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**Riverwoods Development Grant** Application Guidance

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*The Riverwoods Blueprint Project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.*

**1. Application Form - Guidance Notes**

Please carefully read these notes before completing your application. The question numbers used re­fer to those on the **Application Form.**

This must be completed in full and submitted to riverwoods@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk with the subject line “*Development Grant Application – [Your Organisation*]” by **12 noon on Monday 28 July 2025.** If you do not fully complete the application form, we may not be able to consider your application.

In addition to the **Application Form**, you should also submit the following supplementary information:

* A copy of your organisation's most recently audited or verified accounts.
	+ If you are a new organisation and do not have audited accounts, you can submit your last three bank statements, or a letter from your bank confirming that you have opened an account.
* You must complete this [online](https://arcg.is/1f0GT0) survey to show your project location. If you have additional maps or spatial information supporting your application (not required), you can also submit these here.
* Letters of support or other written confirmation from any participating project partners or landowners/managers, as applicable.
* Any additional supporting evidence of the need for your proposed project.

If you require assistance with the application process, please contact riverwoods@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk.

Please note, some questions in this application form have a word limit.

**You must not start your project before our Grant is awarded.**

**Key Information**

**Riverwoods Development Grant Overview**

* The key purpose of Riverwoods is to create a network of river woodlands and healthy river systems throughout Scotland, which will deliver a range of benefits including flood protection, improved water quality and improvements for salmon fisheries, as well as helping to tackle the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.
* The Riverwoods Development Grant seeks to address one of the key barriers to river woodland creation by supporting the scoping, planning and design of river woodland development plans for the benefit of river health, habitat connectivity and access to nature in Scotland.
* Successful projects will also play a key role in informing the development of the Riverwoods Blueprint and will be promoted via press releases and Riverwoods media channels and newsletters.

**What is the Aim of the Grant?**

* The Riverwoods Development Grant seeks to support the production of river woodland development plans focussed on identifying opportunities for expanding river woodlands and improving riparian habitat.
* It will do this by supporting the scoping, initial engagement, planning, and design of native river woodland creation, expansion, and restoration activities for the benefit of river health, habitat connectivity, communities and access to nature in Scotland.
* In the context of this Grant, native river woodland is defined as woodland that abounds to a watercourse, which may also extend significantly away from the riverbank into wider secondary native woodland creation and restoration areas*.* However, it is expected that key river woodland habitats and areas (see definitions below) will form the core focus of any proposals:

**Key Habitats & Areas**

* **Riparian woodlands:** A woodland area on the bank of a river or loch, with the width being defined by the biogeochemical site conditions.
* **Floodplain woodlands:** All woodland lying within the fluvial floodplain that is subject to a regular or natural flooding regime.
* **Gorge woodlands:** Native trees in gorges where the influence of the riparian zone extends beyond the floodplain due to high humidity levels.
* **Man-made riparian woodland buffers:** Riparian woodland buffer zones occur on farms as areas between natural and artificial water courses, such as streams or ditches, and agricultural land.

**Secondary Catchment Woodland Areas and Activities that may be considered**

* **Catchment woodlands:** Typically encompasses the total area of woodlands in a catchment, including all above defined woodland types. For the purpose of this Grant we will consider this as referring to all woodlands not encompassed by the above definitions.
* **Cross-slope woodlands:** Smaller areas of woodland or typically belts of woodland across hill slopes.
* **Large woody material:** Naturally occurring or man-made large wood structures found within the stream or river, also referred to as large woody debris.

**Project Requirements**

* All funded projects must include an outcome to produce a written River Woodland Development Plan for an identified and defined area in Scotland. This Plan should detail clear and realistic next steps towards expanding and/or improving the state of riparian vegetation and freshwater habitats primarily through river woodland creation.
* Plans should include the following:
* A GIS mapping analysis of the area identifying the ecological need, key landscape and catchment features, and opportunities and constraints for river woodland habitat creation, expansion, and/or restoration
* Identified landowners and managers that are agreed in principle to considering proposed works, where applicable
* Anticipated delivery timelines
* Outlined budgets for the planned woodland development works
* Identified partnership opportunities
* Plans must also consider the benefits that this Grant can have to local communities in both the immediate and long-term;
* Immediately, how can this Grant be used to benefit local communities and increase engagement with river woodland planning and scoping?
* Long-term, how will future river woodland planting and habitat improvement provide benefit to local communities? e.g. through interpretation, access, health & wellbeing, etc
* The Riverwoods Development Grant is made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As such, projects will need to adhere to their guidance (e.g. procurement and publicity processes). If successful, this will be further detailed in your award letter.

