should enter the text 'not applicable'.

Evaluation Criteria for Section 1 Summary of Changes:
This section is not scored; however, if Natural England determines that its conditions have not been satisfactorily addressed, or that other changes that you have made materially impact the eligibility, suitability and quality of the project proposed, this section will fail or conditions will be applied.

Scoring: Pass/Pass with Conditions/Fail

Weighting to be applied: 0%.

Section 2: Project Summary

Project title: Should be succinct and relevant to the project.

Total SRP funding requested: Enter a value in pounds sterling which should match the amount of funding requested and shown in your budget plan (Annex D). This figure should not include any cash or non-cash match funding.

Person submitting this application: Provide name, role, organisation and email address for the person who is submitting the application form. Note that this person must have the requisite authority from their employing organisation to make the application.

Delivery lead for the project: If the project delivery lead will be different from the individual who has submitted the application provide their name, role, organisation and email address.

Project summary: In no more than 100 words succinctly describe your project. This text may be used in any NE or Defra publicity if your application is successful.

Project duration: Please indicate the intended start and end dates of the project for which you are seeking funding, using the format mm/yyyy.

List all project partner(s) involved in the project, including NE staff if applicable: Provide name, organisation and role in the project for each of the key delivery partners.

Taxonomic group: Select the appropriate taxonomic group(s) from the list provided.

Location of project: Select the appropriate Natural England region or regions from the list given (refer to the map in the link provided). If your project is working at a truly national scale or delivering research with national applicability, please place an X in the box for 'National'.

You must provide a project location map, with base map, scale bar and north arrow which shows any landscape designations (National Parks and National Landscapes) and clearly delineate the extent of your project area:

- **if your project involves a single site** – show geographical information (i.e. nearest town/city), any landscape designations and site boundary clearly delineated
- **if your project involves several sites** - show geographical information (i.e. towns/cities), any landscape designations and site boundaries clearly delineated. Multiple widespread sites may be shown as points if this aids clarity
- **if your project involves a wide area without defined sites** - show geographical information (i.e. towns/cities), any landscape designations and project area boundary clearly delineated
- **of your project is not site based** (i.e. desk/lab based without fieldwork) – no map required

Evaluation Criteria for Section 2 Project Summary:

This section is not scored.

Weighting to be applied: 0%.

Section 3: Project Description

Section 3a: Aims and Objectives

Use the table to set out the aims and objectives of your project. Aims are overarching, generally broad and long-term and not specific enough to measure, they usually start with 'to'. Objectives are shorter-term and define measurable actions to achieve an overall aim. When writing objectives remember to make them SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

Section 3b: Species and TSRA Actions

Refer to the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TSRA) dataset when completing this section Threatened Species Recovery Actions 2025 baseline - JP065

Complete the table using a new line for each different species and each different TSRA action you are addressing. For example, if you are working on three TSRA actions for one species then you should compete three lines of the table. Where the action text is the same for more than one species, still set out each species and action on separate lines. Add more lines to the table if needed and add sequential reference numbers to these.

The text can be copied from your call for ideas response or from the TSRA dataset.

The species named must be drawn from the list of eligible species provided in the 'Key actions summary' sheet of the TSRA dataset, or species not listed in TSRA but pre-approved by the SRP team.

> *This sub-section is not scored, however, note that the application would receive an automatic Fail if the species named are not included in the TSRA dataset or have not been pre-approved for inclusion, as described above.*
>
> *Weighting to be applied: 0%.*

Section 3c: Activities Table

In this section you should describe each of the activities you plan to carry out, when you will do them, who will do them, what the measurable outputs will be and what outcomes will result. Please include species and site/location names. Note that multiple activities and outputs may be needed to achieve each desired outcome, so outcomes can be repeated in this table.

An activity is a task or an action that you do to create or produce an output and/or outcome.

An output is an item or product (tangible or intangible) that is produced, constructed or created as a result of an activity.

An outcome is the change, difference or benefit for species, habitats or people that will result from the activities delivered and the outputs created or produced.

If you do not have the specific details for some activities, then explain why (for example specific site yet to be confirmed, in discussion with landowners).

