



**Crown Estate  
Scotland**  
Oighreachd a' Chrùin Alba

Sustainable Communities Fund  
Environment Grants

# Guidance Document



## Introduction

The Environment Grants are part of Crown Estate Scotland's Sustainable Communities Fund which has been created to support sustainable development across the Scottish Crown Estate.

A total of £125,000 is available for Environment Grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 for individual projects.

The grant is open to Crown Estate Scotland tenants or their authorised representative only. Applicants must have a current agreement with us at the time of application and at the time when monies will be awarded (i.e. March 2026).

## What are we looking for

Applications must support at least one of the following priority areas:

- Biodiversity projects to restore and regenerate the local environment
- Providing natural climate solutions
- Facilitating a change to greener ways of operating through climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Projects are likely to score highly if they deliver lasting and demonstrable environmental benefits in one or more of the following ways:

- set out a clear baseline, where appropriate, to show clear benefits to be delivered
- involves the community through jobs, training, engagement or volunteering;
- demonstrates wider value through delivering multiple benefits, i.e., projects which benefit the environment and supports community cohesion;
- embeds circular economy practices, i.e., resource efficiency, repair and reuse, recycling, local supply chains, and plans for long-term viability.
- prioritise public, community, or environmental benefit over private profit.

Priority will be given to projects which provide wider benefits rather than primarily benefiting private businesses or individuals, e.g. renewables projects which will benefit community organisations or active travel measures that can be used by the local community. We welcome applications which can provide equality, diversity and inclusion benefits.

The Fund has been heavily oversubscribed in previous years, so we encourage applicants to provide as much information as possible on the importance of the proposed project to the applicant, the environment, the wider community and the Scottish Crown Estate.

For details of our previous awards, please see our [StoryMap](#) on our website. Examples of previous awardees are also included at the [end of the document](#).

## Application process

The application form is available as a [Microsoft Form](#). If you have any issues with this then please fill out our Microsoft Word document which can be downloaded from our website. If you would prefer a paper copy, please contact us and we can post one out.

For any queries, please email [EnvironmentGrants@crownestatescotland.com](mailto:EnvironmentGrants@crownestatescotland.com).

If you have any queries regarding the eligibility of your application or the process, we encourage you to get in touch as soon as possible to discuss this with us.

## Criteria

### Eligibility

- Applicants must be an existing Crown Estate Scotland tenant or their authorised representative.
- All projects must benefit the tenanted area or rights, or the wider Scottish Crown Estate, otherwise they will be ineligible.

### Location and scope

- Projects must take place on tenanted land or assets. For wild fisheries tenants, projects can take place on land adjacent to the river for which rights are leased, as well as upstream or downstream of the leased river, only if they clearly improve the tenant's fishing rights or fish stocks.

### Timeframe

- Projects must be completed within 18 months of receipt of funding.

### Project plan

- Clearly set out the problem you are addressing, the actions you will take, and the measurable benefits.
- Provide quantifiable targets where possible, e.g. tonnes of carbon saved, area of habitat restored, number of trees planted, likely users. Explain how these outcomes will have an impact on the tenanted land or assets, or the wider estate. Please accompany with evidence to support these claims, as this will strengthen your application. Priority will be given to projects that clearly demonstrate significant environmental benefits through data-supported projections.
- Indicate how your project assists with ongoing management or operations of the asset or right, providing quantitative estimates where possible.
- Describe how future maintenance or upkeep will be funded and managed to sustain benefits beyond the grant period.
- Applicants must have appropriate risk assessments, insurance, and safeguarding arrangements for any activity undertaken.

### Permissions and partnerships

- If statutory permissions are required, include evidence that they are in place, or that applications have been submitted with an indicative decision date. Any award will be conditional on permissions being granted before work commences. If advice confirms that no permission is required, provide details.
- Provide details of engagement or partnership working with stakeholders, e.g. NatureScot, SEPA, or local community groups. Collaborative projects, including those with match funding or with community partners, are encouraged.

### Costs

- Include a clear budget and project funding. For any item over £500, provide at least one quote, and where possible 2–3 quotes for fair comparison. We appreciate this may not be always possible in some geographic areas and markets, so in these cases please identify what you can with a short explanation. Please request price validity through April 2026 following award.