**Eligible Activities**

* The Grant can be used to pay for any activities or other costs, including required staff time or contractual work, to realise your project’s outcomes and develop the required River Woodland Development Plan. Common eligible activities will include but are not limited to the following:
* Desk based analysis
* Sub-catchment/catchment scale GIS analysis
* Landowner & community engagement and consultation
* Surveying or other ground-truthing
* Woodland scoping, design and planning
* Woodland creation cashflow modelling, including potential funding options
* Production of a River Woodland Development Plan

**Grant Themes**

* This Grant is made available through the Riverwoods Blueprint Project. At the heart of [Riverwoods](https://www.riverwoods.org.uk/about/), the [Blueprint Project](https://www.riverwoods.org.uk/streams/blueprint/) is a five-year project made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Lottery players.When completing the **Application Form**, please consider how your project would further the Blueprint Project by delivering on the following themes:
* **Restoring natural processes** – Establishment of river woodlands for the purpose of halting and reversing the degradation of freshwater environments. Establishing natural processes associated with permanent woodland cover that minimise the need for human intervention.
* **Improving habitat connectivity** – Use of river woodland creation and restoration to improve the connectivity of native terrestrial and aquatic habitats, contributing to the expansion of nature networks.
* **Supporting species and ecosystem resilience and diversity** – Use of targeted and well-designed river woodland creation and restoration at scale to aid in addressing the biodiversity crisis and local effects of a rapidly changing climate.
* **Increased engagement** – Widened participation in river woodland creation and restoration through cross-sector connectivity, collaboration and knowledge sharing, alongside reconnecting communities with their local rivers.

**Applicant Eligibility**

* Projects must be located within Scotland and contribute to the aim of the Grant. Applicants should be based in Scotland and be one of the following:
* ENGOs
* Charitable Trust/Organisation
* Constituted Community Group/ Voluntary Group / Foundation
* Environmentally focussed not for profit organisation
* Local public bodies including Local Authorities and District Salmon Fisheries Boards
* Applications from individuals will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances.
* The focus will be on supporting appropriately constituted organisations as defined above however, there may be exceptional cases where community and associated public benefits are deemed sufficiently high to allow an individual to apply. Successful individual applicants may be subject to additional contractual conditions.

**Deadlines**

* The deadline for completed applications is 12 noon Monday 28th July 2025.
* Applicants wishing to discuss their application ahead of submission should get in touch with the Riverwoods team no later than Friday 18th July 2025. Requests for feedback made after this deadline may not be possible to accommodate.
* Both successful and unsuccessful candidates will receive a decision and feedback on their application no later than Friday 24 October 2025.
* Delivery of Grant funded development plans and activities must be complete and final Grant claims submitted no later than Monday 1st March 2027.

**Cost Thresholds and Eligibility:**

* This Grant cannot fund a project that has already started and funds can only be used to pay for activities taking place during the contracted award period (e.g. October 2025 – February 2027).
* The minimum total project value is £5,000, however there is no minimum Grant request threshold. The maximum funding award will be £20,000, however there is no maximum total project value. Funding requests are expected to be within the £10,000 - £20,000 range.
* Applications for funding over £20,000 may be considered in exceptional circumstances i.e. for a whole catchment or sub catchment scale restoration opportunity where landowner agreements are or will be in place to deliver at scale.
* You can apply for up to 90% of the total eligible project costs*.* i.e. you can only apply for £20,000 if your total project costs are £22,222 or more.
* If your project is approved, the percentage Grant rate and the maximum Grant allocated will be fixed according to the budget submitted. Should the project costs decrease at any time following project approval, the Grant will reduce accordingly in line with the approved percentage intervention rate. If project costs increase, the awarded funding will not be increased in excess of the amount awarded at the time of application.
* If your organisation can recover VAT, you should not include any VAT in your project costings.
* We will not fund recoverable VAT so please do not include VAT that you are able to reclaim in your project costs.

**Match Funding:**

* A minimum of 10% funding for the project must come from other sources. These other sources cannot include National Lottery Heritage Funding. In-kind contributions are accepted.
* Match funding does not need to be in place at the time of application however prospective sources should be detailed. No approved project can start without confirmation, in writing, that all match funding has been secured.