> *Evaluation Criteria for Section 3 Project Description:*
>
> *Sub-sections 3a and 3c are scored.*
>
> *We are looking for clear articulation of how the project you are proposing (the activities and outputs) will directly address the stated TSRA actions for your chosen target species at the appropriate scale and duration to achieve national recovery, and lead to the outcomes you have described. There should be clear read through to show how these will address the aims and objectives you listed in section 3a.*
>
> *We are looking for the information provided to be clear concise and measurable. The information provided here will form part of your funding agreement and expected deliverables and timetable.*
>
> ***This section will be scored using the standard scoring matrix: 100 = Excellent, 70 = Good, 50 = Acceptable, 20 = Poor, 0 = Unacceptable.***
>
> ***Weighting applied to section 3 = 40%***

Section 4: Strategic Fit

In this section you should complete the table to name any applicable local or national strategies that your proposed project will make a contribution towards and briefly describe how.

Evaluation Criteria for Section 4 Strategic Fit:

This section is not scored, but Natural England requires this information for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Weighting to be applied: 0%.

Section 5: Project Management

Please tell us how you will manage the project to ensure delivery in the expected timescales.

Section 5a: Personnel and Skills

Tell us who will deliver your project:

- explain the structure of the project team (including staff, partners, contractors, specialists and volunteers), their roles in delivery and previous experience, and availability of staff to deliver the project
- provide assurance that the team has the skills necessary to deliver the activities, outputs and outcomes
- if recruiting any new staff specifically to deliver this project we will ask you to provide a job description and person specification together with a recruitment schedule within 3 months of making you a funding offer. Recruitment should be included as an activity in section 3c

Section 5b: Approvals: Permissions, Licensing, Consents etc

You must tell us if your project will deliver work on any protected site. By protected site we mean Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), National Nature Reserve (NNR), or Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).

You must tell us if your project requires any form of approvals. The term 'approval' is used to encompass any of the following: planning permission, SSSI assent, SSSI consent, historic environment consent, Flood Risk Assessment Permit, landowner permission. See the table below for additional information.

You must seek protected sites input from the relevant Natural England Area Team before submitting your application. Failure to do so may result in your application being rejected. You must provide a project map clearly showing all protected sites on which you will, or expect to, work. The sites should be clearly labelled with site name and designation. A separate key or accompanying table can be used to provide clarity.

You must follow all environmental and other appropriate regulations. You must apply and comply with any permissions, licences and regulations applicable to the activities in your project.

You will need landowner agreement that you can access the land to implement the works (including survey) funded by this grant scheme. You will need to secure and provide evidence of management control for any land, freshwater or marine environment where creation or enhancement works take place (this includes, but is not limited to: construction, infrastructure, signage, habitat management, habitat creation, species translocations).
In the application, please indicate the approvals you already have in place or have applied for and timescales for when you will receive them. You will also need to maintain the works for the Obligation Period of five years after the grant.

You should provide, as supporting documents, evidence of any approvals you already have or evidence of any submissions you have made for which you are awaiting approval. If your application is successful, you will be given a period of up to three months from the date the funding agreement is signed in which to provide all required approvals for at least the first year of the project.

PLEASE NOTE: The Find a Grant Application will not constitute a Notice of Proposal, and the grant offer will not act as SSSI Consent, Assent, or Advice.

Below is a summary guide to the potential environmental permissions you may need for a species recovery project in England, likely timelines are included and points of contact. It is strongly advised to begin this process well in advance of the upper end of the typical lead time to acquire any licences, to avoid costly delays and ensure projects run on time.

