



The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development:  
Europe investing in rural areas



# Guide to Countryside Stewardship:

Facilitation fund 2017

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# Contents

1	Overview.....	3
2	What facilitators do .....	4
3	Eligibility and selection criteria.....	5
4	How much could successful applicants receive? .....	7
5	When to apply.....	8
6	What happens next?.....	10
7	How to get help .....	11
8	Agreement conditions.....	12
9	Annexes.....	14

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# 1. Overview

The Countryside Stewardship (CS) facilitation fund supports people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. This landscape scale approach can cover land under existing agri-environment and forestry/woodland agreements, common land and land not currently covered by a scheme. It builds on the principles of partnership working to deliver environmental benefits, as demonstrated by various initiatives, including farm clusters and the farmer-led Nature Improvement Area.

Funding will be awarded to successful applications through a competitive process. Priority will be given to approaches which show partnership and a collective approach across holdings<sup>1</sup> to deliver shared environmental outcomes that go beyond what could be delivered by individual holdings acting in isolation.

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<sup>1</sup> A holding is all the land managed by an applicant in England for agricultural and/or woodland activities. Where that holding or property is made up of geographically dispersed production or management units across England these can be entered separately.

## 2. What facilitators do

Facilitators will work with a group of new or existing land managers (farmers, foresters and/or others) to:

- develop cooperation amongst these land managers;
- agree with the group members the CS priorities in the [statements of priorities](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities>) that they plan to take forward across their holdings;
- where necessary, help the group members interpret the CS statements of priorities and associated guidance so that they submit individual but complementary CS applications for land management and capital items or apply for adjustments to existing Environmental Stewardship or English Woodland Grant agreements where the regulations (Article 14 of Regulation 807/2014) permit; and
- where these applications are made, endorse these to show that they are consistent with the group's agreed objectives.

Facilitators will also:

- support group members by providing them with the relevant skills and expertise that are directly required for the delivery of the CS statements of priorities and, where facilitators are not qualified to provide these, by securing it from others [see Annex 3](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3>);
- maintain links with local partnerships and initiatives, as well as Defra delivery bodies to ensure that the group is undertaking work that complements the local actions of these partnerships and initiatives; and
- provide information to Natural England to show what the group is doing differently as a result of the cooperation and the difference that this is making in the delivery of CS priorities through the funded period.

To qualify for funding, the group will have to undertake activities that are new to them as a result of cooperating. These might include aligning the management activities across different parts of the holdings to deliver at a landscape rather than single-farm scale. This would extend to checking and re-positioning where necessary any existing land management activity that is poorly sited, using any new knowledge or expertise that is provided to operate in a different way or undertaking new or additional activities.

## 3. Eligibility and selection criteria

These are attached at [Annex 1 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex1\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex1). All eligibility criteria must be met to be considered for funding.

### 3.1 Who is eligible to be a facilitator?

Individuals or organisations from the farming, forestry and other land management sectors or service providers with environmental land management experience and suitable facilitation skills can apply to become CS facilitators.

Applicants will need to demonstrate expertise in at least one of the following:

- agriculture;
- forestry;
- water management; or
- ecology

### 3.2 Land area requirement

The members of the group will need to manage<sup>2</sup> an area which is sufficient in size to deliver Countryside Stewardship priorities set out in the statements of priorities for the area and that is at least 2,000 hectares (ha)<sup>3</sup>, unless it fits a smaller, obvious environmental boundary such as clusters of woods, meadows, marshes and/or sub-catchments which offer the opportunity to improve the connection and interaction between them.

Applicants who wish to rely on the smaller environmental boundary will have to set out why that applies in the application.

The area of land must be spread across a minimum of four holdings in the management control of different people<sup>4</sup>. The holdings should normally be adjoining or largely adjoining, but they could be more dispersed if it can be shown that cooperation across more dispersed holdings is required to deliver the CS priorities in the statements of priorities, such as those relating to soil, water quality or flooding.

Land owned or run by a public body including Natural England or Forestry Commission would in general be ineligible for funding through Countryside Stewardship. For full details, see the Countryside Stewardship Manuals para 3.2.5.

These bodies and their holdings can, however, work with a group so long as their holdings aren't

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<sup>2</sup> ie members must be eligible to enter into land management agreements under CS or its predecessors.

<sup>3</sup> The 2000ha threshold represents the size of the holdings not the size of the area(s) of management activity.

