Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

New farming policies and payments in England

Landscape Recovery Handbook

Updated: May 2024

We are the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing the green economy, sustaining thriving rural communities and supporting our world-class food, farming and fishing industries.

We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

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Version	Description of update	Section	Date
1.1	Added guidance on how to confirm indicative costs Removed project development phase flowchart Added further guidance on legal consents and permissions Added further detail and guidance on claims and amendment processes, including links to forms.	3.3 4 4.3.9 5.2, 5.3	March 2023
2.0	Updates throughout for round 2 and based on co-design and answers to project questions. Updated MS Teams and SharePoint information. Incorporated deliverables guidance, forestry guidance and frequently asked questions. Removed duplication between deliverable guidance Added guidance on how to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Changes and simplifications of grant management processes between round 1 and round 2. Change to evidence required at claim – evidence not required at claim for costs under £300, raised from under £50 Added further publicity guidance, including the Landscape Recovery logo block.	 2.5 4 4 4.4 5 5 and Annex 1 8	November 2023

2.1	Updated link to habitat condition assessment methodologies	4.7.8	January 2024
2.2	Addition of guidance on outputs planning, review and assurance.	4.2.1 and 4.11	April 2024
3.0	Land Manager Support, Existing Agreements and Funding has more clarification on the information needed. Permits, Consents and Land Rights • clarified how far into implementation permits and consents are needed • confirmation that permitting support tool is mandatory for round two Forestry guidance has been restructured to make the regulatory requirements and requirements for woodland management and creation plans clearer. • Included example maps required for management and creation plans. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: • restructured to make the presentation of the information required simpler and clearer • updated the list of templates for the plan • added information on baseline timing and sampling Site access plan has a requirement added to consider blue space. Clarification that implementation can: • only pay for activities on agreement land • not pay for maintenance where there is statutory duty to maintain access routes Grant claims has: • further information on how to manage budgets within 10% allowance • added guidance on the NE accruals information needed Grant amendments has updated: • rules on requests for more funding and budget cap • rules for round two projects on adding land • guidance on extending agreements Annex 1 has updates to eligible and ineligible expenditure	4.3.6 4.3.9 4.5, 4.6 4.8 4.10 5.2 5.3 5.3.4 5.3.5 5.3.6 9.1	May 2024

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1 Introduction

This handbook supports:

- round two Landscape Recovery applicants through enrolment
- round one and round two projects through project development

It explains the enrolment process, the project development phase, how your agreement will be managed, and the grant funding rules you must follow.

It is clear where information is different for round one projects and round two projects.

It's recommended that you read the handbook, and continue to refer to it, as your project progresses through enrolment and the project development phase.

The Landscape Recovery scheme is a pilot. This handbook, and the processes described, may change as we learn from the pilot and improve the scheme.

We will notify you whenever there is a change to the handbook or we release additional guidance. When guidance changes or is updated, you should:

- alter your approach to the development phase or grant as needed
- speak to your liaison officer if changes to guidance affect project costs, plans or timings

We welcome feedback on how to improve the handbook. It's particularly useful to know what information you need in the handbook and in what level of detail. Please send feedback to your liaison officer.

2 Landscape Recovery overview

Landscape Recovery is one of Defra's three environmental land management schemes. It's being piloted across England from 2022. Landscape Recovery aims to enhance our natural environment and support ecosystem recovery. Long-term, large-scale, land-use change and habitat restoration projects will help realise these aims.

2.1 Round one

The first round of the Landscape Recovery pilot was launched in early 2022. During this round, 22 projects were selected under one of two themes focused on:

- recovering and restoring England's threatened native species,
- restoring England's streams and rivers, improving water quality, biodiversity and adapting to climate change.

Find out more about the round one projects.

2.2 Round two

Round two of the Landscape Recovery pilot was launched in May 2023. Instead of applications to a single theme, round two invited applications that support multiple themes:

- net zero
- protected sites
- wildlife-rich habitats

Find out more about the round two projects.

2.3 Administration of the scheme

Defra is the owner of the Landscape Recovery scheme. The Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) administer the enrolment and development stages of Landscape Recovery on behalf of Defra. The EA and NE are referred to as the 'delivery bodies' throughout.

The EA is the lead delivery body for round one projects under the streams and rivers restoration theme. NE is the lead delivery body for projects under the species recovery theme.

For round two, projects have been divided between the EA and NE based on factors like specialisms and how they relate to the project's ambitions.

The delivery bodies work with organisations across Defra and other delivery partners, like the Forestry Commission (FC) and Historic England (HE).

FC work alongside delivery bodies to provide advice, guidance on woodland creation and management, support on regulations and assurance of woodland and tree elements of projects.

Some project outcomes overlap both NE and EA expertise. The delivery bodies will work together to provide appropriate advice to these projects.

2.3.1 Project point of contact

EA and NE will allocate a liaison officer to each project at the start of enrolment. The liaison officer is your main point of contact for your project. If you would like to contact other staff regarding your project, please do this through you liaison officer.

FC will provide selected round two projects with a liaison officer. EA is the delivery body for projects with a FC liaison officer.

You can contact your delivery body using the scheme mailboxes, for example to:

- notify them that you have submitted a claim
- ask for support or advice if your liaison officer is not available

Please email your delivery body as follows:

- Environment Agency: Landscaperecoveryprojects@environment-agency.gov.uk
- Natural England: Landscaperecoveryprojects@naturalengland.org.uk

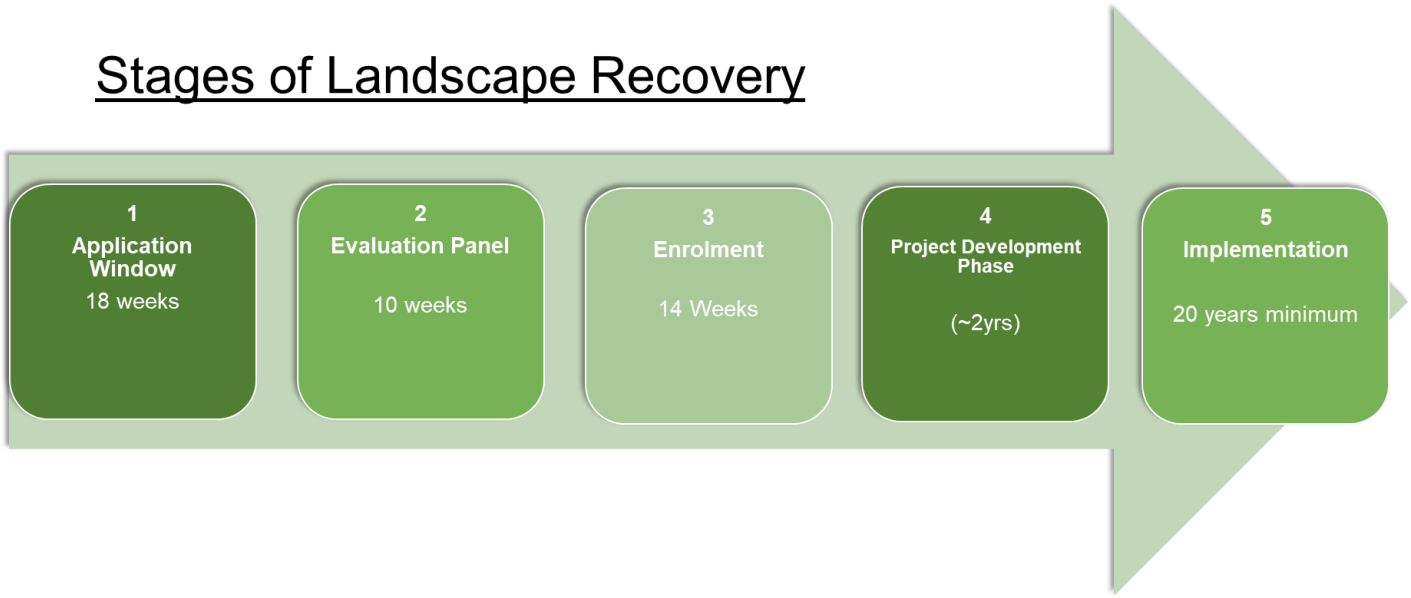
The delivery bodies use these mailboxes to send information directly to projects, such as webinar invitations or guidance updates.

2.4 The Landscape Recovery process

Each round of Landscape Recovery has 5 phases:

1. Application window is 18 weeks.
2. Evaluation panel is 10 weeks.
3. Enrolment takes around 14 weeks.
4. Project development phase takes up to 2 years.
5. Implementation is a minimum of 20 years.

Figure 1. The stages of the Landscape Recovery scheme.



To progress to the next phase, projects must successfully complete the previous phase. For example, you can only progress to implementation if you have completed the project development phase.

Projects may exit Landscape Recovery at any point if they are unable to meet scheme requirements.

2.4.1 Enrolment

Enrolment takes about 14 weeks to complete.

During enrolment delivery bodies will build on your application and support you to:

- produce a plan for the project development phase
- identify what you need to do during project development, by when and how much it will cost

We will offer projects that complete enrolment a project development phase grant.

Entering enrolment does not commit you to entering the project development phase.

2.4.2 Project development phase

The project development phase is around 2 years.

During the project development phase, you will:

- produce six planning documents, known as deliverables
- get your project ready for implementation

2.4.3 Implementation

Implementation agreements will last at least 20 years.

Implementation is when you will start the delivery of your project on the ground. Some further development may need to continue in the implementation phase.

2.5 Collaboration

During the project development phase there is a SharePoint site and Teams channel for you to access scheme guidance, store documents and network with each other.

You will get access to SharePoint and the Teams channel once you've started the project development phase. During enrolment, projects and liaison officers will exchange documents and resources via email.

2.5.1 Microsoft SharePoint

The 'Landscape Recovery Scheme Support' SharePoint site is where all guidance documents and supporting information relating to the scheme is held. This includes the scheme handbook, webinar recordings and news items.

We encourage you to use the documents stored on SharePoint, rather than downloaded copies. This will ensure you use the most up to date versions.

We will keep all documents and correspondence relating to your project in a secure folder.

Access to the SharePoint site is restricted to grant recipients and nominated members of project teams only.

You can save a link to folders in your favourites and click the star in the top right corner to follow the page. This will mean you are notified when the site is updated.

2.5.2 Document Naming Protocols

Documents uploaded to secure project folders on the SharePoint site must follow a naming protocol. It is important to have a naming protocol so that delivery bodies can:

- find the relevant documents for project claims or amendments
- easily review the latest version of documents

Each document needs a file name that unambiguously describes the document and identifies the project it relates to. You should:

- use LR1 or LR2 to show the Landscape Recovery round
- include your unique project reference number, for example LR1_1234567 or LR2_89
- describe the document, for example LR1_1234567_CF for a claim form or LR1_1234567_AF for an amendment form
- write the date as YY MM DD so that documents list chronologically, for example LR1_1234567_AF_YYMMDD

Grant recipients and liaison officers can save relevant emails in the project folder. Use a common naming convention to provide an audit trail. For example:

- LR1_1234567_YYMMDD nature of email sender initials
- LR1_1234567_190201 Amendment Request
- LR1_1234567_190203 Amendment Outcome EA

All documents must meet GDPR data handling requirements. Save documents with personal information like names, addresses, payslips as official sensitive. For example, OFFICIALSENSITIVE_LR1_1234567_Payslips_YYMMDD.

The folder they are saved in must also carry this security marker.

Projects are responsible for adding protective markings to documents you feel need it.

2.5.3 Microsoft Teams channel

The Teams channel is known as the 'Landscape Recovery Community of Practice'. It allows you to collaborate and communicate with other Landscape Recovery projects in your round. For example, you could organise theme specific meetings or coordinate knowledge sharing.

Delivery bodies may also use these channels to:

- contact projects with reminders for webinar dates
- highlight important email correspondence

2.5.4 Accessing Microsoft Teams and SharePoint

Early in project development, liaison officers organise access to SharePoint and Teams. They will ask who from the project team needs access.

You can request access for new or extra project staff via your liaison officer at any time. You should provide them with:

- the name, email address and project role of the person needing access
- the apps they need access to, like SharePoint or Teams
- any sub folders or groups they also need access to, for example the secure project folder or community of practice sub-groups

You must also contact your liaison officer if you need to remove access, for example, if a colleague leaves their role on the project.

If your liaison officer is unavailable, send access requests to the relevant delivery body mailbox. They will arrange access within 7 working days. Any requests not made through your liaison officer or mailbox are automatically denied. For example, if you open a link or document in the SharePoint site which asks you to ‘click to request access’.

2.5.5 Webinars

Defra and the delivery bodies will organise webinars during enrolment and project development. These will provide guidance and allow opportunities to ask questions.

Invitations will go to liaison officers and project managers. Your project manager should forward invites to other staff who would benefit from attending.

We will record webinars and store recordings on SharePoint where relevant. Please do not share webinar recordings with anyone outside of your project team. This ensures future applicants do not receive out of date information or gain an unfair advantage.

3 Enrolment

Defra will invite shortlisted projects into the enrolment phase of Landscape Recovery. This phase is not funded but requires committed resource from the project to complete.

During enrolment we will agree the final details of your project development phase grant agreement. Agreements are between the delivery body and the single legal entity acting on behalf of your project. The grant agreement will outline the project area on a map and detail what the project will do (the deliverables), by when, how much it will cost.

The project development phase grant agreement is based on a template agreement that the delivery body will share with you. We recommend you review the terms of this agreement at the earliest opportunity.

Entering enrolment does not:

- commit your project to entering the project development phase
- guarantee progress to the project development phase

The enrolment phase will take up to 14 weeks. We will only extend this in exceptional circumstances and at the delivery body's discretion. Speak to your liaison officer at the earliest opportunity if you think you cannot complete enrolment in this timeframe.

You need to nominate a second team member to make decisions and provide information on behalf of your project if your lead contact is absent.

3.1 What you need to do during enrolment

You will work with your liaison officer to provide any extra information needed. This will allow you to:

- develop your project development phase plan
- complete administrative and due diligence checks.

Your application will contain some of this information. Your liaison officer will discuss any points for clarification with you. The delivery body needs to confirm this information by week 10 of enrolment. This will allow enough time to review and, if appropriate, award a grant agreement by week 14.

You need to provide a draft project plan, complete with Gantt chart, to outline your plans for the project development phase.

To develop your project development phase plan, you will need to:

- complete a payment schedule, the delivery body will provide a template

- provide project staffing costs
- estimate when you will submit your deliverables to the delivery body for assurance
- provide a cost recovery model

A cost recovery model will show:

- the total wage bill of your organisation
- the total routine organisational costs, such as office rent, utilities or financial management.

Your liaison officer can provide further guidance on cost recovery models. You can defer this to the project development phase if necessary.

You need to provide full cost evidence for the first claim period, as per the procurement thresholds in Annex 1.

The administrative and due diligence checks include:

- confirmation of the single legal entity that will sign a grant agreement, including if you need to create a new entity
- how long it will take the entity to sign an agreement
- checks on the single legal entity to confirm financial viability
- confirmation of your VAT status and relevant evidence
- double funding checks on development funding only, including self-declaration forms submitted by the grant recipient and project partners

We will discuss whether the project needs, and is eligible for, advanced payments. This will include how to provide evidence and if you require a guarantor.

You will need to confirm the agreement land entering the development phase. You'll need to include outstanding land manager support forms, SBI numbers, and a GIS shapefile of the project area.

You can add or remove land during enrolment within a fixed deadline. The deadline is to allow enough time to complete double funding checks. Your liaison officer will confirm this deadline with you. Please read the grants amendments section for more information.

Your project may need a signed partnership agreement before you start project development. This is not a requirement of enrolment.

3.1.1 What the delivery body will do

We will invite project managers and your project team to a welcome webinar at the start of enrolment. This will introduce and explain the enrolment process.

During enrolment, the delivery bodies will:

- assess and validate the information in your application using administrative and due diligence checks
- request additional information or clarification as needed
- suggest potential additional activities to your project plan as needed
- evaluate your proposed costs in more detail, to ensure good value for money

Once checks are complete, the delivery body will go through internal governance for approval and begin to draft the grant agreement. This will be formalised through a legal agreement between the delivery body and the single legal entity for the project.

The delivery body will agree the terms of your project development phase plan. You will then receive a grant funding letter and a grant agreement to sign. If the delivery body is not able to offer a grant agreement, projects will exit the scheme.

Legal constraints mean you can only sign the project development phase grant agreement from 60 days after the project receives the letter from Defra stating their application has been shortlisted.

3.2 Project costs

All project costs must be eligible and directly associated with the work needed to produce the outcomes and deliverables required during the project development phase. Examples of eligible and ineligible costs and evidence needed to support them are in Annex 1.

During enrolment the delivery body will review the costs in your application and may:

- reduce or remove proposed costs if they are ineligible or are not good value for money
- recommend additional costs, for example if we believe a project will need further advice
- reprofile costs across deliverables to ensure enough funding is allocated

Any costs incurred by the project before the start of their grant agreement are not eligible to be claimed. This includes:

- time spent finalising project details
- recruitment during enrolment for staff for the project development phase

You will need to provide evidence that costs are proportionate, justifiable and ensure good value for money. See Annex 1 for the procurement thresholds. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, providing:

- quotes
- details on the procurement approach followed
- the outcome of a tendering process
- comparison costs

During enrolment, you must provide this cost evidence for at least the first claim period.

You can apply for overhead costs at a rate of up to 20% of staff costs associated with the project development. Your organisation's overhead rate will determine the actual rate, up to the 20% maximum. Overheads include organisational costs usually related to day to day running, such as:

- rent
- utilities
- human resources
- legal costs
- IT costs
- health and safety training

You can build known or expected cost increases into your payment schedule. This can include planned staff salary increases during the project development phase. You cannot include unallocated contingency costs.

3.2.1 Procurement and the use of preferred suppliers

Delivery bodies will check that the evidence for costs is satisfactory.

You must remove costs that you cannot provide satisfactory evidence for.

Delivery bodies cannot recommend suppliers of specialist services, for example advice on a blended finance business model. This would give an unfair commercial advantage to certain suppliers.

Annex 1 explains terms such as partners, suppliers and contractors.

3.3 Indicative Costs

We understand if you cannot provide cost evidence for the full duration of the project development phase during enrolment. You can forecast costs without supporting evidence after the first claim period. At enrolment, these may be indicative in the payment schedule and project plan.

During the project development phase, you must submit full cost evidence for indicative costs to the delivery body for review and approval. You must do this at least one claim period in advance of forecast spend and before any spend begins.

3.4 Advance payments

The delivery body may consider paying the costs of each claim period up front. This is capped at 20% of the total project development phase grant.

You must request advance payments during enrolment.

Advance payments are only available in exceptional circumstances, where cash flow restrictions will prevent a grant recipient from progressing their project. You will need to demonstrate why you need advanced payments.

