

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder

Prospectus

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A scheme to support innovation by funding projects that demonstrably improve resilience in communities at significant risk of flooding in England.

Aim

Defra is seeking to enable and stimulate communities¹ at significant or greater risk of flooding to work with key partners, including local authorities, to develop innovative local solutions that:

- Enhance flood risk management and preparedness in ways which quantifiably improve the community's overall resilience;
- Demonstrably improve the community's financial resilience in relation to flooding;
- Deliver sustained improvements which have the potential to be applied in other areas.

Rationale

Between 2009 and 2011 Defra funded a scheme to install property-level flood protection measures in homes vulnerable to damage from flooding. Over 1,000 households were fitted with measures as a result. In the course of reviewing that scheme we became aware of other activities that communities benefitting from the grant had also implemented to further increase their resilience to flooding. For example, some had set up "gully watch" schemes; others had put in place local monitoring equipment on non main-river streams; while others were disseminating information or carrying out exercises to increase local levels of awareness and flood preparedness. We believe that there may be many other innovative local initiatives that could be developed to complement the protection offered by flood defences at a property or community level, and to help people manage their level of risk and improve their financial resilience.

A recent report commissioned by the Cabinet Office² defines resilience as "the capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identify". This project is particularly interested in encouraging "resilience as transformation – owning a need to change"³ by local individuals and communities in managing flood risk.

¹ Further information on community resilience is set out in a Cabinet Office report: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE RESEARCH: Final Report on Theoretical Research and Analysis of Case Studies
http://www.cep.co.uk/files/Download/CEP%20DSTL%20Community%20Resilience_FINAL%20REPORT.pdf

² *ibid*

³ *ibid* - see pages 30 to 34

Eligibility

One of the key requirements for any initiatives funded through this scheme is that applicants submit proposals that demonstrate change through improved community and household resilience. This might mean increased ability of vulnerable households to cope with the financial impacts of flooding, improved uptake and appropriate use of measures such as property level protection and telemetry, or increased levels of engagement by local communities through community resilience forums.

Assessing levels of flood risk is a specialised process and we welcome applications that, perhaps by working with actuarial specialists, demonstrate that the actions put in place by the Accountable Body and its partners have the potential to reduce levels of flood risk in quantifiable ways. Applicants will need to provide a clear rationale for the interventions they are proposing, particularly highlighting any previous projects, research or experimental findings that support the approach they are taking.

To be eligible for pathfinder funding, projects must be focused on communities at significant⁴ or greater risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources, or where surface or groundwater flooding is a major problem⁵.

We are looking to bidders to use information about local demographics, and local knowledge of the community context, to identify social groups or individuals that may be more vulnerable⁶ and that would benefit the most from engagement and support. Bids for Pathfinder funding should include an assessment of this.

Pathfinder projects should be designed to complement other flood risk management activity already taking place, or planned for the future, such as ongoing maintenance or capital investment, to further alleviate the risk of flooding. Capital schemes are likely to be funded in part or full under Defra's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding policy. In order to prevent value for taxpayers' money being diminished, funds under the Pathfinder cannot be used to contribute towards the costs of Partnership Funding projects. Pathfinder funding also cannot be used to compensate for flood damages or subsidise insurance premiums. Given that each project will be different, and in order to ensure that lessons are learned which can be applied more widely, we invite applicants to develop monitoring criteria for their projects as part of the bidding process.

Any Interventions proposed for the Pathfinder should be aligned with the objectives and priorities within Local Flood Risk Management Plans, as required under the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act.

⁴ **Significant:** the chance of flooding in any year is greater than 1.3% (1 in 75); **Moderate:** the chance of flooding in any year is 1.3% (1 in 75) or less, but greater than 0.5% (1 in 200); **Low:** the chance of flooding in any year is 0.5% (1 in 200) or less

⁵ <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31652.asp>

⁶ Factors that indicate increased vulnerability may include elderly (over 75), lone parents, financially deprived, or long term sick (<http://rsta.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/360/1796/1511.full.pdf>)

Accountable Body

A first tier, second tier, or unitary local authority in England must act as the Accountable Body for all applications.

Where the applicant is a second tier authority, it must also have secured the active involvement of the Lead Local Flood Authority. This is because the Lead Local Flood Authority has a strategic role in managing local flood risk and its involvement will help to ensure that the interventions fit into the local framework and are coordinated locally with other relevant agencies and bodies.

Partnership

The Accountable Body may act on its own behalf or on behalf of a consortium of other local interests including, for example, other local authorities, community groups, business groups, insurers, voluntary organisations or housing associations.

Community Action

Factors to consider when deciding how best to engage with local communities include financial deprivation, age, community cohesion and existence of social networks. Community interventions should apply good practice. This means, for example, understanding the local community, setting clear objectives for engagement with the community, using appropriate methods and materials to engage, and good evaluation to help others who may want to adopt the approach you are implementing through your project.