## Fair Work First

- In line with the Scottish Government's Fair Work First initiative, grant-seeking organisations are expected to be paying the "Real Living Wage", as accredited by the Living Wage Foundation, and provide access to effective voice channels. Effective voice channels can include the opportunity for 1:2:1s with line managers, staff surveys and suggestion schemes. This criterion applies even if you aren't seeking funds for salaries.
- While evidence is not being requested at application stage, it may be requested before any grant is awarded. If you are not currently paying the Real Living Wage and/or providing effective voice channels, please provide details of when and how you intend to do this.

## Funding eligibility

### What we will fund

- Distinct projects that deliver new, lasting environmental outcomes on tenanted land or assets.
- Replacement of equipment or assets where this demonstrably delivers new environmental outcomes, e.g., material reductions in energy use, emissions, pollution, or ecological harm.
- Targeted works only where they directly enable a clear and evidenced step-change in environmental benefits.
- Implementation following a feasibility study where the grant funds a new extension of a prior project, e.g., moving from a previously funded feasibility study to delivery.
- Direct delivery costs, e.g., labour, equipment, materials, and essential technical design that is directly tied to delivery.
- Staff time that directly delivers the project, including proportionate project management.
- Volunteer expenses that enable participation, where proportionate, for example travel and subsistence.
- Irrecoverable VAT as part of delivery.
- In-kind contributions may be counted as match, for example donated staff or volunteer time or materials. Quantify at a fair market rate and describe how this supports delivery.

### What we will not fund

- Routine repairs and maintenance, or like-for-like replacements that do not improve environmental outcomes.
- Standalone feasibility or consultancy not tied to delivery of environmental benefits.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Core running costs of your organisation that are not directly delivering the project.
- Activities that are a statutory responsibility of the applicant or another body.
- Retrospective costs before the award

### Funding conditions

- Funding cannot be used to continue an existing project unless it clearly delivers new outcomes, e.g., implementation stage of a previously funded feasibility study.
- Identify any other public sector funding sources in your application.
- Grants will be made on a no-subsidy basis and may be subject to assessment.
- Typically one award per applicant per round.
- Demonstrate value for money, avoid conflicts of interest, and disclose any related party transactions. Where a related party is used, explain why this offers best value and how conflicts are managed.
- We may offer a scaled award below the amount requested to maximise the Fund's impact and will discuss with you before award.

## Timeline

Fund launches	Monday 1 September 2025
Deadline for applications	Monday 27 October 2025 at 12pm
Successful applicants notified	January 2026
Monies awarded.	Late Feb / early March 2026
Projects start	From April 2026

## Data Protection

Our Data Protection policy and Privacy Notice for Tenants will apply to all applications: <https://www.crownestatescotland.com/privacy-and-data-protection>

## Successful Applicants

Decisions will be made by Crown Estate Scotland and are final.

Monies will be provided to successful applicants in one instalment in late Feb/early March 2026 for projects starting from April 2026.

Successful applicants must agree to monitor and report on outputs / outcomes with six-monthly progress reports until the project is completed (up to maximum of 18 months).

A template will be provided for these reports. This includes providing evidence to the intended benefits to the environment and assets/rights or wider Scottish Crown Estate have been realised (e.g. monitoring data or site photos).

Where relevant, please establish an appropriate baseline before work starts to help us measure the impact of the grant. Monitoring data and images may be used in Crown Estate Scotland publications and digital channels.

A completion report is to be submitted within three months of the completion of the project (final progress report). This should provide a summary of the project, a description of the benefits derived from the project (if known at this time), any issues and learnings from the process, and before and after photos.

Details of successful projects will be included in Crown Estate Scotland publications.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Who can apply?**

Tenants of the Crown Estate Scotland and their authorised representatives.

### **Q. Where must the project be located?**

Within your tenanted area or on adjacent land (for wild fisheries tenants), where this is necessary to realise benefits. Please obtain written permission from any non-CES landowner.

### **Q. Can we submit multiple ideas?**

Yes. You may bundle related activities in one bid up to £20k or submit separate bids. In most cases, we will only award to the strongest project so expect only one award per successful applicant in any given round, except in exceptional circumstances.

## Q. What evidence should we include?

Some examples include:

- Baseline: current performance or condition, with photos or maps.
- Projected impact: quantified £ savings and CO<sub>2</sub> reductions where relevant.
- Monitoring plan: what will you measure and when.
- Community benefit: who benefits and how; attach support letters.