<sup>4</sup> A common is treated as one holding for the purpose of this funding and can join with non-commons to create the land area of the group.

required for the group to fulfil the minimum requirements for facilitation funding as outlined above, and won't be eligible for the £500 per member uplift. Where this situation exists and public land adjoins or is connected to a group's area is welcomed, but subject to these restrictions.

### 3.3 How facilitators are selected

An initial check is undertaken by Natural England to ensure the application complies with the eligibility criteria in [Annex 1](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex1) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex1>).

A local assessment by Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission of those applications which pass an initial eligibility check will be provided to the national panel ahead of a national assessment and final decision.

A national panel comprising Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission will appraise and score each application to decide which are successful.

The facilitation fund is a competitive fund and applications will be scored against:

- the selection criteria at [Annex 1](#) (including those summarised below):
  - evidence of the applicant's experience and ability;
  - evidence about the group's proposals to undertake the CS priorities from the statements of priorities and the evidence of coherence with other local partnerships and initiatives that are delivering the CS priorities in the statements of priorities;
  - evidence that the transfer of knowledge and expertise requirements are directly needed for the delivery the CS priorities in the statements of priorities;
  - evidence to show that group members are undertaking activities which are new to them; and
  - proposals to secure effective cooperation amongst the group and what the applicant plans to do to help the group members deliver the priorities from the statements of priorities at the landscape scale.
- and a value-for-money assessment that will balance costs against deliverables, effectiveness and efficiency.

The applications with the highest scores will be offered agreements subject to available budgets.

See details of the National Panel's [general scoring process](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413777/csff-scoring-process.pdf) ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/413777/csff-scoring-process.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413777/csff-scoring-process.pdf)).

## 4. How much could successful applicants receive?

The maximum funding for a facilitator is dependent on the number of holdings involved in the group and the work that the facilitator does. With 4 holdings a facilitator could receive up to £12,000 per annum, which comprises £500 per holding and up to £10,000 for costs of delivering the cooperation. With 10 holdings, the amount could rise to £15,000 up to a maximum of £50,000 per annum for a group of 80 holdings. All applications will be assessed for value for money through a competitive process.

To receive payments, claimants must comply with all relevant rules (see below for more details) and provide evidence that expenditure has been incurred. Claims can be made on a quarterly basis in arrears or on a less frequent basis by agreement with Natural England.

### 4.1 What are facilitators paid for?

- the running costs of facilitating the cooperation including their salary costs;
- the direct costs of the project set out in a detailed plan, which should include the transfer of knowledge and expertise;
- pro-rata salary of the facilitator (whether employed or self-employed at an agreed rate); and
- contributions to national insurance or pensions.

### 4.2 Eligible costs include:

- costs associated with administration, travel and subsistence, meetings, VAT where the facilitator is NOT VAT registered, costs associated with the provision of training on activities that are directly required for the delivery of the CS priorities in the statements of priorities, such as training materials, training venues and buying in the trainers in accordance with Annex 3.

### 4.3 Ineligible costs include:

- costs of submitting this application or other activities prior to its submission, VAT where the facilitator is VAT registered;
- provision of one-to-one advice to a group member, completion of Countryside Stewardship applications on behalf of group members, provision of monitoring information to Natural England.

VAT is complex and applicants should not assume that VAT is recoverable even if the business or organisation is registered. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from their accountant, a VAT specialist or HM Revenue and Customs, before submitting an application.

### 4.4 Agreement length

3 years.

# 5. When to apply

You must submit your application by 14 November 2017.

## 5.1 Before applying

Applicants should:

- 1 Identify the CS priorities from the CS [statements of priorities](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-statements-of-priorities>) related to the area that the group members could address;
- 2 Form the group from prospective CS applicants (Mid and/or Higher tier) and/or existing Environmental Stewardship agri-environment and English Woodland Grant agreement holders;
- 3 Work with the group members to agree the CS priorities from the statements of priorities that will be delivered by them, as well as any knowledge or skills that need to be developed to achieve this;
- 4 Define the area that the group members cover – this is the size of the holdings, not the area(s) of management activity;
- 5 Work with the group members to determine if they wish possible non-CS funding sources to be identified for them to explore which can support the delivery of the CS priorities in the statements of priorities and/or if they wish for the group to be broadened to others, such as neighbouring farmers or non-governmental organisations;
- 6 Draw up a group agreement, if one is not already in place, to cover the way the group will operate, who will have what roles, how it will handle disputes within the group. This will need to be signed by all members. We are not able to provide a template for this agreement;
- 7 Work with the group members to determine actions to develop cooperation within the group to deliver the CS priorities in the statements of priorities at a landscape scale. For the transfer of knowledge and expertise, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) might be undertaken within the group to determine both what should be done and how it will be delivered;
- 8 Work out the total level of funding being sought. An outline budget will need to be prepared which will be finalised if a facilitation agreement is offered;
- Engage with local initiatives and partnerships that could be delivering the CS priorities in the statements of priorities, such as Local Nature Partnerships, Nature Improvement Areas, Catchment Partnerships, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Natural England, the Environment Agency and/or Forestry Commission local area teams to ensure that the CS priorities in the statements of priorities that are to be delivered by the group will complement other activities in the area that are delivering the CS priorities.