Category	Permission	When needed	Who issues it	Typical lead time
Protected Sites	SSSI consent	Any works on or affecting (within effect zones) a SSSI	Natural England	1-4 months (statutory)
	Habitat Regulations Assessment	If a project works may affect SAC / SPA / MCZ.	Competent authority (LPA, EA, MMO, NE, Section 28g authority)	Variable 1-4 months, can be longer for complex cases
Species Licencing	Conservation translocation licence	Reintroductions, translocations, moving live animals.	Natural England Wildlife Licensing Service (NEWLS)	~ 6-12+ weeks (Complex cases may take longer)
	Protected species survey licence	Surveys causing potential disturbance / capture (bats, GCN, dormice etc)	Natural England (NEWLS)	~ 30 working days on receipt of application
	Protected species mitigation licence	Works affecting protected species / roosts / resting places	Natural England (NEWLS)	~6-8+ weeks
Invasive Species	A08 Licence - Release / transportation of schedule 9 species	Project involves removal, transport, release (unlikely) of any species on Schedule 9 of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.	Natural England (NEWLS)	Typical is ~6-12 weeks
	A12 Licence - Invasive Non-Native species Management	Required for certain INNS where you would otherwise commit an offence (disturbing, killing)	Natural England (NEWLS)	~6-12 weeks
	A13 Licence - Possession of Invasive Species	Needed if handling, storing or temporarily possessing controlled INNS e.g. live animals, viable plant fragments, propagules.	Natural England (NEWLS)	~6-12 Weeks
	Invasive Alien Species Regulation (IAS 1143/2014 retained in UK	Required for any transport, handling, containment of species listed as Special concern e.g. grey squirrel, certain plants.	Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	~8-16 weeks

	law) Permit for Prohibited species			
	Waste Transfer Licence	If disposing of Invasive plant waste e.g. Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, rhododendron. A licensed waster carrier must be used	Environment Agency	Waste carrier- 1 week.
	Burning or burying invasive plant material on site	Some cases require an exemption registration (U1, D7)	Environment Agency	1-2 weeks
	Watercourse / riparian INNS removal	If works occur on or near main rivers (removal of INNS plants for example	Environment Agency (part of FRAP see below)	8-12 weeks
Water and Rivers	Ordinary Watercourse consent	Works affecting non-main river, stream, ditches, culverts, altering banks, abstraction / lowering / raising water levels. Flood defence, flood plain works. Near sea defence.	Lead Local Flood Authority (normally county council), IDB, Environment Agency	~1-2+ months depending on complexity
	Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP)	In-channel works, banks, near flood defences	Environment Agency	~6-13 weeks
	Environmental Permit	Discharges, abstractions, waste, groundwater activities	Environment Agency	~2-4+ months depending on complexity
	Fish movement/stocking consent	Moving, trapping or releasing fish / eels	EA fisheries team	~2-8 weeks
Marine / Coastal	Marine Licence	Anything below Mean High Water (restoration, structures, dredging)	Marine Management Organisation, NE	~13+ weeks
	Crown estate seabed consent	If using seabed / foreshore (moorings, habitat works)	The Crown Estate	Variable ~4-12+ weeks
Forestry and Habitat Management	Operations in ancient woodland	If within ancient woodland buffer (15m+)	Requires LPA + NE input and potentially protected sites permissions see above.	Variable
	Felling Licence	Tree felling, woodland modification, thinning, habitat works in woodlands (check with FC)	Forestry Commission	~3 weeks-3+ months depending on complexity
Land Use and Planning	Planning Permission	Earthworks, fencing, structures, access work, ponds (check with LPA for specific project)	Local Planning authority	~8-13+ weeks
Animal Health and Biosecurity	Animal Movement / Disease Risk Permissions	Moving live animals between sites for translocations /	APHA, DEFRA	~ 2-8 weeks