**Reporting and Payment Claims:**

* Successful applicants will be required to submit brief progress reports on a quarterly basis throughout their contracted award period. An up-to-date progress report, along with a claim form (to be provided) and any contractually required supporting documentation will be required to claim payment.
* Our Grants are paid in arrears and proof of payment may be required as part of the claim process. Payments can be claimed on a quarterly basis against the following deadlines:
* 1 December 2025
* 1 March 2026
* 1 June 2026
* 1 September 2026
* 1 December 2026
* 1 March 2027 *(final report and payment)*
* Please note that any procurement will need to adhere to [National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund best practice](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/good-practice-guidance/procurement) to be eligible for claim.
* If you plan to complete your project before the final report date (1 March 2027), you can request to have your final payment and review carried out at an earlier report and claim deadline.

**2. Application Questions – Supporting Information**

The sections and question numbers used refer to those on the **Application Form**.

**Section A: About You and Your Organisation**

**Q1. Title; First Name; Surname; Name of organisation; Your position; Correspondence address; Organisation address (if different from above); Phone number; Contact email; Website (if applicable)**

* Please ensure that this is the main contact for the project – someone who can talk about it in detail and who will be available during the appraisal period. You must let us know if they are away for any time during this period.
* Our focus will be on supporting ENGOs, Charitable Trusts, appropriately constituted community and voluntary groups as well as local public bodies including local authorities and District Salmon Fisheries Boards. However, for exceptional projects, there may be cases where applications from individuals may be considered, please contact riverwoods@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk to discuss prior to submitting an application.

**Q2. What are the main activities of your organisation? (max 200 words)**

* Briefly describe the type of work your organisation does, including its primary aim or vision.

**Q3. What geographical area does your organisation’s work cover?**

* Let us know where your organisation usually operates. If your organisation works across multiple regions or nationally, please include detail of any specific priority areas.

**Q4. Please provide a copy of your organisation’s constitution and your Charity number (if applicable).**

* Your organisation doesn’t have to be a registered charity but if you are, please give us your Charity Number.

**Q5. If your organisation is VAT registered, please give your VAT registration number.**

* Let us know if your organisation is VAT registered or will otherwise be able to recover the VAT element of any project costs.
* If your organisation can recover VAT, you should not include any VAT in your project costings. We will not fund recoverable VAT so please do not include VAT that you are able to reclaim in your project costs

**Q6. Please provide the following for your organisation for the last financial year (April 2024 – March 2025)**

* A signed copy of your latest annual accounts must be included with your application.
* If your group has not yet completed one full year please provide a projection of income and expenditure for your first year of operation.
* Unrestricted reserves are general funds held by your organisation, unlike restricted reserves, which have been provided only for a particular purpose or project.

**Q7.If you have cash reserves in excess of the Grant, please explain why you are not using these to pay for this project? (if applicable)**

* Applicants with unrestricted cash reserves well in excess of the Grant requested may be given low priority.

**Section B: Your Project**

**Q8. Project Title**

* Your project title should include reference to the catchment, sub-catchment, or waterway that your project will take place in.

**Q9. Project Location**

* Please enter your project location details using this [survey](https://arcg.is/1f0GT0). This will include:
* A six figure OS grid reference point that can be used to indicate your project.
	+ *You should also enter this six-figure grid reference on the application form.*
	+ Please note that this location does not need to represent the entirety of your project area. If you need help finding the coordinates, please visit [Grid Reference Finder](https://gridreferencefinder.com/).
* The geographic boundary of your project area.
* Any additional maps or other spatial information to support your application (optional)
* Please note that you will not need any GIS expertise or software to complete this survey.
* You can confirm completion of this survey by noting the six figure OS grid reference in the provided text box on the application form.

**Q10. Project Objectives (max 200 words)**

* Please briefly state your project objectives. Ensure you have read the Grant Aims and Project Requirements guidance information to inform your project objectives.

**Q11. Project Outputs (max 200 words)**

* Please describe the outputs your project will deliver. These should be specific, measurable, achievable within the contracted award period, and in line with your project objectives. All projects should include a final output of a river woodland development plan. Other objectives may include area of woodland creation scoped, length of riverbank surveyed, number of landowners engaged, number of community events held.

**Q12. Project Timetable**

* Please give an estimated start and end date for your project, and the anticipated dates or deadlines of any key project milestones. Please remember that you must not start your project before our Grant is awarded.