## 5.2 Submit application

Applicants should submit completed application forms and any supplementary information to Natural England by email to [CSFacilitationFund@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:CSFacilitationFund@naturalengland.org.uk).

Please sign and retain original with wet signature and submit copy.

All applications will be assessed based on the application form and supplementary information. There'll be no opportunity to seek clarification or provide additional material once an application has been submitted.

An automated response will be issued to confirm receipt.

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# 6. What happens next?

## 6.1 If the application is successful

Natural England will draw up and agree with the applicant a detailed plan (which will become the facilitation agreement).

The agreement holder (the facilitator) will need to register on [Rural Payments](https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) (<https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments>) to receive payments. Please do so before submitting your application.

The facilitator can now start supporting the group to deliver the Countryside Stewardship outcomes as agreed in the facilitation agreement. For example, this can be done by:

- helping those group members without agreements, or existing agreements as they are due to expire, to interpret the CS statements of priorities so they submit individual but complementary CS applications. This will include a role to endorse the content of the application once submitted to [Rural Payments](https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) (<https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments>);
- helping those group members apply for adjustments to existing Environmental Stewardship or English Woodland Grant agreements where the regulations (Article 14 of Regulation 807/2014) permit and where this is needed to ensure shared and complementary environmental outcomes;
- Providing, or making available, relevant knowledge and expertise on a one-to-many basis to develop the group members' skills that are directly required for the delivery of the CS priorities in the statements of priorities;

Broadening the group to other land managers, relevant voluntary and/or statutory organisations if the group wants this to happen;

- Where appropriate, signposting members of the group to additional funding sources if the group wishes, whilst ensuring that no land or activity in the group receives double funding.

The facilitator will also need to provide quarterly reports to Natural England on implementing the agreed detailed plan.

## 6.2 How to appeal

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised by e-mail why their application was rejected. Applicants have the right to appeal and further details will be set out in the e-mail notification.

## 6.3 The claim process

Claims will be submitted to and processed by Natural England, and grant payments will be made by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). Facilitators should register on [Rural Payments](https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) (<https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments>). A reference number will be allocated by the RPA that must be entered on the claim form.

The claim must be supported by proof of expenditure and evidence of payment (e.g. original receipted invoices and bank statement) in support of items claimed. Timesheets detailing the facilitator's time must also be provided, signed by line manager and/or group member.

## 7. How to get help

Contact Natural England if you need further advice by emailing [CSFacilitationFund@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:CSFacilitationFund@naturalengland.org.uk) or calling Natural England Enquiries on 0208 026 1089.

This publication was withdrawn on 21 April 2021

## 8. Agreement conditions

### 8.1 What evidence will be needed to show compliance with the facilitation agreement?

This is set out in [Annex 2 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex2\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex2).

### 8.2 Changes to the agreement

Changes to facilitation agreements cannot be made unilaterally, but if circumstances change they must be conveyed to us immediately as this could have a bearing on funding and the continuation of the agreement.

If it is found that the eligibility criteria are no longer being met, for example, because the number of members in the group falls below four or the land area falls below 2,000ha, the agreement may cease to exist and the funding may be recovered in accordance with regulations <sup>5</sup>.

### 8.3 Breaching the agreement

If the agreement is found to be breached, it may result in the grant being reduced, withdrawn or reclaimed with the agreement being terminated in accordance with the regulations <sup>6</sup>, although each case will be assessed on its individual facts. The penalties may have a bearing on payments that the facilitator receives through other Common Agricultural Policy schemes depending on the individual facts. Examples of breaches include providing false or misleading information and not complying with terms and conditions of the agreement. Further examples can be found in [Regulation 14 of the Common Agricultural Policy \(Control and Enforcement, Cross-Compliance, Scrutiny of Transactions and Appeals\) Regulations 2014 \(http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3263/contents/made\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3263/contents/made).