		reintroductions or management		
	Biosecurity Plan and Disease Risk Assessment	All translocations including amphibians, fish, crayfish, birds (check)	Required by Natural England, APHA, DEFRA	Integrated into licence above
Access and Land Ownership	Landowner permission / agreement	Any works. Could include surveys, releases, trapping, access, habitat works.	Landowner(s)	Depended on Landowner
	Commons Consent / permissions	Any works on registered common land (e.g. areas of Dartmoor)	Planning Inspectorate and LPA	~4-6 months dependent on complexity
Stakeholder Notifications	Pre-application phase of project	General good practice and communication, relevant parties should be informed and more likely to support if engaged at earliest stage	Local councils, NGOs, landowners, commoners, tenant farmers, wildlife groups.	N/A
Archaeology	Scheduled Monument Consent	Any work affecting a Scheduled Monument (often triggered by planning permission/application)	Historic England	~8-12 weeks or longer for complex cases
	Listed Building Consent	Works affecting a listed building or its curtilage (e.g., groundworks near a bank)	Local Planning Authority (aligned with planning permission)	~8-13 weeks depending on complexity
	Archaeological Desk Based Assessment	Required with planning permission on any site with potential archaeology	Commissioned by applicant and submitted to LPA for review.	~2-6 weeks for prep. 1-3 weeks for review
	Archaeological Evaluation (trial trenching)	When LPA requires ground investigation before deciding planning permission result	Commissioned by applicant. Monitored by LPA archaeologist	~4-8 weeks, reporting 4-6 weeks
	Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)	Required before evaluation, excavation or watching brief begins	Prepared by consultant. Approved by LPA archaeologist	~2-4 weeks to approval
	Archaeological watching brief	Required as condition of planning permission when low/moderate potential exists	Commissioned by applicant. Monitored by LPA archaeologist	Approval 2-4 weeks, undertaken during works
	Heritage conditions of planning permission	If project requires planning and archaeology is a major consideration	LPA	~8-13 weeks
	Conservation area consent / tree notification	Works in a conservation area, demolition, some tree works	LPA	~8-13 weeks
	Church Faculty Consent	Groundworks or alterations to churchyards or ecclesiastical buildings	Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)	Typical is ~8-12 weeks

	HER Historic Environment Record Search	Early stage due diligence to identify archaeology on site	County HER Officer	~1-3 weeks
	Registered Parks and Gardens/ Battlefields Assessment	If Project is within /affects a registered landscape	Historic England and LPA	~2-4 weeks
	Specialist surveys (geophysics, coring, paleoenvironmental)	When required by LPA before planning permission granted	Commissioned by applicant	~2-8 weeks depended on survey type

Section 5c: Risk Management:

Tell us what risks and dependencies are associated with your project and how you intend to manage them.

- complete the basic risk assessment table indicating your projects foreseeable risks and dependencies, ranking them High, Medium or Low impact and outlining your mitigating actions
- include reference to any contingency plans you may have

Evaluation Criteria for Section 5 Project Management:

Section 5a is scored. Sections 5b and 5c will be marked as Pass / Pass with Conditions / Fail.

In this section we are looking for assurance that you have the expertise, resource and processes necessary to deliver the project as proposed. We are looking for clear articulation of the structure of the project team, their roles for delivery, previous experience, and availability of staff to deliver the project. We also expect to see an understanding of effective risk and dependency management.

If any approvals are needed, failure to provide appropriate evidence that these have been secured, or a timetable for when these will be obtained, will result in the minimum score not being obtained.

Failure to identify and consider relevant risks and dependencies and to outline appropriate mitigation measures, will result in the minimum score not being obtained.

Scoring: Section 5a will be scored using the standard scoring matrix 100 = Excellent, 70 = Good, 50 = Acceptable, 20 = Poor, 0 = Unacceptable.

Scoring Section 5b and 5c: Pass / Pass with Conditions / Fail

Weighting applied to section 5 = 20%

Section 6: Research and Asset Descriptions

You should complete section 6a if your project includes any research, and section 6b if your project includes any site-based delivery such as habitat management or creation, infrastructure etc. If you are creating assets such as areas of habitat for the purposes of conducting research, then you should complete both sections.

Section 6a: Research and Development

You must set out how your planned research addresses each of the five R&D criteria of being novel, creative, uncertain, systematic and reproducible. The same text should not be entered under more than one of these headings.