You must provide some sort of assurances for advanced payments to be made such as providing a guarantor.

Evidence to support your request may include, but is not limited to:

- a statement stating the implications for the project and impact upon 'business as usual' operation of the organisation if such payments were not available
- bank statements or a cash flow forecast showing the need for advance payments
- the last 3 years of audited accounts
- the last 12 months of bank statements
- a guarantor agreement, if your liaison officer confirms one is required

We understand that if the single legal entity is newly formed, bank statements and accounts may not be available.

The delivery body will assess your request and supporting evidence and inform you of their decision before offering a grant agreement.

3.5 Publicity during enrolment

We advise you not to publicise your project on social media or any other media until Defra publicly announces the names of the shortlisted projects and information about the round. Please discuss with your liaison officer if you are unsure.

Entering enrolment does not guarantee that your project will progress to the project development phase. You may not wish to publicise your project until you've signed a grant agreement.

Read the publicity section for further information on how to publicise your project in line with the terms of the project development grant agreement.

3.6 Exiting the scheme during enrolment

It is our ambition to offer as many projects as possible a grant agreement at the end of enrolment. However, a project may exit the scheme during enrolment if:

- the delivery body cannot agree to the plan in the project development phase grant agreement
- the grant recipient or project fails enrolment due diligence or administrative checks
- you do not provide information requested by the delivery body in the timeframe given

- the scope of your project changes in such a way that it would have scored lower at evaluation and so would not have been shortlisted for enrolment

You need to provide information when requested to meet set deadlines. If you miss deadlines, or do not provide sufficient information, your liaison officer may formally request such information. You will have a further 10 working days from the original deadline to provide this. After this time, the delivery body will consider whether to exit your project from the scheme.

You can agree an alternative timeline with your liaison officer if you experience exceptional circumstances, for example, delays while creating a new single legal entity.

You can request to exit the scheme during enrolment. To exit the scheme, you should:

1. Email the liaison officer and Landscape Recovery mailbox. State your desire to exit the scheme.
2. Send the email from the account on our records. Include a statement of support for this decision from any associated project partners.
3. Attend a meeting with the delivery body or Defra. Provide feedback on your experience of Landscape Recovery. Give reasons for exiting the scheme.

The delivery body will send an email from the Landscape Recovery mailbox to confirm your exit from the scheme.

3.6.1 Reserve list

Defra may keep a reserve list for up to 3 months from the start of enrolment. High scoring applications not shortlisted will be on the reserve list.

Shortlisted projects may exit the scheme during enrolment. Defra may invite the highest reserve application to enter enrolment.

4 Project development phase

The project development phase will start on the date specified in your grant funding letter.

The project development phase lasts up to 2 years. Our aim is to support you to complete this phase more quickly where possible and progress with implementation.

The project development phase grant is intended to help you plan and prepare your project for implementation.

Your grant funding letter will include your project budget and the deliverables you need to produce during the project development phase.

After each claim period, you'll need to demonstrate the progress you've made and submit your grant claim and supporting evidence.

The delivery body will review your progress at each claim assessment. The review is to ensure your project is on track and is good value for money.

We may ask you for further information and to re-submit claims if:

- progress is not on track
- evidence is missing

You may incur extra cost for works either not on track or which need further development. The project development phase grant may not cover such costs.

You may have already done work before starting the project development phase that you can use in the deliverables. This could help you progress through the project development phase more quickly. The project development phase grant will not cover the costs of any work done before your grant agreement starts.

4.1 What you need to do during project development

By the end of the project development phase, you'll need to have produced the following deliverables:

- land management plan
- project management and governance plan
- monitoring and evaluation plan
- stakeholder engagement plan
- site access plan
- blended finance plan and business model

You will also have agreed legal and contractual terms, including:

- between the single legal entity for implementation and relevant project participants, such as land managers
- comprehensive legal agreements for funding from private sources
- an implementation agreement with bespoke terms and conditions for your project

The deliverables guidance describes the minimum information the delivery bodies and Defra will use to assure whether your project can move into implementation. You must include all the minimum information required. You may need more detail to meet the needs of investors, buyers of ecosystem services or partners.

The delivery bodies and Defra have produced extra information and guidance to support this handbook. We will update this information as the scheme develops and inform you of any changes made.

You should ensure that you understand and follow the guidance in this handbook and supporting documents.

You can structure and format your deliverables to best suit your needs.

4.2 What the delivery bodies will do during project development

The delivery bodies and Defra will support you during the project development phase. They will:

- provide staff and resources
- issue further guidance and information as needed
- coordinate knowledge sharing events, like webinars and site visits
- review and provide feedback on project documents and answer your questions

Your liaison officer will work with you during the project development phase. They are the main contact point between your project and the delivery bodies and Defra.

Liaison officers will help you to manage your grant, with progress reporting, claims and amending your grant agreement.

Your liaison officer will provide support. Depending on what your project needs, they could:

- attend project meetings
- discuss project planning and progress, including risks and issues
- communicate information and questions between projects, delivery bodies and Defra
- review information provided by projects as part of their development work
- coordinate input from delivery body and arm’s length body technical specialists

Delivery bodies will be consistent across all projects in the support they provide.

Input from delivery bodies will be on an advisory basis. You are responsible for decision making on the project proposals.

4.2.1 Outputs during the project development phase

Throughout the project development phase, you will produce outputs that inform your final deliverables, for example, habitat survey reports that inform the land management plan.

At the beginning of the project development phase, you will need to:

1. Complete a list of outputs in the Outputs Review Tracker spreadsheet with estimated submission dates. The tracker is specific to each project. It is saved in the Scheme

Support SharePoint site > Project Files > Project Folder > Claims > PDP Deliverables > LR Outputs Review Tracker.xlsx
2. Identify outputs with your liaison officer that need delivery or arm's length body specialist input. The specialists can help you to scope the brief or review the output.

This will help delivery bodies to schedule specialist support so they can promptly review outputs, provide comments, and resolve any issues.

Outputs can be supporting evidence for claims. Where possible, send outputs to your liaison officer before you submit a claim. This will allow us to resolve any issues that may prevent or delay payment of a claim.

4.3 Land management plan

The purpose of the land management plan is to:

- communicate how you will achieve your project's vision
- explain how you will manage the land to achieve the environmental and social outcomes
- describe what you expect to do during implementation and when
- provide Defra with information so they can do assurance checks and analysis

Your land management plan must include information on:

1. A vision statement
2. Expected outcomes and impacts
3. Local context
4. Existing site conditions
5. Baseline surveys
6. Land manager support, existing agreements and funding
7. Planned activities
8. Costs
9. Permits, consents and land rights
10. Resilience
11. Project longevity

The land management plan will also help draft the implementation agreement between the project and Defra. You'll need to ensure that information in your land management plan is accurate. You may need to take appropriate legal or other advice as necessary.

You should show how you've considered environmental, economic, heritage, social, policy and legal factors to work out the right action in the right place (spatial prioritisation).

You should use digital maps throughout the land management plan, for example 'Shapefile' (.shp) or 'GeoJSON' (.json or .geojson) formats. This means they can be easily exported and shared.

You can create digital maps using a commercial application, or free online software like:

- MAGIC mapping from Defra
- QGIS, an open-source GIS application

You should outline the arrangements to review the land management plan throughout the implementation phase. This will allow you to update it to show how you will react to any developments, changes, and emerging policy.

You may choose to publish the land management plan and make it publicly available. The land management plan may be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

We expect the land management plan to be an extensive document and only completed towards the end of project development. We encourage you to submit drafts of individual sections or the whole document to your liaison officer as soon as you're able to.

4.3.1 Vision statement

The vision statement should set the direction for planning and implementation. It should:

- describe the change proposed in the project area
- outline what the project expects to achieve
- outline what the project area will look like at the end of implementation

4.3.2 Expected outcomes and impacts

You should refer to your monitoring and evaluation plan and summarise:

- the long-term impacts or changes to the environment, wildlife and community engagement
- the medium-term environmental and social outcomes that your project expects to achieve

4.3.3 Local context

You should identify any national and local priorities and strategies that apply to the project area and describe how your project aligns to them. Where available, you should use information from the:

- Nature Recovery Network (NRN)
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)

- local planning system
- management requirements for protected sites
- other relevant sources

4.3.4 Existing site conditions

Summarise, using digital maps where appropriate, the:

- site boundary
- tenure and land ownership boundaries, to include land registry searches or checks
- current land use, such as arable, grassland, woodland
- access features, like public rights of way, summarise from the site access plan
- statutory and non-statutory designations, like SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and scheduled monuments

You should also include information on:

- degraded habitats, like rivers that require restoration
- fragmented habitats, like disconnected floodplains
- geology, soils and hydrology, summarise, where appropriate, from the monitoring and evaluation plan

The land management plan should list historic environment sites and features. You can find information from:

- the Historic Environment Records
- the National Heritage List for England and Heritage at Risk
- other relevant sources

Further guidance on the historic environment, and what to consider during project development, is in the heritage assets and the historic environment section.

When explaining how your project will fit within the existing landscape you may wish to reference sources such as:

- National Character Area profiles
- Historic Landscape Characterisation
- local landscape character assessments, or other local data

4.3.5 Baseline surveys

Where relevant, produce summary digital maps of baseline flora and fauna conditions. Use information from your monitoring and evaluation plan. Your maps should include:

- target species and habitats

- invasive non-native species (INNS) that may impact the target species or outcomes

Investors, buyers of ecosystem services or permitting activity may have requirements. They may highlight a need for other surveys. You should record any baseline surveys or monitoring required by investors or buyers during implementation under planned activities in the land management plan.

4.3.6 Land manager support, existing agreements and funding

You need to list existing public and private agreements or funding arrangements. Do this for all relevant land parcels within the project area. You should include:

- all agreements, grants, and payments such as Countryside Stewardship and carbon credits
- closed agreements with ongoing obligations or restrictions, such as continuing management requirements
- agreement details, such as management options or requirements, end date, capital items, obligation terms and period
- digital maps to show the location of agreements and management options or requirements at land parcel level
- land parcels in the project area that do not have any agreements

This information will show how you plan to mitigate risks of double funding and comply with rules on ‘stacking’ of payments.

You will need to collect land manager support details for all land managers that have management control for each land parcel or group of land parcels within the project area. This must include:

- name
- address
- business details, including SBI where applicable
- land parcel references to which the support applies for land entering implementation
- signature indicating support for land to enter implementation

You should carry out due diligence checks with HM Land Registry on land in the project area. At present, land not on the Rural Land Register can go into implementation. We may require land registration in the future. You should let us know if this is a cause for concern.

We have developed a land manager Support, Existing Agreements and Funding (SEAF) form. This form will help you gather this information. We will issue the SEAF form in early summer 2024, notify you when it’s available and provide guidance on how to complete it.

The SEAF form is mandatory for round two projects. It will help you identify existing agreements in your project area. You can then plan how to integrate these agreements

into the implementation phase of your project. We may refine the form during the development phase based on your feedback.

Round one projects can develop their own templates to supply this information, but we recommend you use the SEAF form if possible.

All land in the project area with public agri-environment agreements should go into a single implementation agreement. Speak to your liaison officer if this is not possible.

Where you intend to transfer existing agreements into Landscape Recovery you should explain how you will incorporate the objectives and prescriptions from these agreements.

An existing agreement may have terms or objectives that do not fit with your planned actions and activities. Speak to your liaison officer to identify a suitable solution.

You can find further guidance about existing agreements in:

- the managing land section of Further Information to Support the PDP
- the additionality section of Landscape Recovery public payments

4.3.6.1 New agreements in the project development phase

You may enter into new agreements on project area land during the project development phase. Speak with your liaison officer to discuss such plans.

You will need to consider whether you can exit the agreement early and bring the land into Landscape Recovery at implementation. And, if not, how you evaluate issues of the funding stream working alongside Landscape Recovery.

Other considerations include:

- double funding risk
- ongoing maintenance obligations into implementation
- payments for capital works and funding into implementation
- implications for baselining and differentiating additional outcomes from actions funded by different sources

4.3.7 Planned activities

Identify and list the land management actions and activities that you'll undertake during implementation. Align these to expected outcomes in the monitoring and evaluation plan.

Show how your actions are in the right place. You should consider environmental, heritage, economic, social, policy and legal factors.

You should digitally map your planned actions in as much detail as possible, to include:

- polygons, for areas like habitat creation

- lines, for simple linear features like hedges or streams
- points, for small scale site installations like gates or feeders

Include details about the schedule or timeframe for your actions. You could use a table or Gantt chart to outline your project schedule. You can use this information in the project management and governance plan as part of the project management schedule.

You could include images to show how the project area should look at the end of implementation, for example Wild Haweswater.

4.3.8 Costs

You will need to estimate the capital and revenue costs of your planned activities.

You need to justify your cost estimates. You could provide supplier estimates or use cost estimate tools and resources like the Agricultural Budgeting and Costing Handbook published by Agro Business Consultants.

You should reflect cost uncertainty in your risk assessments in the project management and governance plan. Estimate the potential impact of changes to quote or cost estimates.

4.3.9 Permits, consents and land rights

As part of your land management plan, you will need to:

1. Identify all statutory needs, including consents, licenses, permits or other permissions needed implement your project.
2. Identify consenting and permitting conflicts and risks to the project.
3. Develop mitigation plans for risks identified.

You should plan permitting and consenting activity in detail for at least the first 5 years of implementation.

Begin planning early in the project development phase. You may need to contact regulatory bodies, for example statutory, public or local authorities.

You will need to follow the standard permitting processes as set out for each permit by the authorising organisation. These vary across organisations and could take 12 months or more to issue, depending on the complexity and bespoke nature of your project.

The permitting slide pack has examples of the types of consents and permits that your project may need.

You should consider:

1. If your project includes or could affect a SSSI or another protected site. If so, engage with NE for advice about your planned activities.
2. If you need an EIA for activities during implementation.
3. Risks that may cause EIA consent issues. Explain how you will mitigate these.
4. Scheduled monuments in your project area. Engage with Historic England (HE) about your planned activities. You may need Scheduled Monument Consent for works that directly affect a scheduled monument.
5. Forestry regulations. You can engage with FC for further advice.

You may need to consult HE or NE if the project area includes any heritage properties designated under the conditional exemption tax incentive. Find out if a property is a tax-exempt heritage property. HE or NE will help you to check that your proposals are compatible with the heritage undertakings.

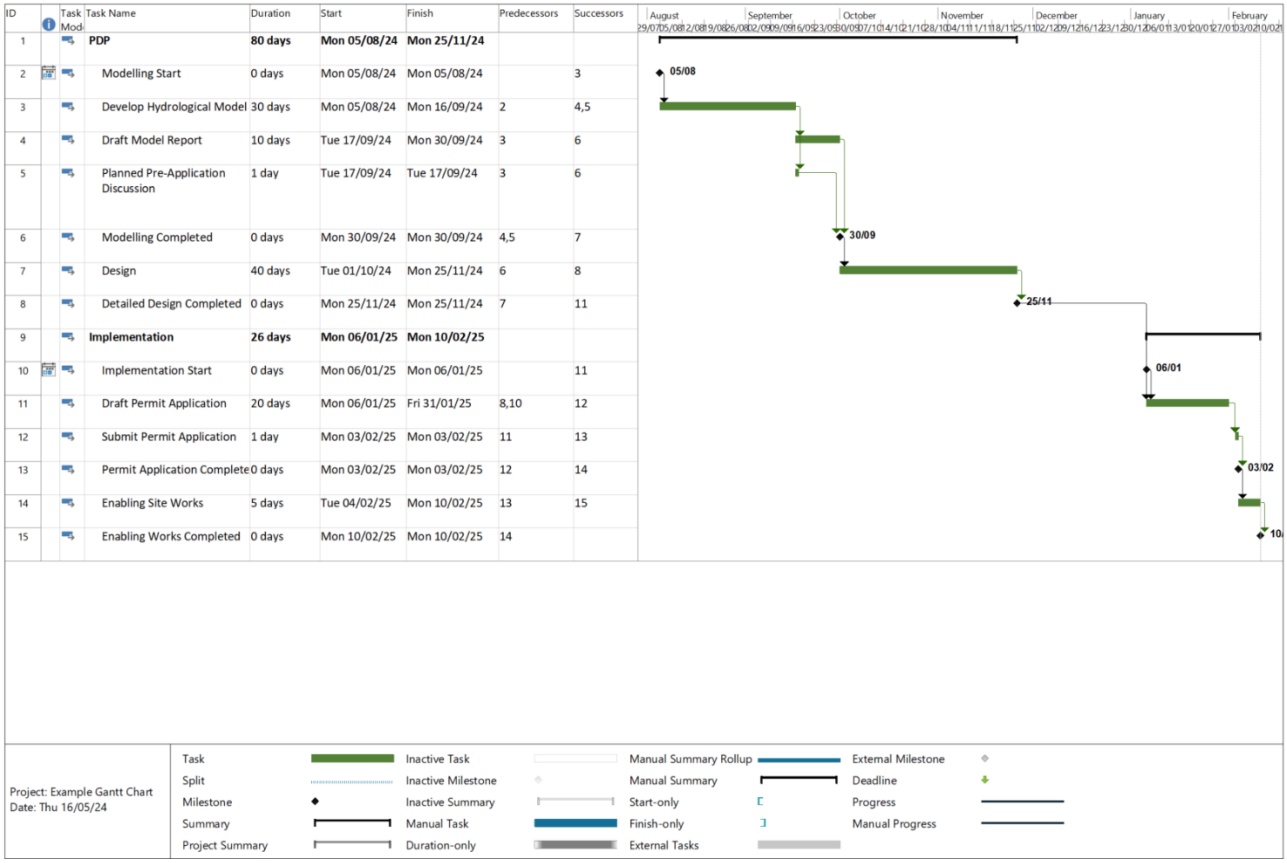
You may need to provide legal assurance that all necessary land rights are in place. We need to know that no third-party interests, restrictions on use or any other rights would constrain or prevent activities in the project area.

Consider how long it will take to get permits and licences. Some permits may need seasonal surveys or hydrological modelling. This could extend the time you need. Include this in your planning.

Permits and consents may extend into implementation. Include this activity in your project schedule in the project management and governance plan.

Figure 2 is an example Gantt chart supporting early-stage plans for a permit to do engineering work to restore a river. Plans should include key activities and timings, dependencies, and sequencing. Your plans should enable you to achieve the stated outcomes within a given timeframe.

Figure 2. An example of a Gantt Chart to use in the early-stage planning of permits.