## Q. Are renewables and energy efficiency projects eligible?

Yes, where they reduce emissions. Provide any baseline surveys done from quotes to show current kWh/tCO<sub>2</sub>e with modelled savings, and any wider benefits realised, i.e., community.

## Q. Are habitat and species projects, including INNS control, eligible?"

Yes. Please describe the ecological problem, rationale for project, method of delivery, and environmental benefits. Please also include any partners, landowner consent, and monitoring.

## Q. Can staff time be funded?

Yes, where it directly delivers the project. Please show all relevant information i.e., hours, rate, and on-costs.

## Q. What if our project depends on other works?

State the process and how you will still deliver Environmental Grants outcomes within 18 months. Please get in touch to discuss.

## Q. Our idea is mainly feasibility/monitoring - what should we do?

The Environment Grants funds delivery of environmental outcomes so this would be ineligible at this stage, however it may be eligible for implementation if it fits the other eligibility criteria. If relevant, it may be eligible for Community Capacity Grants.

# Examples of Previous Awardees

## Farming

A Crown Estate Scotland farming tenant applied for £19,000 to create a wildlife pond with two shallow scrapes, plant 500 native broadleaf trees along 600m of burn, and install 450m of native hedgerow to link two woodlots across a marshy and gorse dominated ground that is not in productive use. A local contractor undertook excavation and fencing from October to March, and the tenant completed planting and Year 1 establishment, with routine maintenance after. NatureScot advised on species mix and scrub retention, whilst SEPA screened proximity to water and benefit. Timings avoided nesting and sensitive periods.

As a result, a new 0.25 ha wetland and corridor habitat is created to improve biodiversity, with measurable gains in wildlife connectivity. Tree and hedgerow survival is at 75% and amphibians are now present. Clear maintenance commitments were made, with planned tree guard removal by Year 3, infill planting where needed, fixed photo points and this was noted in an impact report.

## Aquaculture

A Crown Estate Scotland aquaculture tenant applied for £19,750 to run an 18-month water quality citizen science programme at three fixed points within the leased area, and to remove legacy marine litter from the site and adjacent foreshore. The site manager and two technicians delivered monthly water sampling to monitor progress and ran two volunteer clean ups aligned to low tide. Engagement included SEPA on method alignment, NatureScot screening where relevant, and the Marine Conservation Society for logging marine litter activity. All works completed within 18 months with light touch integration into routine site operations.

As a result, a complete 18-month baseline with data and photos from fixed points and a short public summary was created. The information and data now informs site practices to support marine environmental enhancement. Marine litter was removed and logged by type and appropriate destination, all of which were done with permissions compliance, evidence of value for money, and a follow-up simple maintenance plan for annual clean ups.

### Salmon Fishing Rights

A Crown Estate Scotland wild fisheries tenant, a community angling association, applied for £17,500 to run a citizen science programme which involved the delivery of two education sessions, and removing and treating invasive non native plants (INNS), i.e., Himalayan balsam, and carried out targeted riparian replanting with native species. The association's committee lead delivery with trained volunteers with support from a specialist NGO who provided two training days. Delivery involved monthly spot sampling, two macroinvertebrate kick sampling rounds, mapped INNS removal and treatment in summer, and planting schedule, all with landowner permissions.

As a result, they reduced INNS cover on treated banks by at least 60% by season end, with expected 200m improvement of shaded margin with native plants. Data collected and mapping done will also be used to inform future works and monitor progress.

### Coastal

A Crown Estate Scotland coastal tenant applied for £14,800 to re-profile two eroded dune notches, install low rope and post fencing with waymarking to keep visitors on paths, plant marram and native dune grasses, and stabilise two short saltmarsh creek edges with coir rolls. A local contractor handled the fencing and coir placement from March to May and September to October. Volunteers undertook planting, and two interpretation panels were co-designed with the local school to benefit education. NatureScot were consulted on the works, the access team were engaged, and seasonal bird restrictions were observed; works completed within 18 months.

As a result, at least 30% increase in vegetative cover in treated areas at 12 months, fewer desire lines were created, which improved dune and marsh resilience. There were fixed point photos and cover on three transects, plus periodic path counts, reported in a one-page infographic. A clear tenant maintenance plan for quick repairs and infill planting was created for future works.