### 8.4 What the facilitator should do if they are overpaid

Any overpayment must be repaid as soon as the facilitator becomes aware of it. The facilitator must contact Natural England in the first instance on how to proceed.

### 8.5 How the data provided by the applicant will be used

The applicant's information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Natural England, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peaseholme Green, York, YO1 7PX is the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

Natural England is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and other obligations under law which require us to act transparently and which grant certain rights of access to the public to information held by us. This means that, whilst we will respect the sensitivity of the information provided, there may be legal requirements which oblige us to disclose this information.

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<sup>5</sup> Common Agricultural Policy (Control and Enforcement, Cross Compliance, Scrutiny of Transactions and Appeals) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3263) and EU Regulation 1306/2013.

<sup>6</sup> Common Agricultural Policy (Control and Enforcement, Cross Compliance, Scrutiny of Transactions and Appeals) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3263) and EU Regulations 1306/2013; 640/2014; and 809/2014.

Natural England will use the information provided to administer, process and assess applications for funding under the Rural Development Programme for England and to administer any funding where an application is successful. We may publish details about this application (this may include all or some of the project and applicant details).

Information may be shared with other persons or organisations helping us with the assessment and monitoring of applications. Information provided may also be shared with other government departments, agencies and third parties appointed in connection with the administration of the Rural Development Programme for England. Such organisations may use this information to contact applicants for occasional customer research aimed at improving the delivery of this programme.

The information may also be shared with other government departments and agencies for the purpose of fraud prevention. The application and evaluation of grant funding is also subject to audit and review by both internal auditors who may need to access the information submitted in the application.

If personal information relating to third parties (eg delivery partners) is supplied as part of the application, the applicant must ensure that those third parties are informed about how this information is used and that this information will be passed to and processed by us as set out in this policy.

Natural England hold the majority of the information for a minimum of three years after the programme closure, unless there are legitimate reasons to hold this for longer, for instance in defending any legal proceedings brought by any person or body in relation to the application or any funding we have provided, or as required by law or any relevant code of practice. Natural England will not hold information for longer than is necessary.

## 8.6 Publicity requirements

The contribution of the EU funding must also be mentioned on the business website of the facilitator and hyperlink to the [EU Commission's Rural Development \(http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index\\_en.htm\)](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm) page. Any press releases or marketing material such as leaflets, brochures associated with the project must acknowledge the EU as the funder. Publications must contain a clear reference to the EU's participation and contain the [EU logo \(http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/information/logos/index\\_en.cfm\)](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/logos/index_en.cfm) and this text:

"The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas. This project has received European Union funding under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme's Facilitation Fund."

The scheme is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

## 8.7 How to complain

To make a complaint, see Natural England's [complaints procedure \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/complaints-procedure\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/complaints-procedure)

## 8.8 Contract termination

Either party may, by giving six months' notice, terminate this contract. Termination may result in grant payments being suspended, withheld or reclaimed.

# 9. Annexes

## 9.1 Annex 1: Eligibility and selection criteria

### Eligibility criteria:

All eligibility criteria must be met and evidenced to be considered for funding:

- The area of land that will be managed can deliver the CS priorities from the statements of priorities and is at least 2,000 hectares\* unless the proposal fits a smaller obvious environmental boundary.
- 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 CS priorities from the statements of priorities.
- The applicant has the backing of the farmers, foresters and/or other land managers of the holdings as set out in the answer to question 11 on the application form.

\*Note: The 2,000 ha threshold represents the size of the holdings not the size of the area(s) of management activity.

### Mandatory selection criteria

- The applicant sets out their evidence of the skill set and experience covered in question 6 of the application form
- The applicant also 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 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3) 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 \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund#annex3).
- 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
- The farmers, foresters and/or other land managers that are supported by the applicant are to deliver the CS priorities identified in the statements of priorities on their land with a focus on biodiversity and/or the water environment.
- The applicant sets out how cooperation amongst the farmers, foresters and other land managers will be fostered.
- The applicant provides evidence to show why the facilitation is likely to prove successful and that the cooperation amongst the group members likely to deliver better environmental

outcomes than acting independently.

- 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.
- 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 CS priorities in the statements of priorities.

Areas that may strengthen your application:

- 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 CS priorities.
- 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.