ID	Task Mode	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predecessors	Successors
1		**PDP**	**80 days**	**Mon 05/08/24**	**Mon 25/11/24**		
2		Modelling Start	0 days	Mon 05/08/24	Mon 05/08/24		3
3		Develop Hydrological Model	30 days	Mon 05/08/24	Mon 16/09/24	2	4,5
4		Draft Model Report	10 days	Tue 17/09/24	Mon 30/09/24	3	6
5		Planned Pre-Application Discussion	1 day	Tue 17/09/24	Tue 17/09/24	3	6
6		Modelling Completed	0 days	Mon 30/09/24	Mon 30/09/24	4,5	7
7		Design	40 days	Tue 01/10/24	Mon 25/11/24	6	8
8		Detailed Design Completed	0 days	Mon 25/11/24	Mon 25/11/24	7	11
9		**Implementation**	**26 days**	**Mon 06/01/25**	**Mon 10/02/25**		
10		Implementation Start	0 days	Mon 06/01/25	Mon 06/01/25		11
11		Draft Permit Application	20 days	Mon 06/01/25	Fri 31/01/25	8,10	12
12		Submit Permit Application	1 day	Mon 03/02/25	Mon 03/02/25	11	13
13		Permit Application Complete	0 days	Mon 03/02/25	Mon 03/02/25	12	14
14		Enabling Site Works	5 days	Tue 04/02/25	Mon 10/02/25	13	15
15		Enabling Works Completed	0 days	Mon 10/02/25	Mon 10/02/25	14	

4.3.9.1 Permitting support tool

When complete, the permitting support tool will:

- show you've considered all consents and permits needed for proposed activities in implementation
- help you plan and schedule any permitting and consenting needs

We recommend that round one projects use this tool. It is mandatory for round two projects and you must submit it as part of your land management plan.

Each project has its own tool saved on Scheme Support SharePoint site > Project files > Project folder > Working drafts > Permitting support tool

You should start to use the permitting support tool in the first few months of the development phase. This will allow you to track progress. You should review and update the tool on a regular basis. Aim to complete the tool in advance of your land management plan submission. This will allow us to:

- check you have considered all permitting and consenting needs
- reduce the risk of any delays in entering implementation

Your liaison officer will support you to complete the tool.

The tool is for internal project use only. It is separate from the individual permitting process needed for each permit. We will not share the tool with regulators and it will not influence the progress of permitting applications.

4.3.10 Resilience

To demonstrate the resilience of the project, you should:

1. Outline the risk and impact from climate change over the project life. Consider how climate change could affect land use and delivery of ecosystem services. Your monitoring and evaluation plan can support this. You could refer to the Climate Change Adaptation Manual. This includes a range of resources and tools to support assessments and decision-making. You could also consider the Landscape Scale Vulnerability Assessments.
2. Identify suitable climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. You'll need to carry out these measures throughout implementation. This will allow you to address project risks and maintain project outcomes.
3. Consider any other high-level risks that could impact project outcomes. This might include invasive non-native species (INNS), or pests and diseases. Identify what adaptation and mitigation measures you'll carry out during the implementation phase. You can use this information as part of the risk management strategy in the project management and governance plan.

4.3.11 Project Longevity

We want to safeguard project outcomes for the long-term after the agreement ends. Show what suitable long-term legal safeguards you could use to ensure the longevity of project outcomes. Show how and where you will apply these safeguards.

Outline any proposals to secure long-term agreements over land in the project area. We are open to discussing these proposals with you as we move through project development.

4.4 Heritage assets and the historic environment

Your project is an opportunity to secure the long-term conservation and enhancement of historic environment features.

You should consider the historic environment to ensure your project:

- maximises environmental benefits
- abides by legal requirements for the management and protection of the historic environment
- avoids damage and ensures appropriate mitigation

- provides the stories that inspire and are of value to local residents
- ensures engagement with the local community
- makes a real and tangible contribution to our collective well-being

See the permits, consents and land rights section for consents and permissions needed for designated heritage sites with statutory protection.

You also need to consider heritage and the historic environment as part of:

- any environmental impact assessment (EIA), including forestry and agriculture EIAs
- the planning process

Most heritage sites are non-designated. You will still need to consider these as part of project development.

Your plans should support the conservation of the local historic environment and cultural heritage. You should also identify opportunities for enhancement, for example:

- management of historic sites integrated into the land management plan
- restoration and sustainable new uses for traditional structures and historic buildings
- archaeological sites removed from cultivation through grassland habitat creation
- management of historic wetlands, to preserve historic records of past environments and archaeological remains contained within
- parkland management plans and restoring registered parks and gardens at risk
- restoring natural heritage and historic character, like hedgerows and flood meadows
- improvements to access and interpretation of historic sites and landscapes
- citizen science, volunteering and training in traditional heritage skills
- supporting intangible cultural heritage

You should do a heritage impact assessment. This will help you to understand how the project will affect local heritage assets. Include the following steps:

1. Gather information about local heritage through a heritage audit or desk-based assessment.
2. Assess the importance of local heritage features. Consider how your proposals may impact them.
3. Seek input and advice from heritage specialists, like Historic England regional advisors, local authority historic environment services and commercial heritage sector.
4. Consider what management options are available for the feature. Consider what constraints or opportunities these may bring.
5. Follow the mitigation hierarchy when assessing options. This will help to avoid, reduce, manage and mitigate impact.
6. Involve stakeholders, including local communities, in evaluating options and reaching a decision.

NE have recently published guidance on integrating heritage into nature recovery schemes. This is a good framework to follow and signposts information and advice.

The Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme has developed guidance for historic environment assessments (see section about 'Developing your project'). This may also provide a useful framework.

HE has guidance on preparing statements of heritage significance. Although this was prepared for a planning context, much of the information and the approach is relevant to any proposal that impacts on heritage assets. Good practice guidance on intangible cultural heritage is available from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

4.4.1 Where to find information

To find out about heritage sites in your project area, you should consult:

- your local Historic Environment Record
- the National Heritage List for England.
- HE's Heritage at Risk register for any local opportunities to enhance heritage sites

Other useful sources include:

- HE's Aerial Photo Explorer
- HE's Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer
- the EA's LiDAR data.

The National Character Area profiles for your project area will provide an overview of local landscape character and heritage.

Many local authorities have done landscape character assessments. Use the authority's website or the Landscape Institute's national database to check availability.

To understand how landscapes have changed, you can use Historic Ordnance Survey maps. You can access these from National Library of Scotland, and Historic Landscape Characterisation.

4.5 Forestry guidance

All forestry actions associated with Landscape Recovery must comply with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) to achieve UK sustainability standards.

You must have woodland management plans for all woodland in the project area.

To create woodland, you must have a woodland creation plan that includes woodland creation suitability assessments and planting designs.

Your woodland plans should include other land management considerations from the wider land management plan, like the historic environment or species management actions.

You must consult woodland specialists when drafting woodland management and creation plans. Your liaison officer can facilitate this, or you can contact the FC at ELMEnquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk.

4.5.1 Requirements for existing woodlands

You can complete woodland management plans in either the project development or implementation phase.

You can use either a:

- FC woodland management plan template
- bespoke plan for woodland management of your own design

You can complete one woodland management plan for the whole project area or multiple plans between different land holdings. This is likely to depend on things like the:

- presence and timings related to existing FC approved woodland management plans
- number of land holdings that contribute to the project's total woodland area

You must complete a separate agent authority form for each landowner if the woodland management plan covers more than one landowner.

The woodland management plan cover sheet describes the minimum standard and amount of information FC needs to assess compliance with UKFS.

You can use the inventory and plan of operations template to show how your management, sustainable felling and restocking will achieve a diverse structure of habitats, species and age range of trees. You must complete this template if you're applying for a felling licence with your management plan. You'll need a separate inventory for each landowner if you're using a FC management plan template.

If you choose to complete plans in the implementation phase, you'll need to include a strategic management outline in the land management plan.

This should:

- include a vision and objectives for woodland management, which considers biodiversity, climate change, historic environment, landscape, people, soil and water
- state when you will complete full woodland management plans
- highlight all woodland intended for management

4.5.2 Requirements to create woodland

You should outline woodland creation feasibility during the project development phase. This will need to include all woodland creation that you intend to do.

Find out more on planning new woodland.

You can plan woodland creation in the implementation phase if it's more appropriate to your project objectives. You'll need to provide justification for this, for example if woodland creation will not start until later in project implementation.

You can split woodland creation plans into individual proposed woodland areas or have one plan for the whole project area.

You can write your woodland creation plan using either:

- a FC woodland creation design plan template
- a bespoke plan for woodland creation of your own design

As a first stage, all woodland creation plans must use site assessments, opportunities and constraints checks, to consider:

- biodiversity, including priority habitats and notable species
- designations
- landscape character assessments
- soils and geology, including soilscape identification, peatland presence and agricultural land classes
- tree suitability, ecological site classification can inform this assessment
- historic environment: when to notify historic environment organisations about forestry proposals guidance can aid in this
- stakeholder interests
- pest and diseases, including relevant deer, red and grey squirrel presence and tree diseases, like Phytophthora ramorum

The creation plan must have GIS files or maps, like these examples, showing afforestation areas, designations, context of woodland proposal in the wider landscape, opportunities and constraints.

The FC can initially review plans at this stage before more detailed information is included as part of a full woodland creation design plan. This second stage should include:

- a planting design, including species selection, species composition, stocking densities, and sourcing sustainable planting stock
- establishment technique and viability, for example a natural colonisation viability assessment like for natural colonisation in the England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO). The natural colonisation to create woodland guidance will help you do this assessment.
- ground preparation and site protection strategy
- planting design, such as open ground and access routes

- establishment maintenance strategy, for example weed control, replanting, pest control
- final design maps

Final design maps should clearly:

- define site boundaries
- label compartments and sub compartments
- define and label proposed work areas and actions to a suitable level of detail, for example open ground areas, access routes, distinct areas of different planting

If it's agreed that you'll write woodland creation plans in implementation, some details are still required in the land management plan, to allow viability assessments. This should include:

- an outline of the woodland creation vision and objectives
- a schedule for completing the woodland creation plan
- a schedule for when you will obtain any EIAs
- mapping of areas planned for afforestation, including GIS files
- description or mapping of constraints and opportunities linked to the woodland creation

4.5.3 Digital maps in management plans

Include digital maps in your woodland management and creation plans, using SBI or land parcel references to show woodland compartments, constraints and planned operations.

Figure 3. An example woodland compartment map.

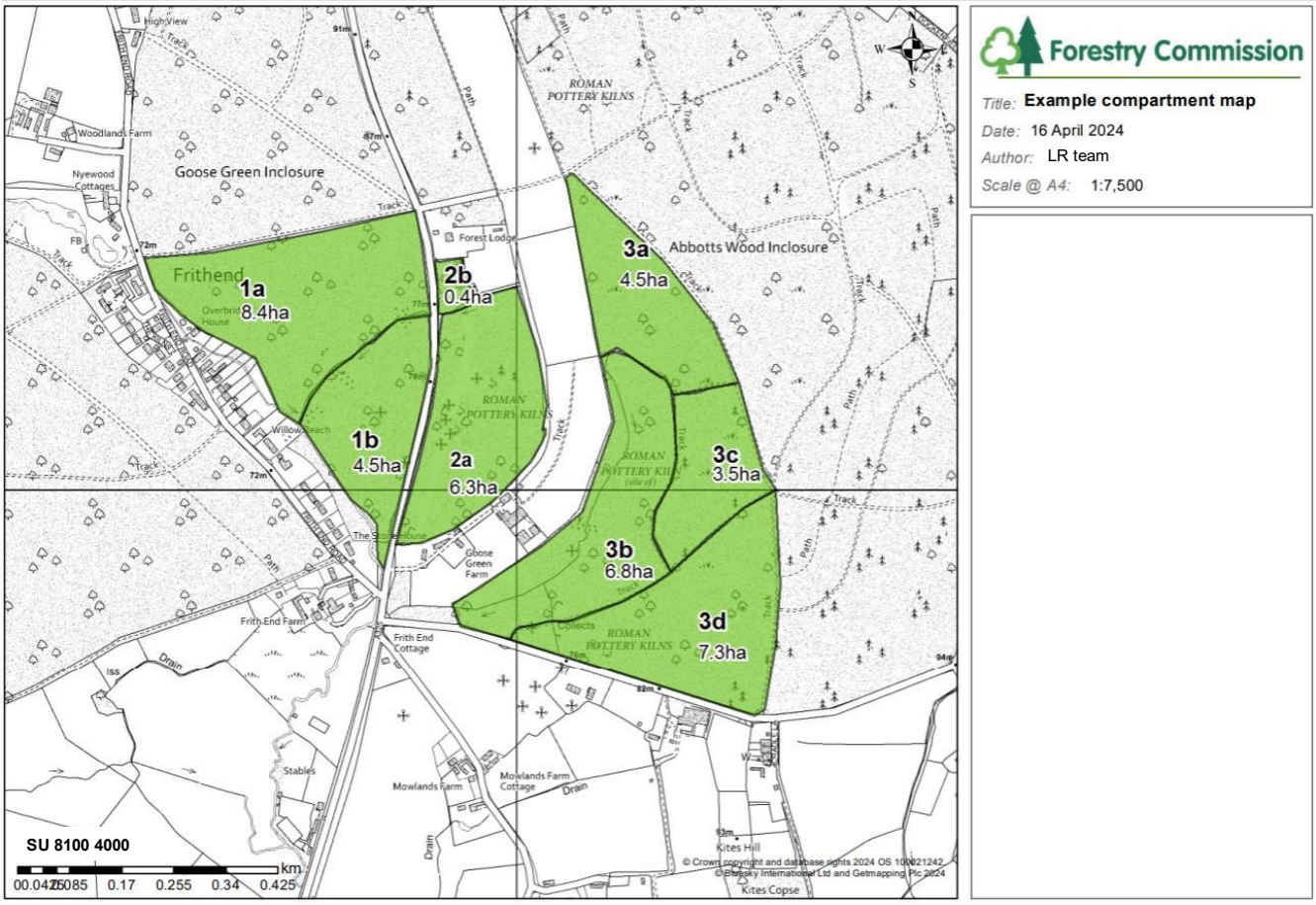


Figure 4**.** An example woodland constraints map.

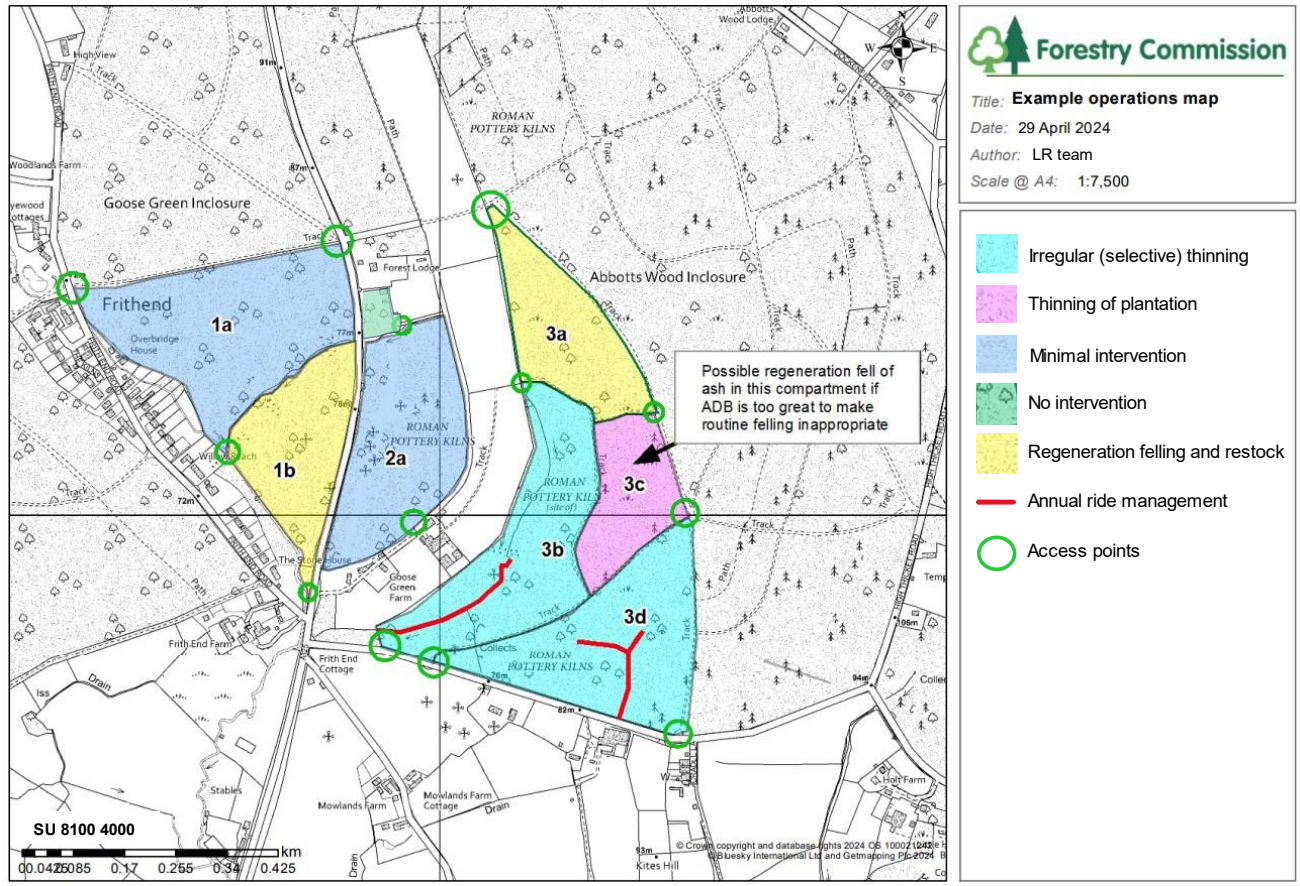
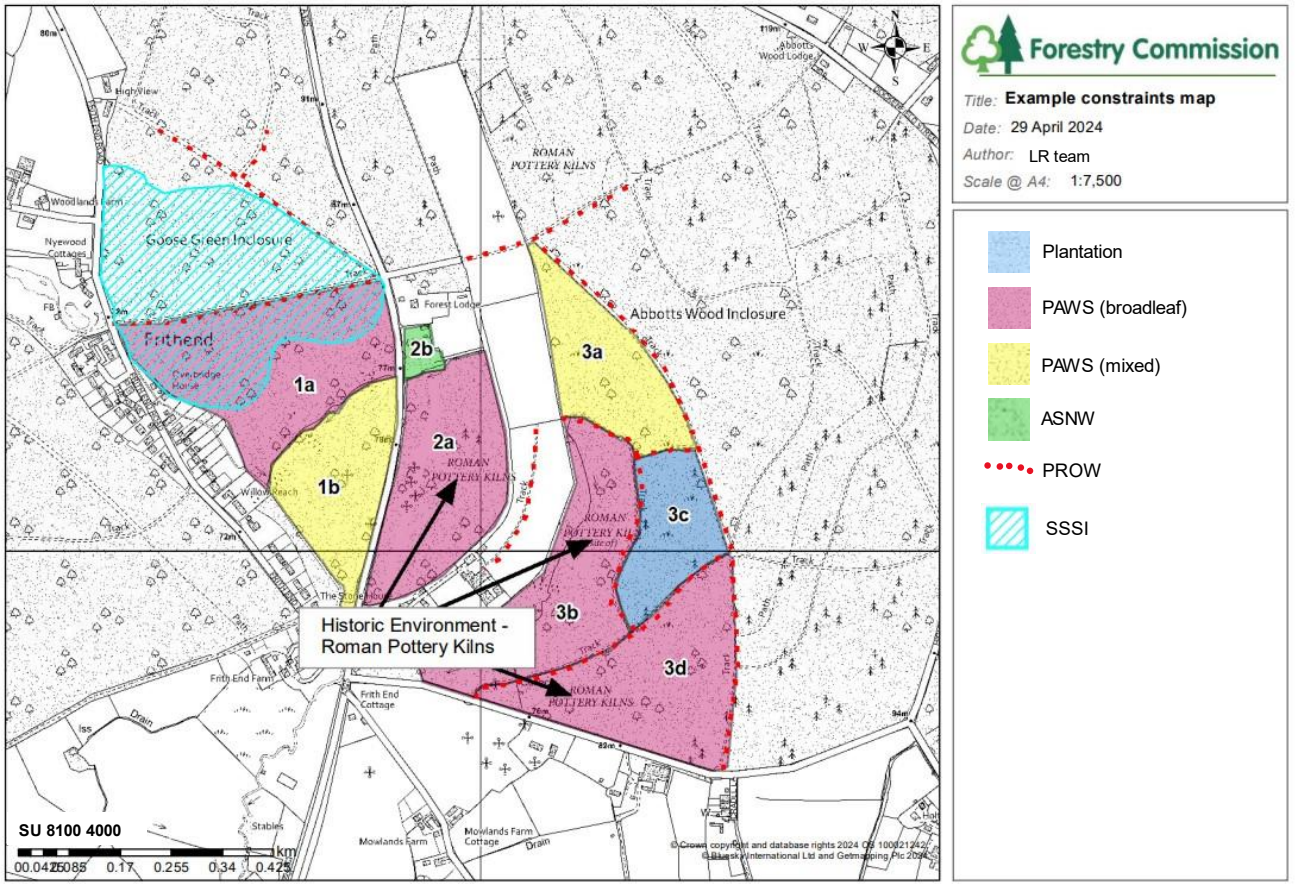


Figure 5. An example woodland operations map.