- aimed at new findings (**novel**). This includes acquiring new knowledge directed primarily towards a specific aim or objective. It also encompasses experimental development projects, aimed at creating knowledge in support of the development of new concepts and ideas related to the design of new products or processes
- based on new concepts or ideas with the objective of improving on existing knowledge (**creative**). This includes R&D to improve methods or ways of doing things
- uncertain about its final outcome (**uncertain**)
- systematically performed. R&D is conducted in a planned way, with the process and outcomes documented (**systematic**)
- lead to results that have the potential to be reproduced (**transferable and/or reproducible**)

Section 6b: Asset Creation and Enhancement

Complete this section if you plan to create or enhance tangible assets e.g. land, habitats, improvements in the freshwater or marine environment, infrastructure etc. Describe what item(s) or asset(s) will be created or enhanced and provide numeric information (i.e. area, length, unit). State where the works will take place, make sure to specify who owns the land, freshwater or marine environment in which the works will take place. If any specific details are not confirmed, then enter ‘not confirmed’.

Evaluation Criteria for Section 6 Asset Creation and Enhancement:

This section is scored

In this section we are looking for a clear articulation of how any research fits within the formal description of R&D, and a clear identification of what tangible assets will result from your project and who will own and be responsible for them.

Scoring: Section 6 will be scored using the standard scoring matrix 100 = Excellent, 70 = Good, 50 = Acceptable, 20 = Poor, 0 = Unacceptable.

Weighting to be applied: 10%.

Section 7: Value for Money

Please tell us how you will use SRP funding and your match funding to achieve your project’s objectives. You must provide evidence in your supporting information that the costings shown are reasonable and include evidence of how staff costs are calculated, where applicable.

Section 7a: Budget narrative

Your costs must enable you to achieve your project objectives, outputs and outcomes as set out in Section 3.

Provide a short narrative explaining your budget. This should include how you have arrived at your costs and how your overheads (if applicable) are calculated. Let us know whether any activities for which you are seeking funding through this grant scheme will receive funding from other sources. If so, please explain how this is not duplicating funding from the grant. You must declare any existing funding on land you include in this application (such as Countryside Stewardship). Provide information on match funding, match contributions (see below for more information) can be used to fund eligible activities and should be detailed on the budget plan template.

You must also provide a full budget breakdown, using the budget plan template provided at Annex D. Grant funding requested must be for eligible expenditure only. Natural England will assess your budget plan as part of the grant evaluation and may require amendments at this time, including removal of ineligible items or reduction in costs, in discussion with you, should your application be successful.

Partnership projects must clearly show on the budget plan template which partner is responsible for which items or activities or costs; for example, if works will be taking place on a NE-owned National Nature Reserve, these costs must be shown on separate lines of the budget plan and be clearly labelled with 'NNR'.

You need to attach evidence of the following staff costs and how they are calculated (evidence can be a letter of confirmation signed by your chief finance officer or equivalent):

- salaries, including annual salary, National Insurance and pension contribution and any other contractual costs
- full time equivalent amount, and the number of days to be spent working on eligible components of the project

Inflationary pressures
You must provide costings that are as accurate as possible for the lifetime of your proposed project. Additional funding from the SRP is not guaranteed. Therefore, all costings should be based on justifiable and evidenced information. Any additional funding requests throughout the lifetime of any project funded by the SRP will be carefully reviewed, taking into consideration progress reports to date and overall benefits of the project, and will be subject to budget availability. Applicants should not assume that further funding beyond that which is awarded to successful applications will be made available.

In the event of project costs increasing during the funding period, we expect successful applicants to follow these steps as a minimum:

- review whether there is any additional match funding that can be provided to cover an increase in project costs
- look to reduce costs that do not negatively impact on the outcomes of the project
- engage with Natural England as early as possible to explore other changes that can be made in order to deliver the project within budget whilst meeting the aims and objectives of the scheme
- submit evidence to Natural England to show that all courses of action have been exhausted and that a variation is required. Any benefits of the change should be at least the same (or preferably greater) than in the original approved project

Match contributions
Although we do not require a set proportion of match funding under this scheme, value for money is weighted highly. So, you are encouraged to demonstrate appropriate value for

money via match contributions of cash, or non-cash (in-kind or volunteer value). Match funding should be clearly tied to the project for which you are seeking funding. You will be expected to report on this so you must provide evidence of cash match (where secured) and realistic estimates for non-cash contributions.

