

Government's £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund opens for applications

Grants from £50k to £5 million are now available to help the nation build back greener from the coronavirus pandemic, the government announced today [14 September].

The £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund, part of the government's wider green economic recovery, jobs and skills package, brings forward funding for environmental charities and their partners to start work on projects across England to restore nature and tackle climate change.

The fund will help create up to 3,000 jobs and safeguard up to 2,000 others in areas such as protecting species, finding nature-based solutions to tackling climate change, conservation rangers and connecting people with nature. Up to 100% of project costs will be available.

The fund will be delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

All [projects must contribute](#) to at least one of the following themes of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund:

- nature conservation and restoration;
- nature-based solutions, particularly focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation such as through tree planting and restoring peatland; and,
- connecting people with nature.

Projects will be favoured that create or retain jobs, creating opportunities and benefits for all ages, including young people. The fund is open to environmental charities and partnerships that include at least one environmental charity, while projects from both rural, urban and inshore marine areas are welcomed.

The fund will create a broad range of jobs such as ecologists, surveyors, nature reserve staff and education workers in environment organisations, and support their suppliers in areas such as agricultural engineering, horticulture, and equipment and seed supply.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow, said:

I am delighted to launch our game-changing fund to kick-start projects to halt the loss of wildlife and tackle climate change, as we build back greener from the coronavirus pandemic.

Our ambitious fund will help environmental organisations employ

more people to work on tree-planting, nature restoration and helping the public enjoy the outdoors, and I encourage organisations to step forward and apply so we can make a real difference to nature whilst also creating jobs.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is funded by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by bringing forward £10 million of money from the Nature Recovery Fund and £30 million of Nature for Climate Funding.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper, said:

Access to a thriving natural environment is essential for the nation's health and wellbeing, and this fund will deliver real on-the-ground benefits for people and wildlife alike as we emerge from the coronavirus crisis.

This fund will also provide a long-term boost for those wanting to build a career in the environmental sector, and help secure a flourishing environment that we need for a healthy future.

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

Reaching net zero by 2050 and achieving the government's 25 Year Environment Plan goals for nature can only be done by employing the right skills. A lack of STEM skills is estimated to cost industry £1.5 billion a year in recruitment, inflated salaries, and additional training costs.

The £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a step in the right direction and will help the UK economy be more competitive in the future.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

I am delighted that we are distributing the Green Recovery Challenge Fund on behalf of Defra and working alongside our partners at Natural England and the Environment Agency.

We are committed to supporting the nature and environment sector quickly and effectively through this Fund.

Applicants for over £250k [must submit expressions of interest](#) by 24 September and if successful full applications by 26 October. The [deadline for applications](#) under £250k is 2 October.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund [forms part of a wider package to boost the economy announced earlier this year by Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#).

[The Prime Minister also re-iterated the government's commitment to re-forestation Britain by increasing planting to 30,000 hectares \(75,000 acres\)](#) of trees every year by 2025, and create a new patchwork of woodlands. The [government has recently consulted on a new England Tree Strategy to expand tree cover](#), support woodland management and increase public engagement with trees and woodlands.

The government's flagship [Environment Bill](#) puts the environment at the centre of policy making to ensure that we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation.