

News story: Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund provides conservation boost

The fourth round of the popular Facilitation Fund has been one of the most successful yet, with 37 new groups of farmers from Cornwall to Northumberland signed up to agreements after a competitive application round, which closed in November 2017.

The Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund rewards groups of farmers for coming together to work out the best ways to improve the natural environment across their land, providing habitats for wildlife on a landscape scale to better aid conservation of important species.

There are now 98 groups working across England with the common goal of better delivering environmental improvements on their land, and the land of their neighbours.

A number of high quality applications were received in this latest funding round, which meant the funding pot was increased by £600,000 to ensure that groups with important work to deliver could access the funding to do so.

All 37 groups have now received their agreements and will be able to receive funding for working together and sharing knowledge to improve the landscape. The addition of these groups to the scheme means that now over 450,000 hectares of holdings in England are delivering landscape-scale measures for wildlife, water management and the historic environment.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

I am very pleased to see thirty seven new nature conservation groups established with over 700 members involved. The facilitation fund we have established aims to support partnership working and bring together farmers and other land managers to deliver local conservation projects.

It is particularly encouraging to see how many high quality applications we received, which we hope to replicate across the Countryside Stewardship scheme following the steps we have taken to simplify the wildlife packages.