## 9.2 Annex 2: Evidence requirements for control and verification purposes

The areas that will be subject to control and verification are below. Work may also be subject to inspection as the RPA are required to inspect at least 5% of expenditure annually. Facilitators will need to provide evidence to Natural England and the RPA of their compliance in the following areas:

- that eligibility criteria continue to be met;
- the work on fostering cooperation within the group;
- the work on securing or providing for the transfer of knowledge and expertise;
- what the group is doing differently as a result of facilitation and the difference this is making on the ground to the CS priorities in the statements of priorities;
- the work to support members of the group to apply for individual but complementary CS agreements;
- any work that is being done to broaden the group or secure funding from other sources; and
- compliance with the facilitation agreement.

If it is found that the eligibility criteria are no longer being met, the agreement may cease to exist and the funding may be recovered in accordance with the regulations <sup>7</sup>.

The facilitator will need to provide evidence of the sessions that they have had with the group including:

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<sup>7</sup> Common Agricultural Policy (Control and Enforcement, Cross Compliance, Scrutiny of Transactions and Appeals) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3263) and EU Regulations 1306/2013; 640/2014; and 809/2014.

- the duration;
- the dates;
- the issues covered;
- the time spent on preparation;
- details of the facilitator's costs; and
- signed and dated statements from at least two members of the group that each session took place and details of their value to them on fostering cooperation.

On knowledge and expertise provision, where the facilitator provides the training or other knowledge transfer activities, the facilitator will need to provide evidence that the training/other activities have been provided, including;

- the length of each session;
- the date;
- the names of the group members who received the training/other knowledge transfer activity;
- the subjects covered; and
- feedback from at least two members of the group at the session on the value of it to them.

Where the facilitator has secured training from a sub-contractor, they will also need to provide receipts for the costs of the training, including;

- the sub-contractor's details;
- evidence that the sub-contractor was selected in an open and fair way; and
- that they provided the best value for money.

The facilitator will need to provide a short annual report which draws on the quarterly reports identifying what is being done differently and the difference this is having on the ground. At least two members of the group will need to sign off the report to confirm its contents.

The facilitator will need to provide evidence of the amount of time they have spent helping members of the group to interpret the CS guidance so that individual but complementary CS applications can be submitted by members of the group. Each member of the group receiving this support will have to sign and date to confirm that the facilitator has provided this guidance, for the duration specified and that the facilitator did not prepare the applications on their behalf.

If the facilitator is broadening the group's membership or signposting members to other funding sources, they will need to provide evidence of the time that has been spent doing this; evidence of the approaches to new

members or funding sources; and in the case of funding, they will need to provide evidence to confirm that this funding can be used to help deliver the countryside priorities that the group is taking forward and that it does not “double-fund” initiatives receiving funding under any Rural Development Programme for England scheme.

The facilitator will be expected to provide quarterly reports on their compliance with the facilitation agreement and the milestones contained within it. If there are reasons why it cannot be complied with, the facilitator should notify Natural England as soon as possible and not wait for a quarterly report. If the facilitation agreement is not being met, payments may be withheld in accordance with the regulations, but each case will be assessed on its individual merits.

Where two members of the group are to provide confirmation of the facilitator’s activities, the same members should not be used every time.

It is important that the facilitator keeps all necessary records relevant to the grant for at least seven years after the agreement has ended, as they may be required for inspections either before or after payment.

### 9.3 Annex 3: Requirements for knowledge and expertise provision

Where the facilitator is providing the necessary training and other knowledge transfer activities, they must:

- provide evidence of their qualifications and accreditations to show that they have the relevant knowledge and expertise of the subjects to be covered;
- provide evidence that they have expertise of delivering training;
- provide evidence to show how their qualifications and accreditations will be maintained and new ones acquired as necessary; and
- provide information with examples on how they monitor their continuous development and how they keep records of this.

Note: Where the facilitator (agreement holder) is a partnership or organisation, the requirements apply to all trainers to be used.

Where the facilitator is procuring the necessary training and other knowledge transfer activities from a sub-contractor, they must:

- confirm that they will invite applications for the sub-contract in an open and transparent way and will select the best value for money tender from a minimum of at least three providers unless they can provide evidence that fewer than three providers applied for the sub-contract; and
- confirm that they will select a provider who has the relevant expertise to deliver it demonstrated through qualifications, accreditations or other relevant expertise.

Any courses of instruction or training which form part of normal education programmes or systems at secondary or higher levels are not eligible for support.



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