**Q13. Project Need (max 500 words)**

* Please describe why the project is required. This can include ecological, community, economic or other drivers. Your answer should demonstrate the need for the project, highlighting any existing statutory, community or other demands, and where relevant, include evidence to back this up. Evidence could include Scottish Forestry riparian target area overlap, status of existing riparian woodland cover, thermal stress measures, or records of poor water quality.
* You can also detail whether you already have local landowner willingness and enthusiasm for the projects or have already identified complementary collaboration opportunities with other landscape scale ecological restoration initiatives. You will be asked to provide supplemental evidence of landowner and/or collaborating organisation enthusiasm with your application materials. This can include support letters or other written confirmation.

**Q14. Prospective Next Steps (max 400 words)**

* Please describe how the river woodland development plan and any other relevant project outputs delivered through your project would be carried forward following the completion of this Grant.
* This should include anticipated next steps, plans for prospective funding sources to deliver and maintain the work identified in the river woodland development plan, and details of who will be involved.

**Q15. How will your project deliver on the Grant’s themes? (max 400 words)**

* Please describe how your project will further the Blueprint Project by delivering on the prioritised Riverwoods themes. See the Grant Themes guidance information for details. Your project does not need to deliver on all of the themes.

**Q16. How will your project engage with the local community? (max 400 words)**

* Please briefly describe how your project with engage with the local community and further community relations. This can include building relationships with key landowners, raising public awareness and understanding of the project objectives and needs, and involving the community in planning and decision-making processes, among others. If you anticipate any key barriers to community involvement, you should also describe this here.

**Q17. Will anyone else benefit from your project? (max 200 words)**

* Please describe anyone else not already detailed that may benefit from either your project objectives or its longer-term legacy. This may include communities and landholdings outwith the direct project area benefiting from natural flood management measures or cross catchment ecological benefits, organisations leading on adjacent projects benefiting from enhancement or connection, or local contractors benefiting from employment opportunities during later delivery stages.

**Q18. If successful, how will you acknowledge the Grant? (max 200 words**)

* Acknowledgement can include recognition on websites, social media, other digital content, press releases or other media coverage, promotional materials, recruitment materials, relevant signage, or at events. Please note that if successful, any acknowledgement will need to be carried out in accordance with National Lottery Heritage Fund and Riverwoods Blueprint Project guidelines and any other agreed contractual terms.

**Q19. How will you manage the project? (max 200 words)**

* Please describe how your project will be managed, including regular financial and operational oversight. The degree of project management required will depend on the complexity of your project. If appropriate include details of key personnel and previous experience of managing similar projects.

**Q20. Does your project require any regulatory compliance or consent? (max 200 words)**

* Regulatory compliance or consent could include, but is not limited to; forestry regulations, SEPA regulations, designated areas, planning stipulations, land management agreement. Please only indicate requirements for the activities funded through this Grant. i.e. You do not need to include requirements that will only be relevant to the delivery of your river woodland development plan.

**Section C: Project Costs**

**Q21. How did you calculate your costs?**

* Please briefly describe how you calculated your project costs (e.g. quotes, previous project budgets).