4.5.4 Deer and grey squirrel planning

The risk of damage caused by deer and grey squirrels must be considered in any woodland creation or management project, due to the potential impact on woodland health and the project's outcomes.

You could do a site-based activity or impact survey to understand the risk of deer or grey squirrels to your aims.

You should outline mitigation, monitoring and management techniques in woodland management and creation plans.

You can create more detailed deer and grey squirrel management plans as needed. You can apply these to other habitats at risk from deer. You can use the deer and grey squirrel operation notes to help you produce species management plans.

The FC map browser has an indicative deer risk map across England. It does not show the impact of deer. Deer may still have negative impacts to your project's outcomes in low-risk areas.

Please contact your liaison officer and the FC at ELMEnquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk for advice and guidance on deer impact, mitigation and opportunities.

4.6 Forestry regulations

This guidance describes the regulatory requirements for creating and managing woodland, scrub, and open tree habitats. This includes forestry environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and felling licences.

4.6.1 Woodland definition

Woodland is typically defined as:

- at least 0.5ha
- an average minimum width of 20m
- a potential tree canopy cover of at least 20%

A tree is a plant with at least one woody stem expected to achieve 5m height.

You need to consider whether you need forestry EIAs where these thresholds have the potential to be met.

4.6.2 Forestry EIAs

Forestry EIAs are bespoke regulations and different to agricultural EIAs. Forestry EIAs are split into 2 stages.

Stage 1 confirms whether:

- the FC believes the proposal is likely to significantly affect the environment or not
- a stage 2 EIA application for consent is needed

A stage 1 EIA decision lasts for 5 years.

You will need to state when you plan to complete forestry EIAs during implementation.

The forestry project: all checks and forestry projects constraints has further guidance on afforestation and deforestation EIAs.

4.6.3 Deforestation EIAs

Deforestation is defined as the permanent removal of trees forming, or having potential to form, woodland cover for conversion to another land use.

This can include the removal of energy crops, short rotation forestry, short rotation coppice and Christmas tree plantations.

Any deforestation over 0.5ha which plans to change canopy cover from greater than 20% to less than 20% is likely to require an EIA.

You may also need a felling licence. The FC can provide advice on felling licences.

The open habitats policy can help indicate where and when deforestation may be most appropriate.

4.6.4 Afforestation EIAs

Afforestation is defined as converting land that is not woodland to woodland or forest. This excludes open ground in woodland.

Afforestation is usually achieved by planting or facilitating natural colonisation of trees to form woodland cover.

During project development, you need to show that you've considered afforestation EIAs for your woodland creation plans. Whether you need an afforestation EIA will depend on the scale and sensitivity of the site proposed for afforestation.

4.6.5 Forest Roads and Quarries EIAs

Forestry EIAs also cover the creation, alteration, or maintenance of works on forest roads, tracks, trails, and any quarrying activities within a woodland to obtain materials for forestry roadworks. The risk level for this activity is dependent on area and land designations.

4.6.6 Considerations to create or manage scrub and open tree habitats

You do not need a forestry EIA where woody species:

- are not expected to exceed 5m in height at maturity in the location where they are growing
- over 5m in height are present, but do not have the potential to exceed 20% canopy cover, which can be limited by factors like management or grazing

However, you need to consider forestry EIAs where scrub or open tree habitats are or have the potential to be over 0.5ha and over 20m in width and have at least 20% canopy cover of woody species capable of growing over 5m high.

Scrub or open trees are considered semi-natural habitat when it is less than 5m high with a canopy cover of at least 10% over more than 0.25ha. You may need agricultural EIA screening to increase productivity or restructure this habitat. You can check if you need a screening decision.

Contact your liaison officer and ELMEnquiries@forestrycommmission.gov.uk if you need guidance on when afforestation EIAs are required.

4.6.7 Agroforestry

Agroforestry system fail-safe designs that are not regarded as woodland and do not require forestry EIAs are:

- 44 trees per hectare on a square grid, with trees no closer than 15m apart
- 51 trees per hectare on a triangular grid, with trees no closer than 15m apart
- 133 trees per hectare in rows, provided each row is no closer than 24m apart and assuming 3m spacing in each row

If you require greater stocking densities in agroforestry systems, you should consider forestry EIAs. However, it may still be possible to plant more trees than these fail-safe designs and remain under the thresholds that require an EIA.

4.6.8 Felling licences

The FC controls some tree felling by issuing felling licences.

Find out when you need a felling licence, as not every tree felling project requires a felling licence, and some exemptions apply.

You can apply for a 10-year felling licence by using a FC woodland management plan template.

Alternatively, you can apply for a standalone felling licence that lasts for 5 years.

You do not need to obtain felling licences during the project development phase. But you do need to consider if you'll need felling licences during implementation and schedule acquiring them in the land management plan.

4.7 Project management and governance plan

Effective project management and governance will assure Defra that:

- you can deliver your Landscape Recovery project
- public funds will be managed in accordance with HM Treasury guidance on managing public money

The project management and governance plan should:

- demonstrate effective project management throughout implementation
- outline the governance protocols and safeguards of your project
- demonstrate how you will manage any grants, funds and blended finance

You should write a project management plan and governance plan as one document. Both plans should cover the lifetime of the implementation agreement.

4.7.1 Guidance for the project management plan

The project management plan should show how the project team will use their skills to meet the objectives and key performance indicators for your project.

You should have a clear project management framework. Describe the time, cost and quality criteria you will use to deliver the project.

The project management plan must include the:

- project scope, including aims, objectives and success factors.
- activities and outputs
- project schedule
- project team, to include roles and responsibilities, reporting and controls
- procurement and contract strategy
- risks, issues and assumptions
- benefits management plan

Benefits are the positive outputs and outcomes attributed to your project. The benefits management plan should:

- identify benefits related to the outcomes stated in your monitoring and evaluation plan
- describe how and when you will achieve the identified benefits
- outline those responsible for realising the benefits
- report whether the project is delivering the intended benefits
- report how well they meet stakeholder needs and implementation agreement criteria

You should plan to review and update the deliverables throughout implementation. You should account for the time and resources to do this.

Further guidance about project management planning is available from the Association for Project Management and Project Engineer.

4.7.1.1 Project scope

Your scope will include the:

- aims and objectives of the project
- timeline
- budget
- assigned tasks
- project stakeholders and suppliers needed to implement your project

Your aims and objectives should refer to the vision statement in the land management plan and expected outcomes and impacts in the monitoring and evaluation plan.

The objectives will impact on every project decision, so need clear definition. You could consider using a framework such as SMART to detail your objectives:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-bound

You should include project success factors and criteria focussed on budget, quality, and project timeline.

It's important that your scope includes what is, and what is not, included in the project. This should prevent the risk of misunderstanding at a later point. You should also include any assumptions made about the project during its life cycle.

4.7.1.2 Project activities and outputs

The activities and outputs that will drive the project should include, but are not limited to:

- activities and outputs in the theory of change in your monitoring and evaluation plan
- the planned actions and activities in your land management plan

Outputs are what is delivered or produced as an immediate result of the project activities. This could include the land management improvements and socio-economic benefits the project will achieve.

Activities are the physical interventions such as soil and land management, creation of hedgerows or earth bunds. Activities ensure you can achieve the project outputs.

4.7.1.3 Project schedule

You will need to include a schedule of when you expect to start and complete work, for example a Gantt chart.

The project schedule should outline the activities and outputs identified during project development. These will come from your other deliverables.

You should forecast how long these activities will take, including resource needs. Include the timeframes for:

- legal and commercial advice
- procurement for implementation
- activity to obtain consents, permits and licenses

You should make it clear how you will keep track of expected progress, to include:

- what action you will take to manage delays
- the points at which you will review progress

4.7.1.4 Project team

The project team might come from more than one organisation. You should describe how you'll manage your project day-to-day within your organisations' structures. Include:

- how much resource you need to deliver the project
- who is responsible for what during implementation

Outline the roles and responsibilities of the project management team. Individuals within the team could include the project:

- manager, who will run the project day-to-day
- executive, responsible for project goals and monitoring project performance
- sponsor, who will get resources and support in place to ensure project success
- officers and support

You could include an organisational chart of the project team to show how different roles interrelate. You should explain how the project team will be managed and who will have responsibility for their management and resolving any issues.

4.7.1.5 Procurement and contract strategy

To deliver your project you may need to procure goods and services. This could include tools and equipment, staff, contractors and external expertise or skills.

You should consider a procurement strategy. Detail of how you will manage cost and quality will ensure good value for money. It should also minimise risks, such as delays, overspend and low-quality work.

We encourage you to share lessons from your procurement activities with the Landscape Recovery community of practice.

4.7.1.6 Risks, issues and assumptions

A risk assessment is a core part of your project. This is best done as a table.

You should maintain a live risk management log throughout your project's lifetime. The risk management log should identify and assess the:

- risks to project delivery, such as environmental, financial, legal, regulation, policy, subsidy, or third-party activity
- the likelihood of a risk occurring, for example low, medium or high
- the impact of risks, for example cost, time or quality
- how you will mitigate for risks to project delivery, or whether you have a contingency plan for risk

You should also include:

- assumptions made to assess a risk
- ways you will minimise or eliminate the risk
- who has responsibility or ownership for the risk
- how you will monitor for new risks

Your risk management process should:

- identify how and when you will escalate a risk through your governance and beyond
- form part of your project governance plan
- ensure that risk does not become a constraint to delivery

Any impact to delivery may affect your ability to meet the project objectives. This includes blended finance.

The Association for Project Management has guidance about risk management.

Table 1 provides an initial list of foreseeable risks you may want to consider and build on.

Risk	Summary
Financial	
Payment rates	There are multiple factors which could affect payment rates such as inflation, private market returns and investor appetites. Projects should consider how to manage, review and potentially amend payment rates internally, while ensuring the overarching agreement objectives are met.
Financial liability	You should set out how financial liability will be shared if one area of the project is underperforming, including arrangements between land managers in a group agreement.
Financial difficulties	There needs to be agreement on the expectations in the scenario that one project partner gets into financial difficulties, with legal safeguards in place to limit risk to other partners.
Specialist advice	If a project pays for specialist advice which proves to be inadequate, there needs to be a clear account of the associated financial and delivery liability.
Changing business models	A ‘communication of intent’ protocol may be needed in the event of a land manager altering their business practices in a way which could impact the agreement with Defra and could risk legal issues for Defra and the project.
Delivery	
Performance metrics	Payments should be linked to reliable, practical, and measurable result indicators. You should also account for the potential impacts of extreme weather, or other uncontrollable events.
Imbalances in project decision making	Imbalances in decision-making powers between project stakeholders could lead to a breakdown of the partnership and project. Governance structures should ensure inclusive, fair representation for all stakeholders, for example through project boards.

Exit from an agreement by a land manager	Exit by a land manager could risk undermining a group agreement, unless appropriate legal safeguards protect the project, buyers, land managers, and public funds.
Exit from an agreement by a buyer or investor	Exit by a buyer/investor could leave land managers short of payment. You should consider how this situation could be addressed.
Underperformance by a land manager in a group agreement	If a land manager fails to deliver an outcome, this could leave project partners short of meeting their collective environmental targets. Mechanisms for enforcement, redress or proportional reward could be helpful in this scenario.
Project under-delivery	There is a chance that you may under-deliver due to unforeseen circumstances such as extreme weather events or ecosystems not responding as expected. You should consider how project stakeholders, activities, and outcomes can be updated and safeguarded against the risks to project delivery and payments.
Staff turnover and loss of expertise	Given the duration of long-term agreements, it might be helpful to ensure that project delivery does not become over-reliant on one individual or project partner in case they leave the project.
Input from intermediaries and advisors	Intermediary organisations could help source private investment for projects and secure agreement on pricing between buyers and sellers. Advisors could help where specialist input is needed. These roles should be fulfilled by competent and trusted providers to enable projects to move forwards with confidence. You should establish processes for due diligence and assurance of external expertise.
Communication channels	Insufficient communication during project development and implementation could undermine delivery, especially where this requires coordinated activity and/or local support.
Evidence and learning	Projects should consider how they can learn and adapt their approach when relevant new scientific evidence is published or based on evaluations and learning from similar projects.
Reputational	

Public misunderstanding	Projects could encounter public resistance or opposition. Significant levels of local opposition could cause reputational damage, halt or disrupt the project and/or bring about lengthy and costly legal challenges. You should have a strategy for convening and maintaining local community support and engagement over the lifetime of an agreement.
Tenants and landowners	You should ensure that those delivering the land-use interventions receive fair payment.

4.7.2 Guidance for the project governance plan

The project governance plan must provide details about the governance of your:

- project during implementation
- project with stakeholders and partners
- blended finance arrangement

Your project will need a single legal entity for the implementation phase. This will mean that you retain some independence and flexibility to manage your project over its lifetime.

The single legal entity should have separate agreements with other legal entities. This includes suppliers, landowners and tenants.

The project management risk register should identify any risks to agreements. Outline how you will manage and mitigate risks on the risk register.

Good governance will clarify how the governance process will work and those involved. It’s important as your agreement will last at least 20 years. Your project will need processes to adapt as circumstances change during implementation.

You will need to secure your project's future once the implementation agreement ends. Include the governance for post-implementation in the project governance plan.

Further information about project governance is available from the:

- Project Management Institute
- Association for Project Management

4.7.2.1 Governance of your project during implementation

The single legal entity can be the same as the agreement holder for the development phase if it is fit for the purposes of implementation. That single legal entity will also need to be able to hold any subsequent agreements with project partners.

You should consider the role of a project board in the implementation of your project.

A project board:

- decides how to direct and guide the project
- is accountable and responsible for delivery
- authorises resource commitments, like budget, workforce and equipment
- authorises decisions about project delivery

You may also have a steering group, though it is not always essential. A steering group gives key stakeholders a voice about the project's direction. It can oversee and support the project to ensure it meets its objectives.

Consider:

- how to manage the relationship between your project, the single legal entity responsible for managing your implementation agreement and Defra
- how and who will make decisions, and who has final sign off
- how you will assess compliance and conduct monitoring and enforcement in the project area over the project lifetime
- how to escalate issues you identify through the risk and management process
- how individual land managers can raise concerns and how to manage these

You will need terms of reference for any governance board. You should describe:

- its role and purpose
- its membership, including roles and responsibilities
- how you will ensure that meetings are quorate
- how you will make decisions
- how often it will meet
- how it will share decisions and information

Your financial management arrangements should be clear and transparent. Include how you will hold funds and disperse money to project participants.

Records management should document actions, decisions made and ownership details.

You should consider a change management process. This would detail how you'll manage and record changes to project delivery, including changes in activity, cost and time.

When proposing a new governance structure, detail the process, policies and procedures needed to manage project delivery project and the management of staff and funding.

4.7.2.2 Governance of your project with stakeholders and partners

You will need to outline how the lead partner, project partners and other stakeholders will interact with each other and administer the project.

Include:

- the lead organisation and the grant recipient, which might be one and the same
- the roles and remits of the project partners
- which organisation is responsible for what, including any legal agreements
- how you will make decisions
- how your governance structure will account for any project partner or member receiving project funds or grants
- how risks and issues will be managed

All stakeholders should have fair and appropriate representation on the project. You may need to balance diverse interests, for example, where a project includes a large corporate body and a tenant farmer.

4.7.2.3 Governance of blended finance

You should use legal and commercial advice to help set up the governance and management of project finances, especially if you are setting up a legal entity or a special purpose vehicle.

Your chosen governance structure or structures should show how you will:

- ensure fair representation and decision making
- manage and disperse funds
- manage any appeals

Good governance is essential for any funding and blended finance. It will give investors, funders, government, and grant givers:

- confidence that you will manage their money well
- reassurance that you will deliver project outputs

The blended finance plan will include details of how you will broker the transactions between the buyers, sellers and investors for nature-based solutions.

The Green Finance Institute has guidance on the governance of blended finance and the Investment Readiness Toolkit.

4.8 Monitoring and evaluation plan

4.8.1 About monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to understand how you are progressing towards achieving your aims and objectives. Monitoring and evaluation helps projects and their stakeholders, for example permitting bodies or private and public investors to understand:

- project outcomes and impacts
- whether there are any unintended consequences because of the project
- value for money and what can be learned from the implementation process

Monitoring is the collection of data during and after implementation of a project to inform its evaluation. It focuses on the inputs, activities, and outputs of a project and tracks progress against indicators and metrics.

