

Applications for the Landscape Recovery scheme now open

Farmers and landowners will be able to apply for funding to support projects that will restore nature, reduce flood risks and boost biodiversity, as the first round of applications for the [Landscape Recovery](#) scheme opens today.

The scheme is the third under the UK Government's future farming policy, which outside of the Common Agricultural Policy will deliver a system that works in the best interests of British farmers, designed in partnership with the sector.

The Landscape Recovery scheme will support more radical and ambitious land-use change and habitat restoration, such as establishing new nature reserves, restoring floodplains to help reduce the risks from flooding, or creating woodland and wetlands.

The first round of Landscape Recovery is open to any individuals or groups who want to come together to deliver large (500 – 5000 ha) scale projects. The projects will focus on:

- recovering and restoring England's threatened native species. Projects under this theme will be administered by Natural England
- restoring England's streams and rivers: improving water quality, biodiversity and adapting to climate change. Projects under this theme will be administered by the Environment Agency

Projects could include restoring the natural courses and condition of rivers and streams, creating and improving woodlands or wetlands, or creating a mosaic of habitats for native species, and will support the Prime Minister's ambition to deliver at least 10 large scale areas devoted to landscape and ecosystem recovery by 2024.

Applications for this round of funding are open from 1 February 2022 and will close on 24 May 2022. The application process will be competitive and Defra will assess applications against selection criteria focused on the projects' potential impact, feasibility and costs and will confirm the chosen round one pilot projects in the summer. Up to 15 projects will be taken forward within the total project development budget available of £7.5m.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

The focus of our Landscape Recovery scheme will be to restore threatened species and priority habitats – helping to protect our natural environment for generations to come and boost biodiversity.

While the types of projects we envisage won't be right for every

farm business or farm holding, they will be right for some which is why this scheme will support a choice that some landowners may want to take, and put in place the right incentives to allow them to do so.

Farming in England is moving away from the arbitrary land-based subsidies and top-down bureaucracy of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, towards schemes that recognise the work that farmers do as stewards of the natural environment alongside food production. Defra is working in partnership with farmers to design the new schemes and support the choices that they make for their own holdings. Landscape Recovery is one of three environmental land management schemes and taken together they are designed to provide farmers and landowners with a broad range of voluntary options from which they can choose the best for their business. The reforms are the biggest changes to farming and land management in 50 years with more than 3,000 farmers already testing the new schemes.

Emma Howard Boyd CBE, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The Landscape Recovery scheme will fund projects that will see waterbodies, rivers and floodplains restored to a more natural state helping to deliver the Government's ambition to reverse the decline in nature by 2030. Projects will also improve water quality and help reduce the risks from flooding helping us adapt to the changing climate.

Tony Juniper CBE, Chair of Natural England, said:

As we step up to meeting the climate change and nature emergencies it is clear that we will in future need to secure multiple benefits from how we use land. Taking coordinated action at scale is key, and Landscape Recovery represents a great opportunity for land managers to make huge contributions.

Through this scheme the ambition to create a Nature Recovery Network can take a leap forward, enabling those who manage land to help meet a range of different goals, including for carbon storage, cleaner rivers, reduced flood risk, thriving wildlife and beautiful landscapes for everyone to enjoy, as well as high-quality, sustainable food. Natural England looks forward to supporting farmers with science-led advice through these very exciting trials.

Sir William Worsley, Forestry Commission Chair, said:

I am delighted that the Landscape Recovery scheme pilot has opened

today and fully welcome the approach for large-scale land-use change and habitat restoration. The scheme will work alongside the suite of support we already have available for woodland creation and management, and I believe this is a real opportunity for those with large estates, whether that's farmers, foresters or land managers, or those who are part of a collaborative group, to create and improve woodland.

- To read more about the Landscape Recovery scheme and how to apply, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- As part of submitting a bid, applicants will need to confirm that tenants and those with rights of common within the Landscape Recovery area have been engaged prior to application and are supportive of the project moving forward into project development.
- The selected projects will initially be awarded project development funding. Over the course of the project development phase, which will last up to 2 years, they will have the opportunity to negotiate public and private funding for implementation. If a project meets Defra's requirements at the end of the development phase, they would be awarded long-term funding, allowing them to start delivering on the ground. Implementation agreements are expected to be long term (20 years plus) and we want to ensure the projects are safeguarded into the future.
- Over the next three years we are introducing three new environmental land management schemes in England: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. Landscape Recovery is a crucial part of the suite of new schemes, which we are introducing following our departure from the EU and the Common Agricultural Policy.