**Q22. Please detail all anticipated project costs**

* Please detail all anticipated project costs, including any that will be paid for with other funding or provided in-kind. You should also detail how much project funding you are seeking to cover each cost. Please keep in mind that the Grant can only be used to cover 90% of your total costs.
* Costs should be assigned to one of the following categories:
* Professional Fees
	+ This includes any person appointed for a fixed fee to help with planning and delivering the activities of your project such as a consultant or facilitator. Examples of eligible contracted work include surveys, GIS analysis, budget and plan development, or community consultation.
* Event Costs
	+ This includes any venue hire, food/refreshment, activity equipment or other required events materials
* Equipment and Materials
	+ This includes any equipment or materials required to promote or carry out project activities e.g. PPE, leaflets or publications. Do not include materials relating to training staff or volunteers here.
* Full Cost Recovery
* This includes any costs associated with running the project that are paid by the recipient organisation. This can include both direct costs (e.g. salaries for supporting staff, materials or equipment) or a proportionate share of the organisation’s overhead (e.g. rent, office supplies)
* Staff Costs
	+ This includes salaries, pension, national insurance contributions, as well as any required recruitment costs, for new staff employed, seconded or contracted to deliver the project.
* Travel and Expenses
	+ This may include food, travel and any other expenses for staff and/or volunteers. Travel costs by car should be based on 45p a mile. This also includes the hire of vehicles and any public transport costs. If claiming travel and expenses for both staff and volunteers, you should list these on separate lines.
* Training/Capacity Building
	+ This includes the cost of all trainers and/or resources needed to deliver activities to help staff, volunteers, or other relevant project parties gain new or increased skills
* Other – Contingency
	+ This is only used to pay for unexpected costs required to deliver your project and may be up to 10% of the total costs of the project. If you feel there is substantial, unmitigable risk to any anticipated costs, you may apply for a higher level. Make sure that you only include your required contingency here and not within the other cost headings in the application.
* Other – Capital
	+ This includes any costs associated with the development, delivery, or maintenance of capital works. Please note that capital costs will only be approved for funding in exceptional circumstances.
* Other
	+ This can be used for any other costs not detailed in the above categories.
* The following costs cannot be paid for by the Grant and should not be included in your project costs:
* Costs of existing staff posts or organisational costs, unless calculated through full cost recovery
* Costs for any activity that has taken place before a Grant is awarded.
* Costs for installing artificial grass or plants.
* Legal and/or statutory responsibilities that would be paid for regardless, whether the project went ahead or not, such as building rent or maintenance
* Promotion of causes or beliefs of political or faith organisations
* Recoverable VAT.
* If your organisation is able to recover the VAT element of any project costs you should not include this in your project costings.
* If you are unable to recover VAT, please only detail the total VAT costs in the “Irrecoverable VAT” row.
* The “Total” row should be the sum of all project costs including irrecoverable VAT and the sum of your Grant request.
* Your project costs must be at least £5000 for your project to be eligible. Costs that will be covered with in-kind contributions should make up no more than 30% of the total project value.
* The total amount of Grant requested cannot be more than 90% of total project cost and should not exceed £20,000. In exceptional circumstances, we may increase the maximum Grant award.
* A blank table as detailed below is included in the **Application Form.** If your costs do not fit in the table provided, please include an additional table following the same format with your supplementary information.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Description** | **Total Cost (excluding VAT)** | **Grant Request** |
| *Example - Professional Fees* | *Example – contract to write river woodland development plan*  | *£10,000* | *£9,000* |
| *Example – Full Cost Recovery* | *Example – staff time to manage project including contract and budget (2 days per calendar month @ £120 per day)* | *£4,320* | *£0* |
| Irrecoverable VAT (if applicable) |  |  |  |
| Total  |  |  |  |

**Q23. Please provide details of match funding, including non-cash (in-kind) contributions**

* Please detail all anticipated match-funding or other project income, including any planned in-kind contributions. You will also need to indicate if you plan to use funds from other organisations or if you will be contributing from your own funds, and whether these funds have been secured. “Secured” means that you have the cash in your bank account reserved specifically for this project, or that the money or non-cash contribution has been formally offered. If successful, you will be asked to evidence confirmation of match funding.
* Please keep in mind that a minimum of 10% of funding for the project must come from other sources. These other sources cannot include National Lottery Heritage Funding.
* Non-cash contributions are accepted as match-funding. Non-cash contributions are things you need for your project that you do not have to pay for, such as donated staff time not claimed through full cost recovery, volunteer time working for the project, use of a room in a local business, or materials being donated by a local firm.
* Volunteers working on the project will be valued in accordance with a National Lottery Heritage Fund agreed rate of £20/hr. Please indicate the number of volunteer hours in the description.
* Projects with match funding in place will receive priority.
* A blank table as detailed below is included in the **Application Form.** If your match funding and non-cash contributions do not fit in the table provided, please include an additional table following the same format with your supplementary information.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Funder/Own Organisation** | **Description** | **StatusProspective/Applied/Secured** | **Amount (£)** | **Cash** | **In-kind** |
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**Q24. If any sources are not yet secured, please describe when you expect to apply and/or receive confirmation**

* Match funding does not need to be in place at the time of application and prospective sources can be detailed. However, no approved project can start without confirmation, in writing, that all match funding has been secured.

**Q25. Why would this project not happen without the Riverwoods Development Grant? (max 200 words)**

* Please briefly describe why this Grant funding is essential to deliver your project, including the implications if your application is unsuccessful

**3. Riverwoods Development Grant Timeline**

**\*Deadlines for brief progress report and payment claims:**

* 1December 2025
* 1March 2026
* 1 June 2026
* 1 September 2026
* 1 December 2026
* 1 March 2027 (final report and payment)