

NRF Application Guidance



SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY	
1.1	Officers will assign a project number when the application is submitted.
1.2	Name of the organisation applying for NRF funding.
1.3	What is the name of the project
1.4	<p>The amount of match funding secured and the amount of grant you are applying to NRF. The grant requested plus match funding should equal the total project cost as per section 1.4, 5.1 and 6.1.</p> <p>Funding of up to 100% of eligible costs is available however the project is likely to score higher if match funding is in place. See section 5.1 and 6.1.</p>
1.5	Anticipated start date - projects must be able to start within a month of the date of the offer of grant letter if approved funding. Please note that costs incurred, or contracts signed prior to the start date will not be eligible. No costs should be incurred until confirmation of NRF funding has been approved in writing (“the grant award letter”).
1.6	Anticipated completion date - projects must be able to completed no later than 30 June 2024 . Ensure you allow time for end of project reporting and submission of the final claim.
1.7	<p>Projects are expected to meet ONE of the following strategic themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat restoration – management for enhancement and connectivity • Freshwater restoration, including hydrological change • Eradication of invasive non-native species impacting on nature • Coastal and marine management to promote restoration and resilience • Urban - enhancing and connecting nature across, and between, towns and cities. <p><i>The types of projects supported:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for pollinators (equipment for maintaining wildflower areas or verges including planting) • Improving condition and use of Local Nature Reserves (purchase and planting) • Developing a local nature network through planting of wildlife corridors, removal of barriers to wildlife movement and pollinator planting • Greening active travel routes (purchase and planting) • Natural flood management actions such as connecting rivers with flood plains, pond creation, de-culverting, in-stream works for habitat and flow variability • Removal of invasive non-native species (INNS) to improve the biodiversity value of the remaining habitat • Habitat and species enhancement works using native stock, enhancing natural coastal defences through marram, addressing coastal squeeze.

SECTION 2: CONTACT DETAILS	
2.1	Name and telephone number of the main point of contact for the application/delivery of the project.
2.2	Position of the person named in 2.1 e.g. chairperson, project officer.
2.3	Address and postcode of the person/organisation named in 1.2 and 2.1. This address may differ from the project location stated in 4.1.

2.4	Email address for the named person in 2.1.
2.5	Organisation website address if applicable.

SECTION 3: ORGANISATION DETAILS

3.1	Tick boxes to indicate the status of the organisation named in 1.2. More than one may apply.
3.2	If the project is delivered in partnership with another organisation and there is a formal agreement in place, only one lead signatory should be responsible for the NRF application. Project procurement, contracts, invoices, bank payments and claims for example should be administered by the lead applicant organisation.
3.3	<p>Is this organisation registered for VAT?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – VAT can be reclaimed from HMRC therefore should not be include in the project costs. • No – VAT cannot be reclaimed from HMRC therefore should be included in the project costs. <p>By ticking this, you are declaring the organisation VAT status as per HMRC. If this changes at any time during the project, you <u>must</u> notify the NRF Team as this may affect the offer of grant.</p>
3.4	If the organisation is registered for VAT, please provide the VAT number. If this doesn't apply, leave blank.
3.5	VAT that can be reclaimed (fully or partial) is not eligible for NRF funding and should not be included in the project costs as per section 5.1. We are not able to advise on which costs can be reclaimed through HMRC as so many factors can determine this. Ensure you seek advice from a suitably qualified professional how VAT may affect your project.
3.6	Please read and acknowledge the NRF Privacy Notice.

SECTION 4: PROJECT DETAILS

4.1	<p>Location where the project is happening/being delivered - including postcode. This may differ to the location of the organisation address in 2.3. Project location must be within the Highland Council area.</p> <p>Also, specify if the project location is within a designated site such as SSSI, SAC, LNR etc. If so, ensure you answer section 4.3.</p>
4.2	The applicant must have land ownership or lease agreement or landowner consents before the project starts. Lease agreements must be for at least 10-years.
4.3	Detail any statutory or regulatory consents that will be required (for example planning permission, SEPA consents, SSSI consents, marine licence). Consents <u>must</u> be in place and evidence provided before commencing the project.
4.4	State if you have had advice from relevant organisations – this may include permissions, advice on the types of species to plant, habitat restoration practices etc – please provide evidence.
4.5	The Project – This section is where you explain what the funding is for, what the project is to achieve and how it will be delivered. It is important to answer the questions concisely.