Include details of cash match or contributory funding, the value of the funding, whether it is secured or unsecured (if unsecured, when you anticipate confirmation), and the source of the funding. Please explain how this is not duplicating funding from the grant.

Match funding does not include staff time funded by Defra (Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise, other Natural England sources) as they are exchequer funded. You can tell us separately how these provide added value, but these contributions will not be considered as part of our value for money scoring.

Match funding cannot be part of an existing obligation.

Also tell us about non-cash contributions you will make from in-kind value and volunteer contributions. In-kind contributions are not cash, but for example can include the monetary value of:

- peoples time - management time, staff time
- running costs of the space in which the activity will take place
- equipment or materials needed for the activity e.g. computers, kitchen equipment,
- donations of building materials towards a building project

You should use the following rates to calculate the value of volunteer time (note that the value derives from the type of activity not the skill of the individual):

- professional volunteer - e.g., accountancy or writing a management plan: £50 per hour
- skilled volunteer - e.g., leading a guided walk: £20 per hour
- volunteer - e.g., administrative work: £10 per hour

You should not include a value for people who take part in engagement activities, such as a attending a guided walk.

Instructions for completing the budget template

The Budget Plan Template (Annex D) is an Excel workbook. **First read the Instructions sheet.** On the Instructions sheet, enter your organisation name, project name and unique project reference in the gold highlighted boxes only (cells G16, G17 and G18). Read the rest of the instructions, then open the Budget Plan sheet where you must enter details of your proposed project costs. Only enter information in the gold-coloured cells. The sheet is locked to prevent formulas from being changed. If you need more space, the instructions for adding news rows are on the Instructions sheet.

Enter all the costs that are needed to deliver your project, selecting the correct cost category for each item. Individual staff must be entered onto separate rows.

Where any costs will be incurred on a NE-owned National Nature Reserve you must show these on separate rows from other items and clearly state the site name and the text NNR (e.g. Derbyshire Dales NNR).

Don’t forget to enter cash match funding and non-cash match. Cash match funding should be entered in column S against the items where the cash match will be used. Non-cash match (in-kind and volunteer contributions) should be entered in rows 44 to 48. Please note that match funding should not include other exchequer funding such as Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise, other Natural England sources.

The spreadsheet formulas will calculate your annual project costs, total project costs and grant intervention rate based on the amount of cash match funding you are providing. This budget plan will be used to evaluate value for money.

Additional instructions are given in notes within the spreadsheet. Do not enter data on any other part of the Annex D template. An example budget plan and claim have been provided for your reference (Annex E).

Section 7b: Legacy & Maintenance

Explain how you will secure and develop the legacy of your project. If your project is awarded grant funding and improves the prospects of the target species, how will you ensure that those gains won't be lost? For instance, knowledge gains must be stored securely, shared widely, and made easily accessible. Likewise, habitat enhancement or creation must be maintained by some clear mechanism. Include, if appropriate, how your project would create a momentum that was self-sustaining, continuing to move the target species along their recovery curve(s).

For conservation translocations, reinforcement over multiple years may be necessary to successfully establish a self-sustaining population. Given that the SRP only offers funding until March 2029, explain your plans for future resourcing to ensure long-term success of the translocation.

Due to funding restrictions, we are unable to cover the costs of ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring after the Grant Funding Period has concluded. Therefore, please set out how you will maintain the works carried out for the five-year obligation period required by this grant scheme and continue appropriate management and monitoring. Include plans for securing any resources required to fulfil this obligation.

You will need to:

- maintain the positive environmental outcomes obtained through the SRP funding award
- negotiate a maintenance period for any physical infrastructure introduced to sites

The Obligation Period must be at least five years. You must make this clear to all partners and landowners if they are not the lead applicant.

If your grant application is approved, you will need to show management control of any land where capital works will be delivered to meet the requirements of the grant and retain them for the required Obligation Period. This will include formal arrangements with site owners or managers. If you do not have management control, you must get the written consent, within three months of the grant agreement being issued, of all other parties who have management control of the land in order to undertake these activities for the duration of the Grant Funding Period and Obligation Period.