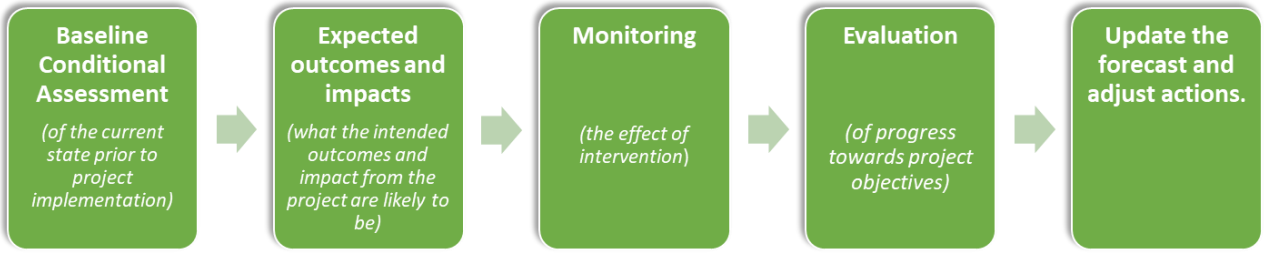
Evaluation is an objective examination of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of activities against your project objectives. Regularly evaluating a project helps identify if its actions are having the desired effect or not. This allows project plans to adapt as projects progress.

In the context of ecosystems, indicators are used to suggest the state or level of an objective, for example changes to flood behaviour.

Metrics are the method of measurement, for example number of flood events, time of concentration, volume, and inundation period.

Indicators and metrics should be designed to answer evaluation questions. They can be used to measure actual results against planned or intended outcomes. Indicators and metrics are specific, measurable, and observable characteristics or features that provide information about the inputs, activities, outcomes and impact of project's interventions.

Figure 6. The steps needed to monitor and evaluate a project.



4.8.2 Guidance for monitoring and evaluation plans

Your monitoring and evaluation plan must include:

1. A theory of change.
2. An evaluation framework, including evaluation questions, indicators, metrics, and data collection methods.
3. Monitoring and evaluation methods.
4. A data management plan.
5. An environmental and social baseline assessment.
6. Expected project outcomes.

During the development phase, you will need to submit completed baseline assessments, monitoring data and expected outcomes for indicators and metrics using the Landscape Recovery reporting database.

The database guidance describes the core indicator attributes that you need to report on and forecast to show the changes your project expects to make.

During implementation, you'll need to submit an annual progress monitoring report and a detailed monitoring and evaluation report every 5 years. We will provide a data reporting table for this.

4.8.3 What support is available

Each project is responsible for resourcing, designing, and delivering their own monitoring and evaluation plans and associated outputs.

Cross-cutting monitoring and evaluation support is available to help projects with the development phase outputs. Each project has a monitoring and evaluation support officer assigned to it from the support supplier funded by Defra. Ask your liaison officer if you do not know who your support officer is.

The monitoring and evaluation support supplier for round two projects is to be confirmed.

The support supplier provided up to 2 days a year of bespoke support per round one project. It is likely that this level of support will continue with some additional resource to specifically help with environmental baseline and monitoring methods.

Send questions about monitoring and evaluation to your support officer and copy in your liaison officer. Your support officer can help you with:

- drafting and reviewing the project theory of change
- how to develop an evaluation framework and link this to the theory of change
- how to draft evaluation questions
- selecting the most appropriate environmental and socio-economic indicators and metrics for baseline and monitoring
- defining the most appropriate research methods for your indicators and metrics
- queries on data management and metadata

- how to populate the baseline and forecast outcomes database
- how to forecast expected project outcomes
- signposting to monitoring and evaluation guidance, tools and templates
- getting input from monitoring specialists

4.8.4 Theory of change

A theory of change explains how a project's activities lead to the desired outcomes and impacts. The theory of change consists of:

- inputs, the resources allocated to the project, for example funding, staff, time or skills
- activities planned for project development and implementation
- outputs, what is delivered or produced, such as the immediate result of the activities
- outcomes, the short or medium-term changes resulting from the activities
- impact, long-term changes or vision the project contributes to, but cannot achieve on its own
- assumptions and risks associated with achieving the impacts, to be tested and assessed while monitoring and evaluating the implementation phase

The theory of change activities and outcomes may change during the development phase to reflect changes to your project based on research, surveys and feasibility studies that you do. At the end of the development stage our monitoring and evaluation support supplier will work with you to review the theory of change.

You may also need to revise and update the theory of change activities and outcomes during project implementation based on your realised targets.

Chapter 2 of the HMT Magenta Book gives further guidance on the theory of change.

4.8.4.1 Link habitats and assets to outcomes

Under outputs, outcomes and impacts, make sure you've stated the:

- habitats and assets that your project will affect
- ecosystem services that your project will provide

This will help you select suitable metrics and indicators for the evaluation framework to baseline and monitor your project.

Defra's Enabling a Natural Capital Approach (ENCA) links habitats and assets to potential outcomes and impacts. Defra have produced a Landscape Recovery ENCA spreadsheet to help you make these links.

Choose the ecosystem services most relevant to your project, as you may not provide or be interested in all the ecosystem services associated with a habitat or asset.

You can choose the best way to present this information alongside your theory of change.

4.8.5 Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework includes the evaluation questions, indicators and metrics, and data collection methods that you will use during project development and implementation.

To create your evaluation framework, you'll need to:

1. Write evaluation questions linked to theory of change outcomes and outputs.
2. Select the relevant core indicators and metrics from the LR Indicator Index. You must report on all environmental, social and financial indicators relevant to your project.
3. Choose suitable recommended indicators and metrics from the LR Indicator Index.
4. Identify and record any bespoke indicators or metrics specific to your project.
5. State your data collection methods and frequency, using the information in monitoring and evaluation methods section.
6. Describe the governance, for example internal procedures to approve and assure the quality of outputs. Describe who is responsible for assurance, data collection and project evaluation. You can refer to the project management and governance plan if it describes governance of monitoring and evaluation.

You should present your evaluation framework as a table. More detail about what to include in the evaluation framework is in the following sections.

4.8.5.1 Evaluation questions

Use your theory of change to write evaluation questions that test the assumptions, risks and causal relationship between inputs, activities, intended and unintended outcomes.

Some examples of evaluation questions that could apply to your project:

- How did the activities implemented for targeted ecosystem-based habitat creation, protection and restoration increase or halt the decline of species abundance, biodiversity and threatened or iconic species?
- What were the effects of activities implemented for reconnecting floodplain channels to reduce flood intensity downstream?
- How did the activities implemented for better site accessibility increase the number of visitors on site?
- To what extent did the intervention achieve its outcomes?
- How would the site develop without the intervention used?
- How effective and efficient was project delivery, for example how partnerships worked or whether resources were used effectively?

As you gather enough data, you should aim to answer these questions in the monitoring and evaluation report that you'll submit every 5 years during implementation.

You can use evaluation questions to identify relevant indicators, create a data collection plan and plan future monitoring and modelling.

4.8.6 Indicators and metrics

Identify the indicators, metrics, and data sources that you will use to:

- estimate the baseline condition of your project area before implementation
- forecast the expected outcomes and impact that your project will have
- monitor to what extent the project achieves its outcomes during implementation

From your baselining, surveying and financial planning work during project development you will be able to produce:

- environmental indicators and metrics, like flood behaviour and number of flood events
- social indicators and metrics, for example number of visits to the project site and number of volunteering days
- financial indicators, for example private investment support, investment amounts or return on investment expected and generated

The LR Indicator Index lists core, recommended and bespoke indicators and metrics.

4.8.6.1 Core indicators and metrics

You must measure core indicators and metrics from the 'Core' tab of the LR Indicator Index that are relevant to your project.

You only need to select and report against relevant indicators. For example, if your project does not include woodland, then you do not need to report against woodland core indicators.

The LR Indicator Index states the monitoring methodology, frequency and Defra's reporting requirements for each core indicator and metric.

The core indicators are directly linked to Defra's Environmental Improvement Plan. They allow Defra to aggregate data across projects to monitor and evaluate the impact and value for money of Landscape Recovery at the scheme and project level. Defra will use these data to monitor the outcomes achieved by the scheme and to learn from it to improve future rounds of the scheme.

4.8.6.2 Recommended indicators and metrics

You can use the 'Recommended' tab of the LR Indicator Index to identify other indicators and metrics relevant to your project and evaluation questions.

These indicators and metrics are optional but recommended. They're more detailed and:

- allow your project to make better, more informed decisions
- provide better validation of success

The core indicators are designed as a foundation for you to build on with recommended and bespoke indicators and metrics.

You may add more recommended indicators throughout your project, but it is best practice to identify and gather baseline data for all indicators before project implementation.

4.8.6.3 Bespoke indicators and metrics

You may have unique or very specific project targets that are important to your project, partnership, investors or buyers of ecosystem services.

The 'Bespoke' tab of the LR Indicator Index has some examples.

You may add more bespoke indicators throughout your project, but it is best practice to identify and gather baseline data for all indicators before you start implementation.

4.8.7 Monitoring and evaluation methods

Monitoring and evaluation methods relate to your evaluation questions and assess:

- the impact of your project
- what can be learned from how your project was delivered
- what can be improved
- whether your project demonstrated good use of resources

State which monitoring and evaluation methods you'll use alongside each indicator and metric you've chosen.

You must use the methods stated in the 'Core' tab for each core indicator and metric. This ensures that all projects provide consistent and comparable data on the core indicators.

The methods given in the 'Recommended' tab are best practice. Consider the cost, timing, respondent burden, ethics, likely response rate, and the potential effect data collection might have on the intervention.

Describe how you'll measure a counterfactual if an evaluation question needs one.

A counterfactual infers the impact of an intervention implemented through your project by statistical comparison to a group or time period unaffected by the intervention. It gives a temporal and spatial control, that shows how the site develops without the intervention. This provides stronger evidence of the overall effect of an intervention and its impact.

When measuring the counterfactual, it is essential that:

- data is of sufficient quality and quantity to support the analysis
- the counterfactual is genuinely comparable to the intervention group
- the intervention effect is large enough to distinguish from expected ‘noise’ in data

You can find further guidance in Chapter 3 of the HMT Magenta Book and Annex A of the Magenta Book.

4.8.8 Data management plan

The data management plan be a table that shows:

- what format you will store data in, for example spatial data
- where you will store data, for example in an open-source GIS application
- how you will record your metadata, for example using the metadata template
- how you will quality assure data, including when and who is responsible
- how you will you ensure Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR compliance
- who will own the data or the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- how you will share data

If you add value to data, consider where you derived the original data from, as sharing it may be restricted.

You may want to refer to Section 16 of your grant or deed agreement for information about IPR relating to material generated using Landscape Recovery funding. Defra will have unlimited access to these data to evaluate the Landscape Recovery scheme and each project’s progress.

4.8.9 Environmental and social baseline

A baseline is the initial environmental and social conditions before an intervention.

You’ll need to record baseline data for all the indicators and metrics you’ve selected for your project in the Landscape Recovery reporting database.

The baseline reporting requirements for each core indicator and metric are in the reporting database guidance and the ‘Core’ tab of the LR Indicator Index. The index outlines the metrics and methodologies to use with each indicator.

Unless otherwise stated in the indicator index, the recommended minimum standard methodology for assessing habitat condition is the statutory biodiversity metric condition assessments which uses the UKHab Habitat classification system. Further advice is available through your liaison officer or monitoring and evaluation support officer.

You'll need to submit baseline condition assessments using these methods and record the attribute values used in the scoring criteria, for example the total percentage of scrub cover and total identified vascular plant species.

You can use different assessment methods if they exceed the minimum standard methodology, for example, JNCC Common Standards Monitoring. Other methods can easily be used to complete the Biodiversity Metric condition assessment.

In addition, projects must consider watercourses within or directly adjacent to the project area. Specifically at baseline, you must provide:

- an estimate of the length and average width of each watercourse section within the project area
- the current land use and features next to the watercourse, for example arable land without a buffer, grazed grassland, or woodland
- stocking levels and input rates for land next to the watercourse, if you know them

Defra will use these data for water quality modelling and will help assess the catchment factors affecting the watercourse. Defra will share the modelled outputs with projects.

Your monitoring and evaluation support officer will contact you during the development phase to support you with reporting baseline data.

Defra will provide support where modelled environmental data forms part of the baseline for core indicators.

4.8.9.1 Baseline timing

You should do baseline assessments before and as close as possible to project implementation.

Surveys within the past 36 months, or since the last change in management practice, whichever is shortest, are acceptable as a baseline for habitats.

Surveys within the past 24 months are an acceptable baseline for smaller features, including hedgerows, ditches, and ponds.

Species surveys need to have been done within the past 24 months. This is especially important for mobile taxa as their presence will fluctuate year-to-year and populations will typically shift within a 3-year period. Vegetation surveys on peatlands and woodlands are an exception and can follow the requirements for habitats.

4.8.9.2 Baseline sampling

You should try to assess as much of the land in the project area as possible. However, prioritise areas where you plan to make changes to the management of the land.

You will need to use representative sampling, for example you:

- could treat contiguous grassland parcels along a river, with the same aspect and under the same management as a single area for the baseline assessment
- can do one condition assessment on priority habitat split across several parcels that is under the same management

Where there is a highly variable mosaic of habitats that are managed in the same way, it may be appropriate to survey the mosaic as one. In this instance, please discuss with your evaluation support officer to help tailor your sampling methodology appropriately.

4.8.10 Expected project outcomes

Expected project outcomes are estimates of the environmental and social outcomes that you expect to achieve during implementation.

For each indicator and metric that you've selected, estimate the improvement in the condition, size, measure, or extent that you expect to achieve in the Landscape Recovery reporting database.

For example, if your baseline assessment shows an asset is in poor condition, your expected outcome could be to change that asset condition from poor to good.

You can use narrative terms where it's not possible to quantify change due to evidence gaps. It's recommended to quantify change where possible to help better inform project and scheme benefits.

For each indicator, you'll need to:

- state the timeframe for the anticipated change in condition
- outline how you estimated the outcomes you expect to achieve, including your rationale and assumptions

You may want to do a sensitivity analysis to identify assumptions that underpin your estimate of how your outcomes may change if the assumptions change, for example due to different climate modelling scenarios.

You do not need to provide financial forecasts or outcomes. You will provide financial forecasts in the blended finance plan and business model.

4.8.11 Data layers for Landscape Recovery monitoring

You may find widely available standardised monitoring data sets useful for developing a project baseline and ongoing monitoring. This is not a complete list and is recommended based on targets for the Landscape Recovery scheme.

Biodiversity

- Priority Habitat and Species maps
- National Forest Inventory maps
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Other protected areas
- UK Plant Health Risk Register for lists and information on plant pests

Water

- Catchment Data Explorer
- Water Quality Data Archive
- Water Framework Directive Cycle 2 Classification Data
- National flow monitoring network data accessed via National River Flow Archive

Other

- England Coast Path Route
- National Trails
- England Green Infrastructure Mapping Database
- Scheduled Monuments

4.9 Stakeholder engagement plan

The delivery of an effective stakeholder engagement plan:

- is critical to the success of implementation
- should lead to more nature-positive outcomes

Meaningful engagement and consultation should:

- tackle barriers to accessing nature
- encourage participation in your project
- ensure stakeholders understand the need for the project and are supportive of its aims
- provide opportunities for stakeholders to co-design the project, where appropriate

The outcomes of stakeholder engagement should influence project management and may influence governance arrangements.

Engagement with stakeholders may be more complicated and challenging, particularly if those stakeholders:

- are rarely invited to participate

- experience barriers to established stakeholder engagement methods

These groups are often defined in a variety of ways, which could include:

- protected characteristics, like their age, race or religion
- income levels
- geographical isolation, for example caused by infrastructure barriers between communities and projects

You'll need a plan to identify and engage these communities in different ways. This could also help project delivery of wider environmental, social and economic needs.

The stakeholder engagement plan relates to implementation only.

You will have already done some stakeholder engagement for your application. This is likely to continue and expand throughout project development. You do not need to provide details of stakeholder engagement before or during the project development phase.

4.9.1 Stakeholder identification

In addition to the stakeholders that may already be involved in your project, consider the groups in figure 7. Try to understand the local area’s demographic when you identify relevant stakeholders.

You should consider doing a stakeholder analysis to:

- identify your stakeholders and the issues they care about
- understand how best to communicate with your stakeholders
- appreciate the topics in which your stakeholders need to be engaged
- indicate how often you need to engage with your stakeholders
- identify and establish a core steering group of key stakeholders

You should understand your current audiences and critically who doesn’t engage with your site or who hasn’t been reached by the project to date.

This doesn’t necessarily mean you should list hundreds of different stakeholder groups. But you should demonstrate how your stakeholder list links to what you want to achieve for your site and the people who make use of it.

Figure 7. Possible stakeholder groups.

4.9.2 Stakeholder engagement

You should describe:

- how engagement with stakeholders will occur at project milestones or phases
- what outcomes you expect from stakeholder engagement
- how you will address issues when raised

You should consider how much flexibility the project's decision-making process has. This could include whether stakeholder involvement means they could change or influence decisions.

Try to understand the desired outcomes from stakeholder engagement. This should help you choose the best ways to engage.

You'll need to consider if you expect stakeholders to:

- receive something, such as information, education, or experiences
- provide something, such as money, skills, experience, or time
- collaborate to achieve something that the project could not achieve by working alone

Use the best or most suitable ways to engage with different stakeholder groups. The suggestions below are not exhaustive. Local circumstances may encourage novel or forward-thinking ways of stakeholder engagement.

Ways to receive stakeholder engagement could include:

- consultations
- surgeries
- crowdsource information
- opinion polls
- advisory panels
- public or 1 to 1 meetings

Ways to provide stakeholder engagement could include:

- leaflets
- interpretation or signage
- newsletters
- presentations
- exhibitions
- advertising via newspapers, TV or radio
- websites or social media
- site visits

Ways to collaborate with other stakeholder groups could include:

- steering groups
- workshops
- forums
- partnerships
- formal negotiation or mediation

We recommend you establish a core steering group from a range of stakeholders. This group should be representative of the local area. It should cover relevant interests and population characteristics.

This group will help guide your project, but it’s up to you to decide how much influence it has on the project.

Make sure you consider equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the engagement process. Consider if the chosen ways to engage will reach those with specific requirements. This could include people or groups that are:

- less able to access the project
- less well represented in the community
- within a minority group

Consider if engagement will be more effective if worked through other stakeholders. These could act as enablers or opinion formers.

You should engage in a clear, concise and consistent way, whatever method(s) you choose. Ensure regular engagement throughout the whole project timeline.

4.9.3 Maintaining stakeholder engagement

You should consider:

- the longevity of initial methods for engagement
- how to develop stakeholder relationships over the project’s lifetime
- how stakeholders, communities, or target groups may change over the project’s lifetime
- opportunities for continuous engagement
- project legacy

This work should highlight when you need to refresh engagement.