(a)	<p>Project summary, objectives and outcomes – provide a summary of the project, explain how it meets at least ONE of the fund strategic themes as stated in 1.7.</p> <p>List which outcomes the project is to achieve as per objectives of the Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2021 – 2026 as noted in 4.5 (f) below.</p>
(b)	<p>Project benefit – explain how the project benefits biodiversity. How will this improve, enhance and deliver positive effects for local ecosystems specifically for the location stated in 4.1. Is the project appropriate for this parcel of land?</p>
(c)	<p>Project activities – list the main activities that will be delivered during the project with anticipated timescales. This should reflect the start/completion dates in 1.6. This will be an outline delivery plan for the project.</p>
(d)	<p>Environmental impact – describe how the project specifically addresses climate change or net zero ambitions by adopting nature-based solutions or enhancements to biodiversity? How will the project mitigate any negative impacts?</p> <p>Equalities impact – How will you ensure that no one is excluded or disadvantaged from benefitting from the project? Is there an organisational equalities policy in place?</p> <p>Fair Work First – applicants must be able to demonstrate that they comply with the Fair Work First Policy. In line with the Bute House Agreement, the default position is that all grant recipients awarded a public sector grant from 1 July 2023 will be required to pay at least the ‘Real Living Wage’ and provide appropriate channels for ‘Effective workers’ Voice’ as a minimum standard. Only in limited circumstances, an exception to these conditions is considered and that this must be agreed by the Highland Council.</p> <p>Payment of at least the real Living Wage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, a grant recipient must demonstrate it is paying at least the real Living Wage before it can access a grant. • All UK-based staff aged 16 and over, including apprentices, who are directly employed by the grant recipient, must be paid at least the real Living Wage; and any UK-based workers who are not directly employed but are directly engaged in delivering the grant-funded activity, whether they be sub-contractors or agency staff, must also be paid at least the real Living Wage. • The Scottish Government or the Highland Council may apply limited exceptions to provide funding to organisations who cannot pay at least the real Living Wage in order that the measure is proportionate. <p>Appropriate channels for effective workers’ voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All organisations with a workforce must be able to demonstrate, before they can access a grant, that all workers employed within that organisation have access to effective voice channel(s), including agency workers. • Voice exists at both collective and individual levels and organisations will be expected to show how genuine and effective voice is evidenced. • The Scottish Government or the Highland Council may apply flexibility to recognise the different forms of voice that are appropriate for different organisations.

	<p>The following Fair Work First Guidance has comprehensive information.</p> <p>In addition, groups and organisations should consider applying for the Living Wage Accreditation. As best practice, we strongly advise that all applicants work towards achieving this if practical and applicable to do so.</p> <p>Please also refer to the supplementary document ‘Fair Work First Summary Guidance for Applicants’ where there is also an example statement template should you wish to use or adapt it unless you have a statement already in place. Please ensure the statement is signed by a workers/union representative.</p> <p>The RSPB has a good example of what is required as a Fair Work First policy statement.</p>
(e)	<p>Project continuation/lasting benefits - if the project is intended to continue or needs to be maintained beyond the NRF funding phase, how will this happen? Will the NRF fund a specific phase of the project for example? If so, how will the remaining project be funded and when will it be completed by?</p> <p>What will be the lasting benefits or change that arises from the project? Who will manage/provide ongoing maintenance of the project?</p> <p>The removal on invasive non-native species (INNS) projects must be sustainable beyond the funding period and that there is a plan in place to manage sites thereafter.</p>
(f)	<p>Fit with local plans or strategies – Explain how the project contributes/supports/delivers local plans and strategies, for example the Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 - 2026</p> <p>Objectives of the BAP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of priority species • Controlling invasive non-native species • Increase participation in blue and green activities to benefit health • Public engagement using knowledge, skills sharing and training • Deer and other herbivores are managed to allow natural regeneration of a diverse range of habitats • Restoration of peatlands, wetlands, bogs, mires and wet grasslands • Create woodland networks that improve forest diversity and biodiversity • Support incorporation of trees and woods into agricultural systems • Create healthy, ecologically-diverse freshwater systems • Agricultural practices move to more natural systems and nature-based solutions, reducing CO2 emissions and the need for artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides
SECTION 5: BUDGET	
5.1	<p>List all the main expenditure to deliver the project as per example. Delete the example before completing the table.</p> <p>If the NRF project is part of a wider project, list what the NRF funding specifically will be spent on. Please provide a copy of the overall project budget to show how the NRF element contributes towards this.</p> <p>Please remember to exclude VAT if it is being reclaimed from HMRC.</p>