Evaluation Criteria for Section 7 Value for Money:

This section is scored.

We are looking for clear demonstration or articulation of:

The appropriate use of funding aligned to the key activities needed to deliver your proposed project.

A detailed budget using the provided Budget Plan template.

Contribution of match funding of cash and/or non-cash (in-kind and volunteer time) which contributes towards value for money.

Assurance that funding from the Species Recovery Programme is providing additionality to existing funding sources and not duplicating these, especially agri-environment schemes.

A demonstrated commitment to maintain the work completed during the grant funded period. Your plans for ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness and biological outcomes of your project.

Value for money will be assessed based on:

- *total grant requested from the SRP*
- *intended outputs and outcomes*
- *appropriateness of costs provided*
- *evidence of proper procurement*
- *value of match funding provided*
- *value of in-kind and volunteer contributions offered*
- *plans for maintaining the benefits after the grant*

This section will be scored using the standard scoring matrix: 100 = Excellent, 70 = Good, 50 = Acceptable, 20 = Poor, 0 = Unacceptable.

Weighting applied to section 7 = 30%

Balancing Principles

The SRP Delivery Board will make the final funding decisions based on moderated score **and** balancing principles. The Board will prioritise projects which provide a balanced portfolio of projects which will:

- deliver actions for those species at the highest risk of imminent national extinction based on:
  - GB or England Red List Status
  - number of sites the species occupies
  - population trend
  - how well the drivers of decline are understood
- represent balance amongst different taxonomic groups
- represent a range of eligible action types
- represent a reasonable geographical coverage across England
- represent good value for money
- maintain a funding ratio of 2:1 capital to resource costs

Application Decisions

Once the application window has closed, NE will assess and score all completed and compliant applications. This is likely to take approximately two months. If the SRP team need any clarifications about your application, they will contact you by email.

If your application is successful, NE will notify you in writing and send you a grant offer letter. The grant offer letter will include:

- any special conditions
- timescales to get consents or permissions
- terms and conditions

You will need to sign and return the offer letter by the date given (within 10 working days). You must not start the project until you have signed and completed all documents in the grant offer letter and fulfilled any special conditions. There will be an embargo on publicity and external communications until such time as NE makes a public announcement about the SRP grant awards. Successful applicants will be required to work with NE staff on appropriate publicity and communications, for instance by providing a short summary of the project and one or two high quality images.

Successful applicants will receive further information about payments and the claim process, monitoring and reporting, including templates.

If your application is unsuccessful, NE will notify you in writing including feedback.

You will need to show management control of any land where works will be delivered to meet the requirements of the funding, allow creation and/or enhancement works, and retain them for the required Obligation Period (see below). This will include formal arrangements with site owners or managers. If you do not have management control, you must provide Natural England with evidence of written consent of all other parties who have management control of the land to undertake these activities for the duration of the Funding Period and Obligation Period. Note that this does not necessarily need to be in place at application stage, however, if you are offered SRP funding you will need to demonstrate your plan for securing agreements / management control within three months of signing the grant agreement.

Grant Payments and Reporting

Payments

NE will make grant payments in arrears for eligible expenditure towards agreed objectives and outputs as set out in your grant funding agreement, which references your grant application. You must submit claims quarterly unless otherwise agreed with Natural England. You will need to us the claim form provided by Natural England to submit a detailed breakdown of all costs incurred and provide the required evidence for grant claims. Some examples follow.

Financial evidence of costs incurred should include:

- receipted invoices, bank statement, remittance report

Evidence of staff costs must include:

- certified staff timesheets, broken down by task
- staff payslip showing gross salary, employers NI contribution, employers pension contribution (personal data must be redacted)

Supporting evidence of activities and work completed should include:

- specification of works, including location and type of works
- evidence of procurement process followed (e.g. quotes for purchase of equipment; brief and quotes for services; invitation to tender for letting contract, including specification; tender return report)
- consultant or expert advice on methodology
- photographic evidence of items purchased or activity underway or complete, with geo-tag and accompanying map
- specialist reports covering research & development

Evidence of volunteer or in-kind contributions should include:

- certified summary of volunteer contributions (number of people involved, time given) and value (using the rates provided)
- certified summary of in-kind contributions and value (using actual staff rates)

Evidence of approvals might include:

- copy of consent or permission from relevant authority
- protected species license
- agri-environment agreement, including written RPA approval for amendments
- landowner agreements

Reporting

Your Grant Funding Agreement will show the dates that reports are required. You will receive guidance and templates for each report you need to submit.

