

Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund (CSFF) – Assessment and Scoring Process

Applications for the CS Facilitation Fund are received via a dedicated email address: CSFacilitationFund@naturalengland.org.uk

Eligibility checking and scoring will commence 15 November 2017 with offers expected to be made December 2017

First stage checking and eligibility check verified against the following will be carried out by Natural England staff.

An application reference will be assigned for each application.

All eligibility criteria must be met to be considered for funding.

High-Level Criteria	Eligibility Criteria	Assessment		Comment	
Landscape scale activity	The area of land managed can deliver Countryside Stewardship priorities from the statements of priorities listed on the application. (Please check the maps provided as well as the detail provided in the application).	Yes:	Pass		
		No:	Fail		
	The area of land is at least 2,000ha hectares? If area of land is less than 2,000ha please detail the justification in the second stage below.	Yes	Pass		(If below 2,000ha, please provide a justification so the application can progress to the second stage).
		No	Fail		
Cooperation	The area of land is spread over a minimum of four adjoining or largely adjoining separate land holdings managed by different people unless it is demonstrated that cooperation is required across more dispersed holdings to deliver the Countryside Stewardship priorities from the statements of priorities.	Yes:	Pass		
		No:	Fail		
Land Manager Endorsement	The applicant has the backing of the farmers, foresters and/or other land managers of the holdings as set out in question 11 in the application form.	Yes	Pass		
		No	Fail		
Outcome	Pass	Fail	Date Rejection email sent		

Applications that fail to meet the eligibility criteria will be rejected. An email will be sent to the applicant detailing the reason(s) and indicating their right to appeal. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be loaded on a dedicated Huddle CS Facilitation Fund secure domain. Each Natural England Area team will have an identified lead to enable the assessment process and will arrange the local area assessment along with colleagues from the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

The **second stage** of the application process is an area appraisal, commentary and indicative score. This will also allow comments from area teams from Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and Natural England to support a score awarded.

This will be done by nominated officers in each of these three bodies who will also canvas local views. Natural England area team staff will liaise with relevant Environment Agency and Forestry Commission colleagues to agree a view on each application, award a score, and provide essential local information and sense checking of each application's viability and fit with Countryside Stewardship priorities for their area.

This stage of the assessment will need to be carried out and concluded between **15 – 30 November 2017**

Appraisal and Scoring				Panel Assessment / Score
Date of assessment:				
Assessment conducted by:				
Environment Agency				
Forestry Commission				
Natural England				
High Level criteria	Mandatory Criteria	Weighted Score H=3 M=2 L=1	Score (0.00-10) x weighting	Agreed Comment
Environmental Efficiency	The farmers, foresters and/or other land managers that are supported by the applicant are to deliver the Countryside Stewardship priorities identified in the statements of priorities on their land with a focus on biodiversity and/or the water environment.	H		
	If less than 2000 ha does the smaller area address priority habitats and species as identified in statements of priority for that area? Please reference this alignment in the comment section.			

	The applicant provides evidence to demonstrate they are engaging with other initiatives and/or partnerships that aim to deliver CS priorities from the statements of priorities in the local landscape to ensure coherence and a joined-up approach, including Natural England, the Environment Agency and/or Forestry Commission local area teams	H		
	The applicant demonstrates that they have identified the training needs of the group members in a training plan to deliver the land management and/or use of capital items that are directly required to deliver the Countryside Stewardship priorities in the statements of priorities.	M		
Value for money	The applicant sets out their evidence of the skill set and experience covered by question 6 of the application form.	H		
	The farmers, foresters and/or other land managers who are supported by the applicant are to undertake activities that are new to them as a result of their co-operation	M		
	The applicant provides evidence to show why the facilitation is likely to prove successful and that the cooperation amongst the group members is likely to deliver better environmental outcomes than acting independently.	H		
	The applicant has the relevant qualifications and experience needed to provide training or other knowledge transfer activities to fulfil the knowledge and expertise needs and demonstrates how they will comply with the other elements of Annex 3 (of the guidance) or where the applicant is using a sub-contractor to provide some or all of the training or other knowledge transfer activities to fulfil the knowledge and expertise needs, they demonstrate that they will select the sub-contractor in accordance with the requirements of Annex 3 (of the guidance).	M		
Cooperation	The applicant sets out how cooperation amongst the farmers, foresters and other land managers will be fostered.	H		

This publication was withdrawn on 21 April 2021

Optional Criteria		H,M, L	(0.00 – 5) x weighting	Agreed comment
Cooperation and landscape scale activity	The applicant, where feasible, broadens or aims to broaden the group membership to other land managers, voluntary or statutory organisations to further the delivery of the Countryside Stewardship statements of priorities.	L		
Added Value	The applicant, where appropriate identifies for group members other funding sources outside of CS to support new activities to further the delivery of the priorities in the statements of priorities	L		
Area Panel decision		Total Points		

The third and final stage of the assessment process will be for a panel of representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission to quality assure the score, amend if required, rank the applications and fit with available budget before notifying any award of funding to the successful applicants.

Natural England will then award funding to the applicant.

Subject to applications meeting a minimum required standard¹ and availability of budget an award letter will be sent to confirm outcome and to be sent to successful applicants as soon as possible. Funding agreement and award of contract to be concluded January 2018

National Panel Score / Decision	Date Award Letter Sent				
	2017/2018	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Grand Total 2017-2021
Total Funding Awarded per annum					

¹ Applications will have to demonstrate a strong likelihood of success. The applications will therefore have to secure a panel score against each mandatory selection criteria of better than half the maximum available although this threshold will be reviewed in light of the experience of the first window of applications.

This publication was withdrawn on 27 April 2021