If the organisation is **not VAT registered, VAT should be included** in the project costs.

Total amount should equal to total cost as per sections **1.4** and **6.1**.

What we cannot fund:

- Staff time to administer or manage the project is not eligible. We accept this as in-kind or match funding contribution. Labour or contractor costs to work on sites however is eligible.
- NRF can fund small scale tree planting schemes or other woodland improvement projects, however you must check the [Forestry Grant Scheme](#) eligibility to ensure your project does not fit with this fund.
- Ongoing maintenance of any site.
- Activities which are a condition of planning or statutory obligations.
- Replacement of existing or new infrastructure where there is no biodiversity enhancement.
- Costs for delivering educational or community engagement activities.
- Interpretation materials apart from warning signs for the public where activity is taking place.
- Surveys, monitoring, data analysis or research.
- Feasibility studies or management plans.
- Single use plastics, for example for tree protection. Biodegradable or re-usable materials should be sourced.
- Contingency costs.
- The purchase of livestock.

5.2 We do not expect applicants to carry out detailed procurement at this stage however please explain how project costs have been determined to inform the application as per section **5.1**. This is to ensure that costs are reasonable at the time of application and that value for money has been considered. For example, quotations, tenders, market research, previous experience, advice from professional services/other organisations.

If the project is approved funding, procurement will be discussed with the project officer during the post offer meeting. A copy of the procurement guidelines will be provided with the offer of grant letter to ensure goods and services are procured in a compliant way. Applicants should not commit to expenditure prior to the start date of the project.

As a guide:

	Goods/Services	Capital works
Direct award – single quotation	Below £10,000	Below £50,000
Quotes – 3 quotations	£10,000 - £49,000	£50,000 - £1,999,999
Tenders	£50,000+	£2,000,000+

SECTION 6 – MATCH FUNDING

6.1 Although 100% NRF funding may be available, your application is likely to score higher if match funding from other sources is available.

	<p>If match funding is available, provide the name of the funder and when the funding was confirmed – match funding must be in place within one month of the date of the offer of grant letter.</p> <p>The total match funding and NRF request should equate to sections 1.4 and 5.1.</p> <p>If the confirmed match funding is required to cover some of the NRF ineligible costs as stated in 5.1, please include these in the application and note how they will be covered and state which costs NRF will cover.</p>
6.2	<p>Detail any “in kind” activities that will contribute towards the project. This could be volunteer and project management time or loan of equipment. The value of “in-kind” contributions should not form part of the project budget and match funding, however it may strengthen the application to indicate it is included within the project activity.</p>
6.3	<p>Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project.</p>

SECTION 7 – SIGNATURE

7.1	<p>The person signing this application should have authority within the organisation to apply for grant funding. Electronic signature is acceptable.</p>
7.2	<p>A copy of a recent bank statement and annual accounts must be submitted with the application form. A signed copy of your Fair Work First policy statement must also be included. Failure to provide these will delay the application being considered and may have to go forward to the next decision-making round.</p> <p>If your project is awarded funding, we require additional documentation as stated on the application form, before commencing.</p>