

# Climate Adaptation Fund Guidance Note

## What is the Cairngorms National Park Climate Adaptation Fund?

The Cairngorms National Park Climate Adaptation Fund has been established to support capital works and investment in response to the changes that we have seen in our climate over the last few decades and preparing for the challenges that we will face as our climate continues to change.

The fund will consider the themes set out in the [National Park Partnership Plan 2022-2027](#): Nature, People, and Place.

The fund has three guiding principles:

1. **Adaptation** – projects will contribute to climate adaptation within the Cairngorms National Park that help deliver the Scottish National Climate Change Adaptation Programme.
2. **Nature Based Solutions** – projects will promote nature-based solutions and green engineering to help adapt to climate change while also contributing to habitat and species recovery in the National Park.
3. **Economy** – Projects will endeavour to maximise their contribution to sustainable local employment and economic activity within the National Park.

## What will it fund?

We are interested in applications from individual, businesses, landowners, community bodies, registered charities, and other incorporated bodies with an interest in progressing climate adaptation within the Cairngorms National Park through capital items that could unlock long term delivery, which could include:

New assets (items with a multi-year lifespan); significant works which will result in benefits or change spanning multiple years i.e. habitat restoration; land management activities; equipment with a multi-year lifespan.

Capital funding cannot support staff salaries, consultancy fees, running costs other than in exceptional cases where some salaries and fees may be eligible in the development of initial designs for projects.

Examples of projects might be:

- Fire management solutions including equipment to reduce the risk of, and tackle wild-fire.
- Flood prevention and drought alleviation through planting, water margin management or other works, rain-water catchment initiatives.
- Regenerative agriculture practices that protect and boost soil health, making them more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Plant or contracts to support undertaking new capital works to support projects addressing climate change impacts.
- Measures to reduce carbon emissions, use of fertilizers and pesticides on farms.

This is not an exhaustive list. Your project ideas will be assessed based on the contribution it will make to the principles of the grant scheme set out above and the more detailed criteria set out in this guidance.

## How much is the Fund worth?

The expected grant awards to successful projects will be in the range of £20,000 to a maximum of £100,000. Grants less than £20,000 will be considered. All projects will need to be completed by 31 March 2027 (including all spend).

We have not set specific intervention rates or grant funding percentages. The Fund is a broad fund open to a wide range of potential applicants and projects, and it is not possible to establish set percentages of grant funding. If a project will make a significant contribution to climate adaptation action, meeting the principles of the Fund, and requires full funding to allow it to happen then we will consider 100% funding. Applications will be assessed in terms of their fit with the scheme principles; their delivery against the objectives of the fund and indicators; and value for money, including the total value of a grant award and the percentage of total cost being sought.

## Criteria

Applications will be assessed against a scoring system based on four criteria listed below.

1. How well does the project contribute to at least one of the selected themes of the adaptation fund?
2. How well does the project provide wider public benefit?
3. How well thought-out is the project? Does it have clear objectives, measurable outcomes/outputs and is it deliverable by 31 March 2027?
4. What's the level of project risk and can the risks be managed?

## What are the key dates?

5. Expression of interest close on 3 April 2026
6. Expressions of Interest officer review 9 April 2026
7. Applications by invite open 16 April to 23.59 10 May 2026
8. Decision panel end of May
9. Project start date by 1 June 2026
10. Project completion date by 31 March 2027

The Park Authority has secured the money to support this Fund for the current financial year, to 31 March 2027 only. The expression of interest stage open from 9 February 2026.

## When will funds be received if our application is successful?

We understand that cash flow for new projects can be difficult to arrange. For approved projects, grants will be on the following basis:

- a) On approval of project and confirmation of start: 40%.
- b) At mid stage (date to be agreed) on basis of reasonable evidence of progress: 40%.
- c) On completion of project and provision of any delivery information including your final project report: 20%.

Alternatively, funds can be claimed 100% on completion of the project.

## Ready to apply?

If you have read these Guidance Notes and think you have a project that meets with the Cairngorms National Park Authority Climate Adaptation Fund themes, outcomes and indicators, and set criteria, then please apply using the [Expression of Interest](#) form in the first instance. This is a compulsory step, and a full application will only be accepted once this process has completed. Submission of an expression of interest will allow the Park Authority to give you initial advice on the suitability of your project ideas for this fund.

Early engagement with the Park Authority is encouraged to allow us to provide advice to help develop your project idea and to assess whether there are any legal implications in providing grant that may be considered a commercial subsidy. Early contact will therefore allow us to consider with you how the grant offer may be structured



appropriately if your application is successful. We also do not wish potential applicants to spend a large amount of their time writing applications that may not fit with this fund. The submission of a brief expression of interest will provide an opportunity to receive advice on whether the idea fits with the fund and additional time in submitting an application is worthwhile.

The Park Authority is an open, inclusive, innovative, and professional organisation that behaves with integrity. We will administer these grant funds in line with these values.

### **How to contact the Fund**

If you need any further information on the Cairngorms National Park Authority Climate Adaptation Fund, please contact the Fund by emailing [CommunityGrants@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:CommunityGrants@cairngorms.co.uk)

## Application form

### Section 1

Applicant details, include project title, contact information and project location which can include What3Word or National Grid Reference.

### Section 2

Basic Eligibility

- If you are VAT registered and can reclaim VAT this will come off your grant award.
- The project must be completed in full by March 2027?

### Section 3

Project details

- Which of the themes do you think your project meets, you must choose an outcome from Theme, plus at least one from theme 1 or 2.

Theme 1: there is an increase in climate adaptation solutions and climate change resilience within Cairngorms National Park

- Project supports community empowerment and resilience to the changing climate
- Project that addresses wild-fire risk within the National Park
- Project that addresses flood risk or is considered flood prevention in the national park

Theme 2: Project will deliver nature-based solutions and \*\*green engineering to help adapt to climate change effects, contributing to improved ecosystem, health, resilience and species recovery in the National Park.

- project supporting natural solutions to mitigate against flooding, including engineering works & tree planting to reinforce flood banks; investment in plant; small-scale wetland creation; and floodplain restoration.
- project that supports the use of nature-based solutions to combat carbon emissions for example solar, hydro, water pumps, soil aerators, rain water collection and storage.+
- project that supports water attenuation/ slowing the flow interventions in the upper catchments i.e reconnecting small burns and rivers to their floodplains, ditch blocking, re-meandering of straightened ditches.

- project that supports nature friendly farming activities: purchase of equipment for example solar water pumps, soil aerators, equipment to support tree planting.

Theme 3: Communities and Businesses in the Cairngorms National Park maximise their contribution to sustainable local employment and economic activity.

- project using local contractors and or boosting the local economy
- project that upskills local workforce in the CNP

You are asked how your project will contribute to the themes/outcome that you have selected to help delivery climate adaptation and the delivery timescale, capacity and risks of the project. You will be asked of any match funding including in kind and if planning permission or consents are required.

## **Section 4**

### **Project costs**

Detail the total cost of the project and the grant requested, detailing the capital items and costs excluding recoverable VAT.