Engaging with your stakeholders on a co-design basis will help ensure that engagement stays strong and grows throughout your project. You should have a core steering group, made up of key stakeholders. This group should be empowered to act throughout the project's lifetime and support the scheme.

Detail a schedule of any actions to achieve continuous engagement. This could include:

- establishment of regular engagement sessions through the core steering group
- delivery of discrete engagement projects in the implementation phase
- maintenance of any physical engagement features, such as visitor interpretation
- maintenance of any virtual engagement features, such as website updates

You should recognise that change is inevitable with any scheme of this size. Consider how engagement might need to adapt because of changes to:

- the project
- the environment
- stakeholder attitudes

Consider what risks, contingencies, mitigations, or opportunities could arise from ongoing engagement. Engagement opportunities are likely to extend beyond implementation. This means ways to engage, set up during project development, should suit future use.

4.9.4 Evidencing stakeholder engagement outcomes

You should understand the desired outcomes from stakeholder engagement. Detail what evidence you'll gather to ensure you realise these outcomes, for example, actions from core steering group meetings to help co-design the scheme. Evidence how you would:

- align any actions with the expected aims and outcomes for the project
- deliver any actions
- identify stakeholder risks and issues

You should also review and adapt your engagement plan if:

- outcomes are not met
- engagement techniques or audiences need review

When you make key project decisions, consider how you will evidence the influence that stakeholder engagement had on these decisions. To do this you may need to:

- provide evidence of engagement activities with the relevant stakeholder groups
- stipulate how you'll make evidence available for review during implementation
- outline the likely influence of this evidence on the project

4.9.5 Actions and costs of stakeholder engagement

You should provide:

- a programme of work to detail how you'll deliver your stakeholder engagement
- a schedule of estimated costs to deliver actions in the stakeholder engagement plan
- a list of actions or activities needed to deliver the stakeholder engagement plan
- a timetable of work for the implementation phase

We may need summary cost and schedule information for other project deliverables, like the blended finance business model and land management plan.

You need to provide justification for your cost estimates, for example supplier estimates or cost estimate tools or resources.

Reflect uncertainty of costs in your risk assessment in the project management and governance plan, with impacts on overall cost should the quotes or estimates change.

You should consider engagement roles and responsibilities within your project team. This could include who will:

- have overall responsibility for the stakeholder engagement plan
- keep track of actions or updates to the stakeholder engagement plan
- be the main relationship holder for a specific stakeholder
- act as key points of contact during implementation

4.10 Site access plan

An important aim of your project should be to improve public access to support the delivery of wider environmental and social benefits.

The site access plan should help you to:

- map provision of inclusive access for the public and other stakeholder groups
- understand any changes to existing access routes to meet inclusive access needs
- plan how to deliver and fund changes to existing access routes
- consider any permits, consents, and legal land rights you may need

4.10.1 Identify and record existing access

You should include existing:

- public or private rights of way
- access areas, like open access land
- permissive access
- dedicated accessible areas
- green spaces more informally accessible to the public
- access to and onto blue space

Blue space is either a natural or manmade outdoor environment that prominently features water and is accessible to people.

Produce a map that shows what access areas and routes into and around the project area already exist. Identify and mark any existing legal land rights specific to access. Consider taking legal advice in the event of any uncertainty. You may wish to explain the nature of any legal land rights in the project area to support the map.

4.10.2 Assess the need to improve existing access

You may need to improve existing access, so that your project includes more accessible gates or surfaces. To identify areas where you need to improve accessibility, first assess how suitable existing access is. You could consider:

- current condition, such as maintenance levels, quality of path surfaces or drainage
- current accessibility for all user groups, like individuals with mobility issues
- potential barriers to access, such as toilet provision or physical barriers
- transport links, including public transport
- health and safety, to improve access arrangements

Describe the measures and associated actions you need to improve site accessibility. Additional guidance about outdoor accessibility and footpaths is available.

Making access as inclusive as possible should be an important consideration for the site access plan. If you think you can adjust access to follow the least restrictive access principle, then we would encourage you to do so.

However, what works in some areas isn't going to work in others. Access improvements should be realistic within the context of the site.

4.10.3 Identify opportunities for new or additional access

You may identify opportunities to:

- provide new access
- extend existing access
- mitigate for access lost due to work carried out for the project

It's important to provide opportunities for people to access blue, green, and agricultural spaces. People should learn to value these spaces and engage with issues such as farming and land management, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Projects are an opportunity to expose people to this, and so we encourage all projects to think about where appropriate access could be gained to their site. If you feel like you cannot create physical access to your site, think about novel ways of creating access, for example using virtual or 3D walkovers, guided tours or controlled public access.

Any new access arrangements should consider accessibility for all user groups.

Opportunities could include routes or areas where you:

- create circular walks, bridleways, or cycle trails to expand the site's access network
- design specific access for dog-walkers to avoid sensitive site features
- provide new access routes to other users not currently accessing the project area

- replace access routes disrupted by the project
- link to existing routes, features or areas in the wider landscape outside the project area for a more cohesive plan
- consider the provision of access beyond the boundary of the project area if there are significant benefits, however, implementation funding can only pay for activities on agreement land

You'll need to consider legal consents and landowner agreements if access arrangements change. This includes:

- long-term maintenance responsibilities associated with new infrastructure
- rights of way
- permissive access

You may wish to engage with your public rights of way officer early in the project. They'll guide you on what organisations you must consult about changes to access. You can find further guidance on access and rights of way for outdoor access and recreation.

4.10.4 Identify opportunities to connect with local travel infrastructure

You should understand how people will travel to the site. For travel by road or public transport you should consider how:

- efficient the existing infrastructure is, and whether it's near capacity
- many members of the public or groups currently access the site
- more visitors may impact existing infrastructure
- to encourage more sustainable ways to travel to site

You may wish to consult with the local planning authority and highways authority where appropriate to consider their views on any changes to travel infrastructure.

4.10.5 Identify opportunities to create or improve access to historic features and heritage sites

You may have historic features in your project area. If so, you should understand:

- their location
- how sensitive these features are, and whether you should restrict or divert access
- how vulnerable these features are to public access
- mitigation measures you need to reduce the risk of damage to vulnerable features

Use this understanding to consider how access could:

- improve historic features
- improve interpretation of historic features

- protect historic features for future generations

Consult your local authority archaeologist for more information. HE's national heritage list should help if you have Scheduled Monuments near proposed access routes.

4.10.6 Agree a maintenance plan for access infrastructure

You should:

- agree clear roles and responsibilities for maintenance with the relevant organisations
- consider how to fund maintenance beyond the implementation phase if possible
- factor in maintenance into any decision about construction materials
- make sure those responsible for maintenance work are capable to do so

Landscape Recovery cannot pay for works to paths where there is a statutory duty to maintain them. You can use implementation funding to improve paths beyond the required condition, for example by improving accessibility.

4.10.7 Assess how site access could impact the environment or sensitive features

You should understand:

- where there are existing and newly created environmentally sensitive sites, species, or features
- how changes to access could impact or disturb these sites, species, or features

Consider mitigation opportunities to manage the risk of disturbance. You could:

- restrict access to sensitive areas at different times, like breeding bird seasons
- create less intrusive access routes, like raised boardwalks over wetlands
- limit or prevent access to certain areas, like single file routes through hay meadows

To discuss the risk of disturbance you could engage with:

- Natural England
- your local authority biodiversity officer
- your local access forum

4.10.8 Produce a map, implementation activities and associated costs

You should:

- produce a digital map showing proposed access arrangements and infrastructure
- detail what actions or activities you will do to achieve the proposed access

- schedule work and estimate costs, including for maintenance

We may need summary cost and schedule information for other project deliverables, like the blended finance business model and land management plan.

You need to provide justification for your cost estimates, for example supplier estimates or cost estimate tools or resources.

Reflect uncertainty of costs in your risk assessment in the project management and governance plan, with impacts on overall cost should the quotes or estimates change.

4.11 Blended finance plan and business model

Blending public, private and third sector funding can increase the amount of money supporting nature's recovery. It can also allow public funds to be used more strategically.

Blending funds helps to support land management change and restoration. It benefits local communities, economies and the environment.

Government is incentivising blended funding to ensure the private sector shares the opportunity for nature recovery, given its dependency and impact on nature.

4.11.1 About the blended finance plan and business model

The Green Finance Institute has created the Investment Readiness Toolkit. This framework guides nature-based projects developing blended finance plans. It's an essential resource for Landscape Recovery projects.

The toolkit uses learnings from nature-based projects across the UK, including the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF). It includes case studies that show how to put blended finance plans in place. It has ideas for innovative funding arrangements.

After you have drafted your blended finance plan and business model, Defra will review it and provide supportive feedback. You will then produce a final blended finance plan and business model before the end of the project development phase.

Defra will use the blended finance plan and business model to analyse and assess the proposed use of public funds. We are seeking a high degree of local initiative. We want projects to have freedom within a framework to try new approaches.

Because of the way nature finance is changing, we expect your business and finance models to evolve during the development phase.

We encourage you to include learning gained into future iterations of the plan. You should regularly review and update it.

4.11.2 Create the blended finance plan

The blended finance plan should describe how your project will raise capital and generate revenue, and from whom.

4.11.2.1 Public funds proposal

You should develop a proposal of how public funds can support the long-term viability of your project. This could include:

- payment rates
- timings
- triggers for payments

Consider how you will use public funds in at least 3 ways:

- as part of the ongoing project revenue streams, for example delivering social and environment benefits that the private sector would be unwilling to invest in
- as part of the upfront capital needed to get the project off the ground
- to de-risk and incentivise more private money to come into the project

You can propose public payment rates which fit your project plans and contribute to the financial viability of the project. You should include a justification of how you arrived at your proposed payment rates.

You will negotiate the public payment rates and mechanisms with Defra during the project development phase. You must ensure that public funds demonstrate value for money and do not only benefit private interests.

You will agree the public payment details with Defra during the development phase.

Defra have published further guidance on public payments in Landscape Recovery. This guidance is subject to further development and co-design as the scheme develops.

4.11.2.2 What else to include in the blended finance plan

As your project develops, you should consider:

- the appropriate legal structures for managing blended finance; the project governance plan should show how this works
- all the products and services that you could sell to generate revenue, such as credits for carbon, biodiversity net gain and nutrient neutrality, as described in your monitoring and evaluation plan
- the quality guarantee of the goods and services you'll sell, such as the Woodland Carbon Code, Peatland Carbon Code or other government or Defra codes
- commitments and how long agreements are likely to last, for example, how much carbon for how many years

- due diligence on sources of private funding, for example, potential investors, the level of risk attached and risk mitigation instruments to manage through the risk assessment in your project management plan

You should gather information on the financial viability of investors using the Companies House register and credit rating companies such as Dun & Bradstreet and Spotlight.

Your blended finance plan should include:

- a public payment mechanism
- payment rates
- timings and triggers for payments in the implementation phase
- legal and contractual terms that will carry on throughout the life of the project

You should show that private finance arrangements do not create:

- unreasonable legal risks to the project and that risks are understood, identified, mitigated and managed through the risk assessment in your project management plan.
- unwanted trade-offs that cause environmental degradation or deterioration.

The Investment Readiness Toolkit has more information on establishing legal contracts and closing.

Projects should investigate tax arrangements as part of their finance planning. Tax arrangements, such as VAT, should be appropriate for your organisational status. Defra is not able to provide tax advice and you should seek tax advice bespoke to your project's situation. Projects should be aware of the update made in Spring Budget 2024 to inheritance tax exemptions.

4.11.2.3 Landscape Recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Landscape Recovery are separate but can interact. Where you want to access BNG, you will need to make sure that you comply with the market rules. Find out more on the rules for how BNG and public funding interact.

4.11.3 Create the business model

Your business model should show how different finance and revenue sources in the blended finance plan contribute to the project.

It is likely there will be a gap between outgoings and incomings. You can use public funds to bridge this gap to make your project viable.

The costs should align with actions and outcomes in other deliverables, for example the land management plan and the monitoring and evaluation plan. You should show how investment will achieve environmental and social outcomes and expected benefits.

Your business model should also include:

- the public funding proposal
- a proposed schedule of payments throughout implementation

This will show how you will maintain financial viability during the project.

The business model should contain information on financial outgoings and incomings. You could use an Excel spreadsheet to show this.

4.11.3.1 Financial outgoings

Financial outgoings include:

- annual management costs, like staff, operational costs, overheads and financial or legal advice
- capital costs, for example, costs of physical assets needed to put the project in place, like fencing, tree planting or hedges
- annual ongoing asset maintenance costs, to maintain and restore natural assets delivering ecosystem services

Annual management costs are not directly related to maintenance and restoration of natural assets.

Consider the time you need to deliver ecosystem services. It's important to include any assumptions when setting out these costs.

Costings will need to consider the effect of annual inflation. The GDP deflators at market prices and money GDP tell you how to do this. The Green Book is also helpful.

You may find templates and further advice on writing business plans useful.

4.11.3.2 Financial incomings

Financial incomings include:

- the amount of capital funding and finance such as grant funding, impact investors, commercial loans or community investment
- anticipated annual ecosystem service income from revenues generated by selling the benefits of ecosystem services and nature-based solutions
- anticipated income from other revenue generating and commercial activities, like ecotourism, guided walks, nature trails, events, visitor centre or car parking

This could help fund more nature restoration and increase your project's value for money.

You should show when you expect to receive this income as it helps with planning cashflow. Include these income and funding streams when you create your blended finance plan.

When developing your business model, you should also consider doing a sensitivity analysis on incoming and outgoing finances.

4.11.3.3 The role of 3 groups in Landscape Recovery

The business model should identify 3 groups and describe their role:

1. Sellers
2. Investors
3. Buyers

Sellers are the farmers, landowners and land managers on whose land the nature-based solutions will be placed. They will be the sellers of the benefits of the ecosystem services. You should show how payment rates have been set and agreed with this group. Explain how you will deal with profit sharing and payment sharing.

You should also consider landowner and tenant relationships and commons where appropriate. Explain how you will distribute payments.

Investors provide the upfront capital to deliver the project. This can include grant making bodies, impact investors or commercial organisations seeking a return on their investments and loans.

Your business model should outline the terms and conditions of capital from these investors. This includes their expected rates of return and repayment schedules.

Buyers provide revenue for the project. Buyers are the organisations that will buy the benefits of the ecosystem services, for example:

- reduced flood risk
- biodiversity net gain (BNG) units
- carbon credits
- nutrient neutrality

Payments to the project, and returns to investors, are likely to come from these revenue streams.

You should show how prices have been set and agreed with private sector buyers. Where assumptions have been made on the income, for example where markets are not yet fully functioning, you should clearly state this and explain how your income figures have been derived. You should also outline how risk around these assumptions will be managed.

You should refer to how each of the benefits has contributed to costs and follow market rules on stacking. For example, detail the payments made for benefits under the Woodland Carbon Code or the BNG market.

If you are receiving, investigating or have secured additional funding sources, including BNG or Woodland Creation Grant, you must comply with all requirements of these revenue streams and ensure they do not conflict with the requirements on Landscape Recovery. You should consider any existing agreements and funding as detailed in the land management plan guidance.

If you do not know who the buyers will be yet, mention the sectors you will target and how you will do this.

4.11.3.4 Presenting information in the business model

You should identify how you will tie funding to planned activities and actions detailed in the land management plan. Table 2 is an example of how you could present this.

Table 2. How you will tie funding to planned activities and actions

Action	Approximate start date	Approximate end date	Cost or saving estimate	Source of funding	Comments, for example location
Create 2 hectares of river corridor woodland	January 2025	March 2025	£24,000 capital and £700 per year landowner payment	Blended finance – LR funds and Environment Bank payment for BNG	Map reference 1.1
Stop using fertiliser	January 2025	January 2055	£600 per hectare saving	Not applicable	Map reference 1.2

The business model should also show the terms of the money provided by investors, for example:

- length of the investment
- amount
- expected return

Table 3 suggests how to show the investment and returns for different investors over the years. The figures are for illustrative purposes.

Name of funding organisation and sector, for example banking or insurance	Length of the contract between your organisation and the organisation investing and any notes	% return on investment generated	% return required	Amount invested (£)	Total investment (£)
Organisation 1	10 years	5%	6%	£150,000	
Organisation 2	20 years	5%	4%	£58,000	
Organisation 3	30 years with 5-year patience	5%	2.5%	£229,000	
Organisation 4	30 years with 5-year patience	5%	1.50%	£25,000	
					£462,000

4.12 Review and assurance of the deliverables

The delivery bodies and Defra will review and assure your project's deliverables to ensure they meet the standards described in the guidance. This will give Defra confidence that your project is financially viable and able to achieve its outcomes over the long-term implementation agreement.

It will determine which parts of the deliverables the delivery bodies and Defra:

- agree with you on
- need more information on
- need to discuss with you to reach an agreement

4.12.1 How to submit deliverables for review and assurance

Email your liaison officer and copy in the relevant delivery body mailbox to notify them that you have submitted a deliverable for review and assurance.

Start the email subject line with ‘Deliverable Submission’. List the documents that you have submitted, so we can check we have received them all.

You must complete a signed self-declaration form and save it in your SharePoint folder with deliverables that are ready for review and assurance.

One form can cover more than one deliverable. If you submit deliverables individually, you’ll need separate forms for each deliverable.

The self-declaration is your confirmation that:

- the deliverable meets the minimum standards described in the guidance
- you have completed due diligence as needed
- the information in the deliverable is true and accurate

The self-declaration should be signed by somebody from the grant recipient’s organisation with the appropriate authority to act on behalf of the project.

