

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 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 enrichment; plant machinery, or other 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 wild-fire, flood prevention through planting or other works, rain-water catchment initiatives, conversion from gas or oil to green energy sources, green-energy storage, plant to support undertaking new capital works to support projects addressing climate change impacts, support for nature-friendly farming. 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 March 2026 (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, outcomes, and indicators 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 2026?
4. What's the level of project risk and can the risks be managed?

What are the key dates?

5. Expression of interest now open
6. Applications by invite open 7 April to 15 May 2025

7. Decision panel end of May
8. Project start date by 1 June 2025
9. Project completion (including all spend) by 31 March 2026

The Park Authority has secured the money to support this Fund for the current financial year, to 31 March 2026 only. The expression of interest stage open from 19 February will include time to work on a project idea with staff and will then lead to feedback or invitation to application. Therefore, early expressions of interest are encouraged.

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