You will need to give quarterly updates on progress, unless otherwise agreed with Natural England, including:

- a summary of the actions and work delivered
- progress made towards project objectives
- any risks or issues encountered and how you are responding
- any proposed changes to the project (a formal change request may be needed)

At the end of each financial year, you will need to submit a year-end report, including:

- summary of project progress towards the activities you specified in your application
- summary of approved expenditure, and budget forecast for the following year
- plans for delivery in the following year of the funding award
- any proposed changes to the project (a formal change request may be needed)

By the end of the project, you must submit appropriate monitoring data, a certificate of grant usage endorsed by an independent qualified auditor and a final report.

If you have undertaken species monitoring or surveys as part of your project, all species observation data must comply with the standards for data quality and accessibility as set out by the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

These observations must be made available to the public on the NBN Atlas with an open licence and at capture resolution, and will be subject to sensitive species restrictions.

There are three recommended ways to do this:

1. Direct to the NBN Atlas as an NBN Atlas Data Partner
2. Through the online recording tool iRecord
3. Via your local environmental record centre

If data are being provided via a third party, you must ensure that they are aware of the requirements to submit these data with an open licence and at capture resolution.

Successful grant applicants will be expected to attend an online workshop with NE concerning methods of reporting progress against the Threatened Species Recovery Actions (TSRA).

NE will issue templates for reporting progress for species, habitats and people that must be returned and completed by the specified deadlines.

Monitoring data for habitats should include a record of the following which will be entered onto a NE spatial mapping tool:

- the type of action taken
- the type and area of habitat before action
- the type and area of habitat expected after habitat creation or restoration activity (wildlife-rich habitats)

Monitoring data for social value should include a summary of people engagement and communications activities, including:

- numbers and types of people directly engaged (incl. standardised value of their time and demographic characteristics)
- a sample set of evaluation or feedback from participants on their experience, and any changes in their degree of ‘nature connections’ resulting from their involvement
- supporting evidence, such as press releases, events information, and photographs

The final report should:

- cover all work completed under the project
- evaluate how far the project achieved its original aims
- record any contributions that your project makes towards the delivery of the Threatened Species Recovery Actions.

Regular reporting will help NE make sure projects are on track to achieve their aims. NE may also:

- map location data of projects using GIS
- use information from project reports to evaluate the impact of the SRP
- survey grant recipients through interviews or online surveys
- offer ongoing support to grant recipients from NE evidence and evaluation specialists

Evaluation & Lessons Learned

All applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will be asked to take part in an evaluation of the SRP application process to help inform any potential future iterations of the Scheme.

Grant recipients will be asked to participate in evaluation and lessons learned exercises focussing on evaluating the grant application process; management and reporting process; and the impact of the grant scheme on our species recovery and other related objectives. This, together with lessons learned, will be used to inform the ongoing delivery of the Species Recovery Programme and any future iterations of the SRP.

Acknowledging Funding

You must acknowledge that your project has been Funded by UK Government, following the guidance here: [Branding - GCS]

You must also acknowledge Natural England's support in any publicity or materials that refer to the project. This includes any written or spoken public presentations you give about the project. You should use:

- our name
- our logo, where you have asked permission or where we request it
- acknowledgement of the Natural England Species Recovery Programme (with wording we will provide)

Before using the Natural England name and logo you need to request our permission and follow any branding guidelines we send you.

Annexes

Annex A - Authority's Terms of Grant Funding Agreement (below £100k)

Annex B - Authority's Terms of Grant Funding Agreement (£100k and over)

Annex C - Technical Application Form

Annex D - Budget Plan

Annex E - Example Budget Plan

Annex F - Partnership Form