You may need individuals with relevant expertise or specialisms to certify specific parts. For example, in the blended finance plan and business model, Defra will check that someone suitably qualified has assured predicted revenue streams and done checks on investors, like:

- anti-money laundering
- modern slavery
- sanctioned parties

4.12.2 How the delivery body and Defra will assure deliverables

We will check that all parts of the deliverable are present, and that the self-declaration form is appropriately signed. We will work with arms-length bodies to ensure the deliverables meet the guidance. Because the content of the deliverables is linked, the delivery bodies and Defra cannot start their assurance until you have submitted the:

- land management plan
- monitoring and evaluation plan
- project management and governance plan
- blended finance plan and business model

The delivery bodies and Defra will consider:

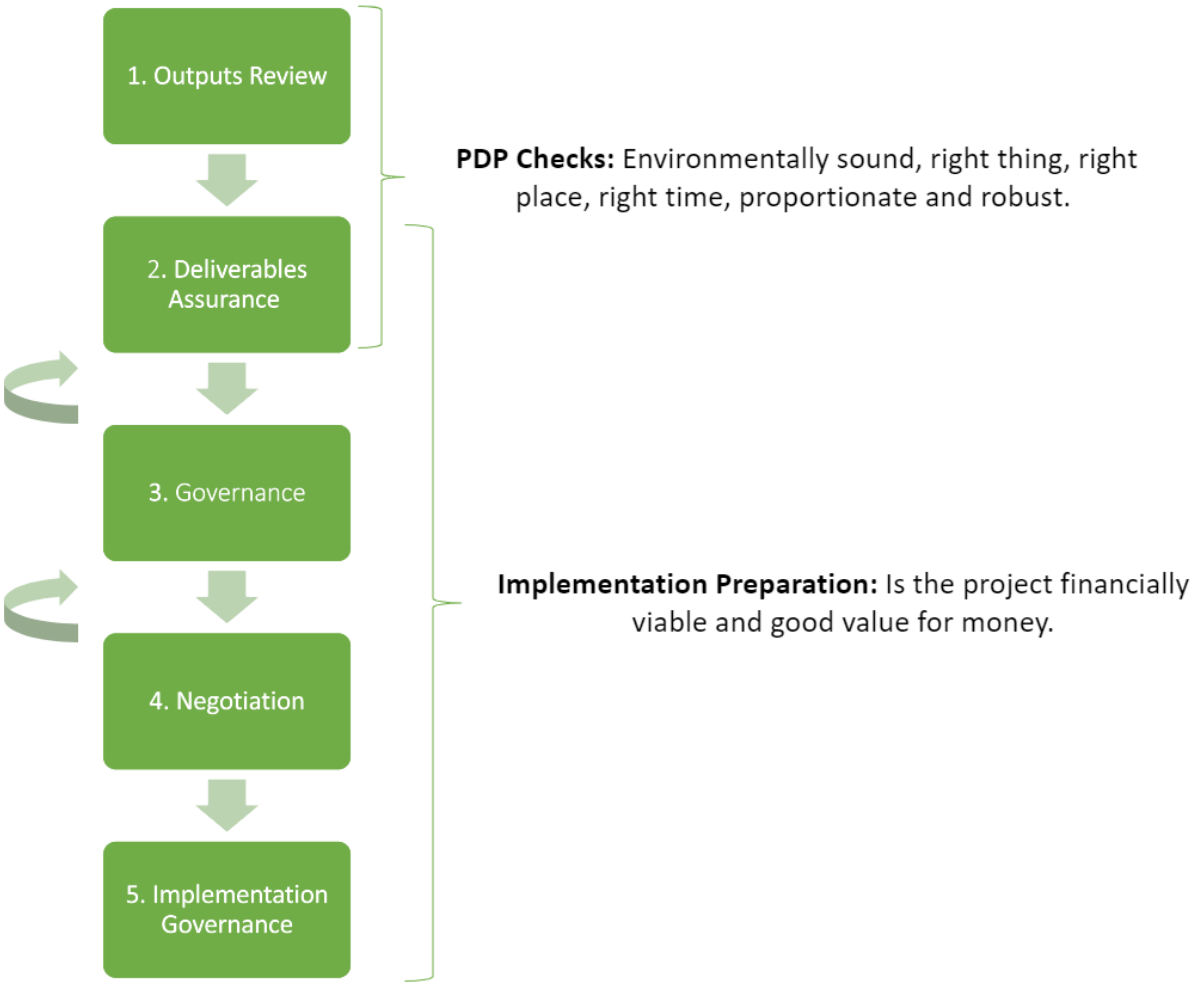
- value for money
- the assumptions you’ve made and the sensitivity analysis in your financial forecasts
- the proposal for use of public funds
- the proposal for use of private finance
- benchmarking costs and business model analysis

- forecasts of environmental and social outcomes and related sensitivity analysis
- whether the right thing is done in the right place at the right time to achieve the proposed environmental outcomes
- the legal rights, statutory consents and permissions needed to implement the project
- the proposed governance arrangements
- risk allocation between parties to the project
- the proposed risk management processes
- duplicate funding risks

This list is not exhaustive and may change based on what the delivery bodies and Defra learn, as they work with your project.

The delivery bodies and Defra will continue to communicate with you throughout this process and will raise any significant issues or concerns as early as possible.

Figure 8. A flow diagram of the assurance process.



5 How the delivery body will manage your project development phase agreement

5.1 Changes between round one and round two

The delivery bodies have improved and simplified grant management processes between round one and round two. Round one projects can opt in to these changes by requesting an amendment to their grant agreement via their liaison officer.

For round two projects and those round one projects that opt in:

- the grant funding letter will include a summary payment schedule, replacing the project development phase table for round one projects
- a separate project plan will give further detail on activities, outputs and costs, which can be updated without needing a formal amendment
- you can claim 10% more or less than forecast for each claim period without the need to formally amend your grant agreement
- you do not need to submit timesheets to evidence staff costs, instead you must provide evidence of total employee salary and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) spent working on Landscape Recovery

An exception to this is if you cannot accurately determine the proportion of time staff work on Landscape Recovery. You will need to provide hourly rates and timesheets for staff whose work on Landscape Recovery is variable or less than 0.1FTE.

For auditing purposes, you need to keep timesheets for staff that work part of their time on Landscape Recovery. You do not need to submit timesheets with your claim. There is a timesheet template but it's not mandatory to use.

5.2 Grant Claims

You must only claim for the eligible activities and agreed costs in your project development phase grant agreement. We will only provide funding for actual costs you incur.

The grant management processes introduced for round two allow you to claim 10% more or less than the total amount specified for a claim period in the payment schedule, without needing to make a formal amendment request.

You must keep your payment schedule saved in your project's SharePoint folder and up to date with any changes you make.

You can move funding between deliverables within a claim period. The total value of a deliverable for the life of the project can be increased by no more than 10% of its original value without the need for an amendment.

You cannot increase the total value of your PDP grant without seeking approval through a formal amendment.

You can make no profit from the grant funding you will receive for your grant agreement.

Grant costs are paid in arrears upon completion of a claim period and in receipt of a valid claim form with all required supporting evidence. This does not apply if you have applied for advance payments which has been separately agreed by the delivery body.

After completing a claim period, you must submit a claim form with evidence of eligible expenditure you have incurred, for example original receipts or paid invoices.

The Landscape Recovery scheme must follow the Government Grants Functional Standard. This requires administrative checks on claims, monitoring of activities and outputs and counter fraud measures. Checks are intended to be robust but proportionate. During the piloting phase of Landscape Recovery these checks will be developed and may change during your project development phase agreement.

5.2.1 Submitting a claim

To submit a claim:

1. Download a copy of the claim form.
2. Complete the form and ensure it is signed by an individual from the grant recipient's organisation who has the appropriate authority to act on behalf of the project.
3. Only claim for the costs you have incurred and are in your grant agreement.
4. Include supporting evidence as described in Annex 1. Outputs and financial evidence must demonstrate the actual, eligible activities you have undertaken and their costs.
5. Name your supporting evidence documents, using the document naming protocol.
6. When completing the claim form, include the relevant document name in the 'Supporting Evidence' column for each cost you enter onto the 'Claim Breakdown' tab. Include the value of each item being claimed. Refer to the Example claim breakdown tab of the claim form to see an example of how to complete this information.
7. Save the form and supporting evidence to your claims folder in your SharePoint project folder.
8. The signatory on the claim form must email your delivery body mailbox to tell us you have submitted a claim: landscaperecoveryprojects@environment-agency.gov.uk or landscaperecoveryprojects@naturalengland.org.uk.

5.2.2 Advance payments

If advance payments were agreed during enrolment, you must complete and submit an Advance Payment Claim Form for each claim period payment instalment.

You can only request an advance funding payment up to the value of your current claim period and capped at 20% of the total value of your grant.

If the claim period value exceeds 20% of the total project development grant value, the payment will be capped at the 20% of this value. Once you have completed the claim period for which you received the advance payment and have paid for all costs incurred you must then submit a standard claim form and an advancement payment claim form for the following claim period. We will issue the advance payment for your next claim period once you pass our claim assessment and financial checks.

5.2.3 Claim checks and payments

On receipt of your claim, the delivery body will check that the financial evidence is sufficient. The delivery body will also review the quality of any outputs.

The delivery body will not pay a claim or part of a claim until you provide sufficient evidence, and the delivery body is satisfied with the project's progress. We may refuse to reimburse any costs where we do not receive sufficient and verifiable evidence that both:

- costs or time have been incurred in accordance with your grant funding letter
- the conditions in your grant agreement have been met

After completing these checks, the delivery body will reimburse you for the eligible expenditure you have incurred.

The delivery body will aim to pay valid claims within 30 working days of receipt of all the required information.

Payments will be made to the bank details you provided in the grant funding letter. No payment can be made until we are in receipt of a correctly completed and signed claim form. Please get in touch with your liaison officer if you need to change your bank details.

5.2.4 When to submit a claim

You must submit your claims based on the profile of claim periods in your agreement. You can submit claims up to a month after the end of the claim period, to allow you time to gather the required evidence. For example, you must submit the claim for a claim period ending on 30th June 2024 by 31st July 2024.

You can submit a claim earlier than the last date of the claim period if you've completed all the work scheduled for that claim period.

5.2.5 Supporting Evidence

You must provide evidence that you have met all the requirements of your agreement when submitting a claim. It is your responsibility to give sufficient evidence of what you have paid for as part of your agreement, see Annex 1.

You need to show evidence of project progress and its outputs, including financial evidence demonstrating the actual, eligible costs you have incurred and spent, such as paid invoices, receipts and staff pay slips.

The expected evidence of project progress is in your grant funding letter. This may include, but is not limited to:

- project outputs such as draft or final reports, maps, surveys
- meeting agendas, minutes, and attendee lists
- governance structures
- copies of obtained consents and permissions, or associated correspondence
- engagement materials and products

Defrayal evidence, for example a bank statement showing the costs leaving your account, is not required as standard. However, this could be requested at any time during an audit and must be retained.

Accruals reporting is needed at the end of each financial year in March for projects whose delivery body is NE. In advance of this and before submitting the claim, NE will ask you to confirm what your completed and expected spend is for the remainder of the financial year up to 31 March. This includes salary costs, expenses and contracted work.

NE use this information to ensure they keep enough budget to pay costs incurred in one financial year but not claimed and paid until the next financial year. For any individual costs over £50,000 incurred you will need to provide supporting evidence, such as a copy of the invoice.

5.2.6 Record keeping

As part of your ongoing project management, you need to keep robust and auditable records of activity and expenditure. This evidence will need to be kept and made available to delivery bodies and their appointed auditors for the duration of the agreement and for seven years from the end of the agreement. The Grant Funding Agreement states:

- the Grant Recipient shall retain all invoices, receipts, accounting records and any other documentation (including but not limited to correspondence) relating to the Eligible Expenditure and income generated by the Project during the Funding Period for a period of 7 years from the date on which the Funding Period ends.
- the Grant Recipient shall ensure that all its sub-contractors retain each record, item of data and document relating to the Project for a period of 7 years from the date on which the Funding Period ends.

5.2.7 Public disclosure of funding and payments

As part of the Financial Assistance Regulations 2021, we will publish certain information about those receiving Landscape Recovery scheme payments in England. Starting with the financial year ending March 2022, we will publish:

- full names of the grant recipient (name of the company)
- partial postcodes, for example GL55, post towns and districts where the grant recipient is registered or located
- total grant payments received by the grant recipient in the last financial year
- a description of the activities financed by the relevant payments

We will publish this yearly, as soon as reasonably possible after the financial year ends.

5.2.8 Project progress visits

As part of the grant claims checking progress, your liaison officer will arrange a visit within 12 months of your first payment. They may:

- ask to see defrayal evidence (bank statements) showing the costs you spent against the costs you claimed
- ask to see evidence of costs claimed under £300
- check progress of your deliverables
- provide advice, guidance, and support as you need it

5.3 Grant amendments

You may need to request an amendment to your agreement to:

- change the timings in your payment schedule
- bring work forwards or push work backwards in your payment schedule
- change the Agreement Land in your project
- change the authorised representatives of your project
- change the project budget
- change the name of your project
- change the duration of the project development phase

You must manage your agreement under its existing terms until the delivery body approves a requested amendment. If you start new activities before the delivery body formally approves the change, the delivery body may:

- reject payment claims
- reclaim payments already made
- terminate your grant

Your amendment request will be assessed based on the impact it has on the time, cost, scope, activity, or scale of your project. If your request has a minimal impact, it will be classified as a minor amendment and be processed within two weeks. If there is a significant impact to your project your request will be classified as a major amendment and be processed within six weeks.

5.3.1 When to request an amendment

You can submit an amendment request at any time and can submit more than one change within the same request.

Your claims must be based on the relevant claim period activity and expenditure detailed in your grant funding letter. If you become aware of a required change above the 10% threshold to the costs or deliverables in a claim period, this must be updated in your agreement via an amendment request before making a claim.

5.3.2 How to request an amendment

Discuss proposed amendments with your liaison officer. If an amendment is needed, you must request it in writing. Your liaison officer will advise whether you need to submit an amendment request form or if email correspondence is sufficient.

1. If required, download a copy of the amendment request form
2. Complete the form and ensure it is signed by an individual from the grant recipient organisation who has the appropriate authority to act on behalf of the project.
3. Update the proposed payment schedule or the project development phase table for some round one projects in your folder on SharePoint to show the changes you're requesting.
4. Include supporting evidence, such as the reason for the change or evidence to justify costs for a new activity. You must also provide updated shapefiles and landowner support forms, if you are requesting a change to your project area.
5. Save the form in the agreements folder in your project folder on SharePoint
6. The signatory on the claim form must email your liaison officer to tell us you have submitted an amendment request and copy in your delivery body mailbox.

5.3.3 How to update your payment schedule or project development phase table

Your payment schedule or project development phase table for some round one projects is saved in your project folder on SharePoint. It has tabs labelled as proposed, which you can edit to show the changes that you are requesting. To do this:

1. Edit the tab labelled as proposed.
2. Highlight any cell you amend and add a brief comment to describe the change.

3. If you are moving underspend which has not yet been allocated, please discuss this with your liaison officer.

If your requested amendment is approved, the proposed tabs you created will be become the new live version. You must then manage your agreement in accordance with the updated project development phase table.

You do not need to submit an amendment if you move costs within the 10% threshold, but you must keep your proposed tables accurate and up to date with any changes made.

5.3.4 Budget changes

Increases to your grant budget will be considered in exceptional circumstances if they are moderate and justifiable. The delivery body will decide whether to approve a project budget increase based on:

- the value of the increase
- your circumstances and justification for the increase
- if the increase would have affected your project's position in the initial competition
- the impact to your project if additional funding is not secured

For round two projects, we will not agree any cost increase to project budgets above the £750k budgetary cap.

In exceptional and justifiable circumstances, we may consider budget increases within the £750k cap that allow for new critical activities or that are associated with extensions.

Any increase to your grant budget is dependent on there being available funds in the Landscape Recovery scheme budget.

Round two projects may not request budget increases for VAT mistakes.

Tell your liaison officer as soon as possible if you cannot deliver your project as outlined in your grant agreement. We will discuss possible solutions with you, like amending scope.

5.3.5 Adding or removing land

You can add or remove land during enrolment or the project development phase at the discretion of the delivery body and if you meet the conditions outlined below.

The delivery bodies aim to allow flexibility so that projects can refine and develop their plans, while also having safeguards to ensure projects will deliver significant environmental outcomes and be deliverable and affordable within our budget.

Requests for land additions will be closely scrutinised. You must demonstrate the increase in project size is deliverable and realistic for both the development and implementation

phases. We do not anticipate large project area increases during the development phase for round two projects, as there was no project area cap in round two. For example, we would consider land additions where land managers were engaged but support forms were not submitted in time for the enrolment deadline.

Projects may only increase their project area once during the project development phase.

This only applies to expansions funded, at least in part by the Landscape Recovery scheme. Projects are welcome to seek other funding to support expansion of their work and to link up with neighbouring initiatives.

There will be opportunity during implementation for you to apply to add land to the project area. The review points at years 5, 10, 15 and 20 in the implementation agreement will provide structured points in the agreement to discuss and assess expansion.

We will continue to keep this approach under review as we test and pilot the scheme. We welcome questions and feedback on this approach.

All proposed addition or removal of land during the project development phase will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant delivery body. In principle, land can be added or removed from Landscape Recovery projects if the following conditions are met:

a) The total area of land within the project does not fall below 500 hectares for both round one and round two projects, or above 5000 hectares for round one projects only. Delivery bodies have the discretion to apply a 2% tolerance to these limits on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, projects of at least 490ha may continue in the scheme for both round one and round two projects, and up to 5100ha for round one only projects. Round two projects have no upper limit to their project size.

b) The delivery body considers that proposed amendments to the land area would not have caused the project to receive a lower score on any of the criteria at the application stage, including cost criterion.

c) Land added to the project will improve the environmental outcomes delivered by the whole project, and the outcomes delivered must be comparable to those being delivered on the land in the original application.

d) Land is considered critical to the project, for example it will improve the projects contiguity, ecological rationale, and fill gaps. Land which unnecessarily expands the project boundary or creates new unconnected parcels should not be considered.

e) The expansion will not increase the costs funded by the project’s development grant. The delivery body may consider increased costs on a case-by-case basis in exceptional circumstances. It must be demonstrated that increased costs are essential for the development of the overall project.

f) Increases to the project area are taken on at the project's own risk. For example, if projects add land which results in an increase in costs during implementation, projects may be required to secure additional private investment to make the project cost-effective and affordable.

g) The delivery body assesses that the change in land area will not materially affect the deliverability of the project or the length of the development phase.

h) Projects should endeavour to make only one application to increase their project area. For round one projects, no land may be added after 12 months from their project development phase start date.

For round two projects no land may be added after the end of November 2024 or 6 months from the start date of your grant agreement if the start date is later than 17 May 2024.

This aims to avoid disrupting drafting deliverables and negotiating implementation agreements. Discuss changes with your delivery body at the earliest opportunity.

i) Projects must provide written justification for the addition or removal of land and evidence that these conditions have been met. This will be reviewed by the delivery body. Projects must also provide evidence of landowner consent to participate in the project and management control of the land.

5.3.6 Extending your development phase agreement

Some projects may need to extend the project development phase due to unforeseen circumstances. The delivery body will decide whether to approve an extension only if the:

- project is still considered deliverable
- extension does not increase grant funding above the budgetary cap for the round

We will only consider extensions 6 months before the end date of the grant agreement and following a review of the project's progress to date. We encourage you to consider the purpose and timing of extension requests so that you do not need further extensions.

5.4 Scheme compliance

We will work with you to deliver your project within the scheme rules. We do not want to see projects fail and will work with you if any challenges emerge.

However, in accordance with the terms of your project development phase grant agreement, the delivery body reserves the right to terminate your funding if your project does not meet its funding conditions.

We will not pay costs that are ineligible under the terms of your agreement or where there is insufficient evidence to support a claim. It's important to read and understand Annex 1. Funding must only be used in accordance with your grant agreement. We may seek repayment of ineligible costs that come to light after payment has been made. If you are uncertain whether something is eligible, ask your liaison officer before incurring the cost.

We will take a zero-tolerance approach to any fraud or if false or misleading information is provided to the delivery bodies. You should take steps to prevent fraud and corruption and must report any suspected incidents related to your grant funding to the relevant delivery body as soon as practical.

If you breach the terms of your grant agreement, we may consider not taking action if you can provide good reasons, as defined in your grant agreement, for the breach. In this situation, you or anyone authorised to act on your behalf will need to provide written evidence to show:

- what has happened
- how it meant you were unable to meet your agreement obligations, including for example progressing through a claim period

The following examples may be considered good reasons for a breach:

- a severe natural disaster, including flooding and droughts
- criminal damage
- supply chain issues
- a disease affecting part or all your crops, trees, or livestock
- serious illness

We will assess any evidence you provide and decide what course of action to take.

You will exit the scheme if your project cannot meet the requirements of the project development phase grant agreement.

5.5 Scheme monitoring, evaluation and learning

We strive to learn and constantly improve the landscape recovery scheme. Defra will contact you regarding your experience of the project development phase of Landscape Recovery. Your feedback will help Defra learn about the effectiveness of the scheme and identify how to improve it.

The scheme-level monitoring and evaluation is being developed by an external contractor with Defra, NE, EA, FC and HE.

The scheme-level monitoring and evaluation focuses on what can be learned from the process of delivering Landscape Recovery. Defra will ask questions like:

- was the scheme delivered as intended?
- were there any unexpected or unintended issues in scheme delivery?
- what has worked well, or less well, for whom and why?
- how has the context surrounding the scheme influenced delivery?

We need your help to answer these questions and will ask you to participate in case studies or remote interviews to help us learn from the delivery of the scheme.

For round one projects, the monitoring and evaluation support supplier selected 8 projects to have 3 or 4 in-depth interviews or focus groups with, at 2 points in the development phase. Each session lasted an hour, and the total time commitment was up to 12 hours. The remaining 14 projects had two 1-hour interviews.

The scheme level monitoring and evaluation for round two projects is to be confirmed.

6 Complaints, appeals process and escalations of project issues

We are committed to giving good customer service. Your feedback is welcome because it helps us to improve our delivery.

If you have concerns about the service you have received or about the conduct of a person, please raise it in the first instance with your liaison officer.

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can raise it through the relevant organisation's general complaints procedure.

6.1 Reconsideration of decisions

You can request a reconsideration of a Landscape Recovery decision:

- not to offer you financial assistance
- relating to a change in your circumstances
- relating to a breach of grant conditions or regulations

6.2 Escalations of project issues

Projects may experience internal management issues during the delivery of the development phase. Projects are advised to inform their liaison officer of any management issues which may impact the delivery of work.

Delivery bodies can provide support on limiting the impacts of issues on the management of the development phase grant, for example by advising on the amendment process. Liaison officers or delivery bodies will not coordinate the resolution of internal management issues.

7 Negotiation of the implementation agreement

Delivery bodies and Defra aim to negotiate the structure of the implementation agreement during the project development phase. Negotiations will be based on the assurance and analysis checks on complete deliverables.

Policy decisions related to the implementation phase will be developed during the project development phase so that you are aware of requirements for implementation agreements. Policy decisions will be part of the co-design process with opportunities for projects to provide input to ensure the scheme is efficient and maximises outcomes.

The negotiation process will be a collaborative and iterative process with opportunities for projects, Defra and delivery bodies to discuss and agree bespoke terms of the agreement that reflect the needs of the project, the proposals and the scheme.

Depending on your single legal entity and planned funding arrangements you may need a guarantor for implementation. This will be part of discussions at negotiation and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Defra will outline its approach to negotiations including requirements to enter and complete negotiations as part of ongoing development of Landscape Recovery.

7.1 Entering into an implementation agreement

On successful completion of negotiations and agreement on project details, Defra and the delivery bodies will take the agreement through their internal processes for approval. Subject to this approval, projects will then be able to enter an implementation agreement.

A working draft implementation agreement was circulated to round one projects in January 2024. This is an old version of the working draft. This may not reflect the position in working drafts that are circulated to you in due course.

The availability of project implementation funding is subject to final budget and spend approvals within Defra.

8 Publicity

You need to acknowledge the source of funding on appropriate publications and documents, and in any written or spoken presentations about the project, as outlined in your grant agreement. Please refer to your grant agreement for specific details, including those on intellectual property rights and publicity.

Printed material must acknowledge Defra, the EA and NE, and include the Landscape Recovery logo.

During enrolment, please do not publicise your project until after Defra have publicly announced the outcome of the round.

Please discuss with you liaison officer if you are unsure about the terms of Landscape Recovery publicity and branding.

You should also speak with your liaison officer if you would like to request a letter of support or quotes from the delivery bodies to support your project activities. We would consider on a case-by-case basis if offering such support would be appropriate.

You can find general Government branding guidelines online.

8.1 Landscape Recovery logo

You should use the Landscape Recovery logo block which is in eps and png formats. The logo is a fixed block to make it easy to use, however please ensure:

- the logo is not distorted or stretched out of shape
- the logo is sized appropriately for the product, but ideally not so the Defra logo is smaller than 15mm in height in the final product
- all logos are of equal size and prominence, if you're using it alongside other logos
- it's appropriately positioned for the product, ideally on the far left if you're using it alongside other logos

The logo block is stored on the Landscape Recovery scheme SharePoint site. During enrolment you can request the logo block from your liaison officer.

8.2 Project websites

You may want to create and host your own Landscape Recovery project website or digital platform. You are welcome to write your own description of the scheme to best relate to your target audience. The delivery body will not be able to provide any specific text regarding Landscape Recovery for these platforms.

You may like to revisit the Defra Farming Blog to see how Defra have described Landscape Recovery projects so far.

Websites and digital platforms must acknowledge Defra (the Authority), the EA and NE (the delivery bodies) and include the Landscape Recovery logo.

8.3 Social media

Social media posts do not need to contain the Landscape Recovery logo, but we encourage projects to use the hashtags:

- #landscaperecovery
- #ELM

We also encourage projects to tag Defra, the EA and NE as follows:

- @DefraGovUk
- @NaturalEngland
- @EnvAgency

8.4 Site Visits and Knowledge Sharing

You may be asked to host site visits or have meetings with delivery body, Defra or arms-length-body staff to support knowledge sharing. Delivery body staff will speak to you to agree the approach to visits including any health and safety considerations.

You should inform your liaison officer of any organised site visits or publicity related to the project by any politicians. You should also inform your liaison officer where delivery body, Defra or arms-length-body staff request site visits.

Please discuss any cost implications of hosting a site visit with your liaison officer before the event.

9 Annexes

9.1 Annex 1: Eligible expenditure and claims guidance

The list of eligible expenditure is not exhaustive. You must justify all costs and inclusion on this list does not guarantee that such costs will or will not be funded. You must have incurred and spent all the costs you are claiming before submitting a claim form.

Table 4. The types of costs that could be funded through the project development grant.

Eligible expenditure	Supporting evidence needed when claiming
Staff costs for time worked directly on the project outcomes (employee gross salary, employer NI and pension contributions only)	Employee gross salary and the employer National Insurance (NI) and pension contributions. You will need to provide a single payslip for each member of staff to evidence the salary rates quoted and the delivery body will check value for money. For staff that work part of their time on Landscape Recovery you must provide evidence of total employee salary and proportion of full-time equivalent (FTE) spent working on Landscape Recovery. You must keep approved timesheets showing total time worked and time worked on the Landscape Recovery project but do not need to submit them with your claim. If you cannot accurately determine the proportion of time staff work on Landscape Recovery (for example, staff whose work on Landscape Recovery is variable or less than 0.1FTE), we require their hourly rate and timesheets.
Project administration, such as project management	
Project related training. Training must be specific to your project	Receipts or paid invoices
Organisational overheads, capped at 20% of staff costs	A cost recovery model that you use to justify the value of overheads claimed. Speak to your liaison

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>officer if you need more guidance on what is required for a cost recovery model.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Essential travel and subsistence related to project activities</td><td>Please refer to standard rates.

Breakdown of all expenses showing direct link to project.

For individual expenses over £300 provide receipts or paid invoices

Evidence is not required for individual expenses under £300 but must be retained in case it’s requested later.

Subsistence costs must be reasonable and cannot include alcohol or service charges.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Coordination and facilitation costs</td><td rowspan="7">All paid advice from a consultant will need a paid invoice. It must:

• be addressed to you (the named organisation on the Grant Agreement)
• be dated
• contain a description of each item and its cost

Project partners can be sub-contractors to the project lead and are subject to the same evidence requirements and procurement thresholds</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feasibility studies</td></tr>
<tr><td>Geospatial data and mapping</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hydrological modelling</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other specialist advice for example in relation to biodiversity, water, peatland, woodland, soil carbon, soil health, climate, air quality, land, landscape, planning, safeguarding, community engagement, access, or heritage</td></tr>
<tr><td>Consents, assents, Habitats Regulations Assessments, environmental impact assessments and planning permission advice and costs</td></tr>
<tr><td>Advice and costs relating to making existing agreements compatible with Landscape Recovery</td></tr>
</table>

Land-use options analysis	
Monitoring, evaluation and learning, including advice, baseline/monitoring data collection, and analysis	
Support for development of indicators/metrics	
Commercial, legal and governance advice	
Advice and costs relating to sourcing private investment	
General engagement costs (including hire of venues or meeting facilities and reasonable refreshment/subsistence costs for external project events)	Breakdown of all expenses showing direct link to project. For individual expenses over £300 provide receipts or paid invoices Evidence is not required for individual expenses under £300 but must be retained in case it's requested later.
Landowner or farmer participation (where there is a direct financial cost to participate)	Reimbursements to participants are capped at £200 per day per participant. Evidence to demonstrate these costs must be provided. This must state the number of days each participant has been involved, a register of attendance and description of the meeting/event's purpose and outputs achieved. Evidence such as a payment log or agreement with participants, invoice from participants or a bank statement showing transactions should also be provided as evidence. We will only reimburse participants where it has been agreed in enrolment. The £200 cap includes travel unless the journey is not local (in excess of 30 miles each way – a 60 mile round trip). Only mileage over the 60 miles would be eligible to be claimed at the rate provided in 9.1.3.

Other project costs, for example stationery, printing, postage, software, conference fees, occasional car hire	Breakdown of all expenses showing direct link to project. For individual expenses over £300 provide: • expense forms • receipts or paid invoices Evidence is not required for individual expenses under £300 but must be retained in case it's requested later.

9.1.1 Ineligible expenditure

Ineligible expenditure includes:

- physical restoration works, including purchase of related tools and equipment
- costs already covered through other funding
- work undertaken and costs incurred before the project development grant funding period commences
- meeting your own legal obligations (except related to designing and developing aspects of your project, for example legal assistance to support the development of the implementation agreement and investment model)
- expenses, such as for gifts or entertaining, specifically aimed at influencing government policy
- applicant tax liabilities, including recoverable VAT (reclaimable by the grant recipient from HMRC)
- fines, charges, or dividends
- paid-for lobbying to influence parliament, government, or political activity, or legislative or regulatory action
- payments for activities of a political or religious nature
- payments to staff relating to previous employment within the organisation, such as redundancy, pensions or TUPE liabilities
- insurance, except employer National Insurance relating to eligible staff costs (costs can be included in full cost recovery model)
- office accommodation (costs can be included in full cost recovery model)
- a separate budget line for contingency, it should instead be built into quotes from contractors and suppliers
- alcohol
- purchase of vehicles
- purchase of organisational branded clothing (you can include costs in full cost recovery model)

9.1.2 Staff costs

Staff costs are only eligible for time worked directly for the purpose of the project's development. We will only cover employee gross salaries, employer National Insurance and pension contributions.

You can apply for cost recovery for up to 20% of staff costs associated with project development, for example organisational overheads such as those related to day-to-day running costs.

9.1.3 Travel and subsistence

Travel and overnight accommodation are only eligible where essential and directly related to project development activities. Routine journeys to an organisation's office are ineligible.

For rail travel, you should always use standard class, unless you can demonstrate that an alternative class provides better value for money. This includes international rail journeys by Eurostar and other international and overseas rail operators.

Subsistence costs should be in line with HMRC rates and cannot include alcohol or service charges. Subsistence costs considered to be unreasonable will not be reimbursed.

Table 5. Claim rates for other forms of travel.

Mileage allowance	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Private cars and vans – no public transport rate*	45p	25p
Private cars and vans – public transport rate	25p	25p
Private use car scheme rate	11p	11p
Private motorcycles	24p	24p
Passenger supplement	5p	5p
Equipment supplement**	3p	3p
Bicycle	20p	20p

*You can only claim the ‘no public transport rate’ for car and van travel where the use of a private vehicle for the journey is essential, for example on grounds of disability or where there is no practical public transport alternative. If the use of the vehicle is not essential, then you should claim the ‘public transport rate’.

**Under HMRC rules this expense is taxable.

Consider your health and safety and your environmental impact when travelling.

Table 6**.** UK subsistence rates

Location	Rate per night
London (Bed and Breakfast)	£130
Bristol (Bed and Breakfast)	£100
Warrington (Bed and Breakfast)	£90
Reading (Bed and Breakfast)	£85
UK Other (Bed and Breakfast)	£75

Should any of the travel and subsistence costs that you incur exceed the rates provided above, we reserve the right to reimburse only up to the stated rate.

9.1.4 Procurement thresholds

When identifying costs for the delivery of services, you must follow the following procurement process linked to the value of works being provided:

Table 7**.** Procurement thresholds

Value of service provided excluding VAT	Procurement process
£0 to £9,999	Minimum of one written quote
£10,000 to £49,999	Minimum of three written quotes
£50,000 and above	Formal tender process

You must provide evidence of compliance with procurement thresholds for all costs.

9.1.5 Reasonableness of costs

You do not have to choose the cheapest quote. However, you must justify choosing a more expensive contractor and demonstrate that the quoted cost is reasonable.

Where the tender process results in fewer than three responses/tenders, you must provide written justification for the low number of tenders received and an outline of the steps taken to source enough tenders.

You should also demonstrate the additional steps taken to ensure that the project costs are reasonable. For example, consideration based on your own knowledge and a comparison of costs of similar projects in the same geographical region.

9.1.6 Specialist markets and exceptional circumstances

It may not be possible to obtain the required number of quotes when operating in certain specialist markets where there are a limited number of works contractors, suppliers or service providers. In this case you must also demonstrate the additional steps taken to verify that the project costs are reasonable. For example, production of website screenshots or statements from other service users.

You cannot directly award work to project partners. Project partners must quote or tender for the work like all other contractors or suppliers. The only exception to this is if your project partners work at cost and provide evidence to demonstrate this with each claim.

9.1.7 Inflation

Suppliers or contractors should build inflation into their quotes for activities during the development phase. Projects should negotiate price increase provisions in supplier contracts on a commercial basis. Pay increases should be accounted for in salary costs.

9.2 Annex 2: Glossary

Blended finance means a method of financing a project that combines public investment (such as a government grant) with private funding, for example from the sale of carbon or biodiversity credits or ecotourism.

Confidential Information means any information (however conveyed, recorded or preserved) disclosed by a Party or its personnel to another Party (and/or that Party's personnel) whether before or after the date of the Grant Funding Agreement. See the grant terms and conditions for a full definition.

Claim Assessment means the assessment Grant Recipients are required to pass at the end of each Claim Period.

Claim Period means the claim periods identified in the table in Appendix 1 of the Grant Funding Letter.

Defra is a Government Department, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Deliverables means the deliverable(s) identified in the Deliverables table in Appendix 1 to the Grant Funding Letter.

Delivery Body means the two delivery bodies for the Landscape Recovery scheme are Natural England and the Environment Agency, who will administer and deliver the scheme on behalf of Defra.

Ecosystem means the complex of living (biotic) organisms and non-living (abiotic) factors and their interactions in a particular unit of space.

Enrolment is a stage of the Landscape Recovery scheme in which NE or EA carry out certain checks and negotiates the project specific details of the grant agreement with the applicant.

Environment Agency (EA) is a non-departmental public body. EA are leading on projects relating to stream and river restoration.

Environmental and social outcomes define the outcomes (quantified unit of improvement) that must be achieved rather than the process to be followed.

Evaluation is a process used to judge quality, importance, or value of something using a set of standards or criteria and enables lessons to be learnt from the project or scheme.

Forestry Commission (FC) is a non-ministerial department body, supporting delivery bodies in woodland and tree elements in Landscape Recovery.

Governance is the framework of authority and accountability that defines and controls the outputs, outcomes and benefits from projects, programmes, and portfolios.

Grant amendment means any change to the project after the grant agreement has been signed. These should be agreed by both parties before any change in delivery.

Grant claim means the payment request submitted by the Grant Recipient to the delivery body for payment of the grant.

Grant Recipient means the party listed as the Grant Recipient in the Grant Funding Letter.

Historic England (HE) is a non-departmental public body. HE provides support on the development and delivery of Landscape Recovery alongside the Delivery Bodies.

Key Performance Indicators are quantifiable measures of performance over time for a specific objective, that will be used to evaluate the success or progress of the project.

Liaison Officer is the individual nominated by either NE or EA to be single point of contact for the project or grant recipient.

Landscape Recovery scheme is one of three new environmental land management schemes being piloted across England in 2022 with an aim to enhance the natural environment and support ecosystem recovery.

Native species means a species that has been observed in the form of a naturally occurring and self-sustaining population in historical times.

Natural England (NE) is a non-departmental public body. NE are leading on projects relating to species recovery.

Procurement means a process by which an organisation buys a product or services from other bodies, suppliers, or organisations.

Private Funding are non-government or non-public funding sources.

Project Development Phase is a stage of Landscape Recovery scheme following Enrolment where EA or NE assist projects to refine and develop their individual projects.

Project Implementation phase is a stage of the Landscape Recovery scheme following the conclusion of the project development phase where the long-term implementation takes place.

Project Partners are organisations formally involved in delivering the project.

Project Plan means the project plan that breaks down the activities and costs that the Grant Recipient will undertake to deliver the Deliverables and which will be created, maintained and updated by the Grant Recipient in consultation with the Authority;

Quotes means a document that a seller provides to a buyer to offer goods or services at a stated price, under specified conditions.

Reconsideration means that a project can request that a decision made by EA, NE or Defra relating to a Landscape Recovery project during the enrolment or project development phase is reconsidered. Please follow the process outlined in the handbook.

SharePoint is a web-based software platform within Microsoft Office which allows for collaborative management and storage of documents.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) means a Site of Special Scientific Interest is a formal conservation designation to protect an area that is of particular interest to science

due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains or its geological interest. Natural England provides advice and consents.