Pathfinder projects should be led and/or managed by the organisation or organisations best placed to work with the people at risk of flooding. For example, a local group with roots in the community could be responsible for implementing the interventions by working directly with the people at risk of flooding, rather than the Accountable Body. It would be up to the Accountable Body to put in place suitable formal agreements with any partners it chooses to work with at a local level.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, including small local businesses such as corner shops, service industries and small manufacturers, can be key components of local communities and their involvement can often act as an anchor and catalyst, giving credibility and a wider reach in the community. Whilst the participation of local businesses in projects is welcome, they should not participate on the basis of seeking direct commercial benefit from the activities of the project.

Project Timing and Funding

All funding provided should be committed by the end of March 2015. Projects can therefore span multiple years. Shorter projects designed to deliver clear and immediate, as well as long-term, benefits are also invited. Subject to the bids we receive, we anticipate that up to a maximum of 20 projects will be funded up to a total scheme budget of around £5m.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome in March 2013. The first tranche of funding will be transferred to successful applicants at this time to allow them to make the internal arrangements for delivery of their interventions. Formal project delivery should start by the end of May 2013. Applicants should set out the project milestones and submit a breakdown of how and when they anticipate spending funds over the life of the project.

It is possible to include an element of capital costs for measures that further the aims of the project. These will need to be justified and placed in context. Any capital costs necessary for delivery of the project should be clearly identified in the application.

Pathfinder funding will be provided on the basis of meeting the full costs of projects, but we welcome applications where complementary funding from other sources is used to magnify the benefits achievable.

We would expect all proposals to include some kind of legacy element. This funding should be seen as a way of kick-starting a longer term intervention that improves local flood resilience and that can continue after Defra has ceased funding the Pathfinder project phase.

Defra will cease funding the project interventions by March 2015 or earlier, depending on the nature of the work and timescales for delivery.

Types of intervention

Proposals submitted under this scheme are likely to combine a number of different elements which, taken together, could achieve a significant, quantifiable reduction in flood risk, or otherwise have the potential to improve financial resilience. They may, for example, draw together and integrate well established methods in a new and innovative way; adapt interventions and approaches that have been successful elsewhere but have not been tried before in the context of flood risk management; or add value to existing flood protection measures and activity.

Innovation and original thinking will be particularly welcome in submitted proposals. The below are not exhaustive lists and are only intended as a general indication of the type of initiatives that might be included in proposals submitted under this scheme.

Some examples of approaches that might be eligible include:

- Combining detailed mapping of local flood risk with installation of measures to quantifiably reduce the level of risk to households at a community level.
- Building a community's capacity to manage flood defence locally by putting in place local response arrangements that help to address risks identified in the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, e.g. through taking responsibility for the deployment of demountable defences.
- Developing local initiatives to help build financial resilience of those at risk, particularly lower income or socially vulnerable people where present rates of insurance uptake are low. This could perhaps involve working with local landlords, housing associations, social providers, cooperatives or others, to develop approaches, such as insurance with rent schemes that provide cover on affordable terms.
- Improved local flood risk mapping and modelling where existing data sets do not accurately capture (and may overstate) the local level of risk. This could, for example, include property-level surveys to quantify existing levels of risk, completed on a street by street basis to reduce unit costs.

Examples of bid approaches that would not be eligible include:

- Funding for physical defences or for the continuation of existing demonstration or pilot activities, where Pathfinder funding is not supporting additional innovation.
- Projects under which the funding would e.g. be used to underwrite and maintain existing insurance schemes which already include flood cover; or to subsidise direct costs of insurance premiums, as these types of expenditure would make the schemes unsustainable beyond the period of the grant.
- Grants that install property level protection measures in the absence of a wider package of innovative community measures.
- Use of the funding as collateral for projects subject to bids for funds from other Defra sources – such as Partnership funding; or for funding from other Government Departments or agencies.
- Compensation for households and other property owners impacted by flooding.

We recognise that applicants may wish to include property level protection measures as part of a wider project designed to reduce risk at community level. We are therefore willing to consider bids which include an element of capital funding. We will, however, be seeking applications that demonstrate additional forms of innovation beyond supplying equipment. Please note that funding for Property Level Protection measures is available under the

normal Partnership Funding rules⁷. As stated earlier, Pathfinder funding cannot be used to supplement Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid available from the Environment Agency under the normal Partnership Funding rules.

Demonstrable/measureable

The key outcome measure is that successful projects demonstrate that their interventions have the potential to impact on the community's resilience to flooding, including its financial resilience, in a clearly quantifiable way. This may mean ensuring that the project team includes people with the relevant skills to measure risk in an actuarial way that other experts, including insurance specialists, should ideally recognise.

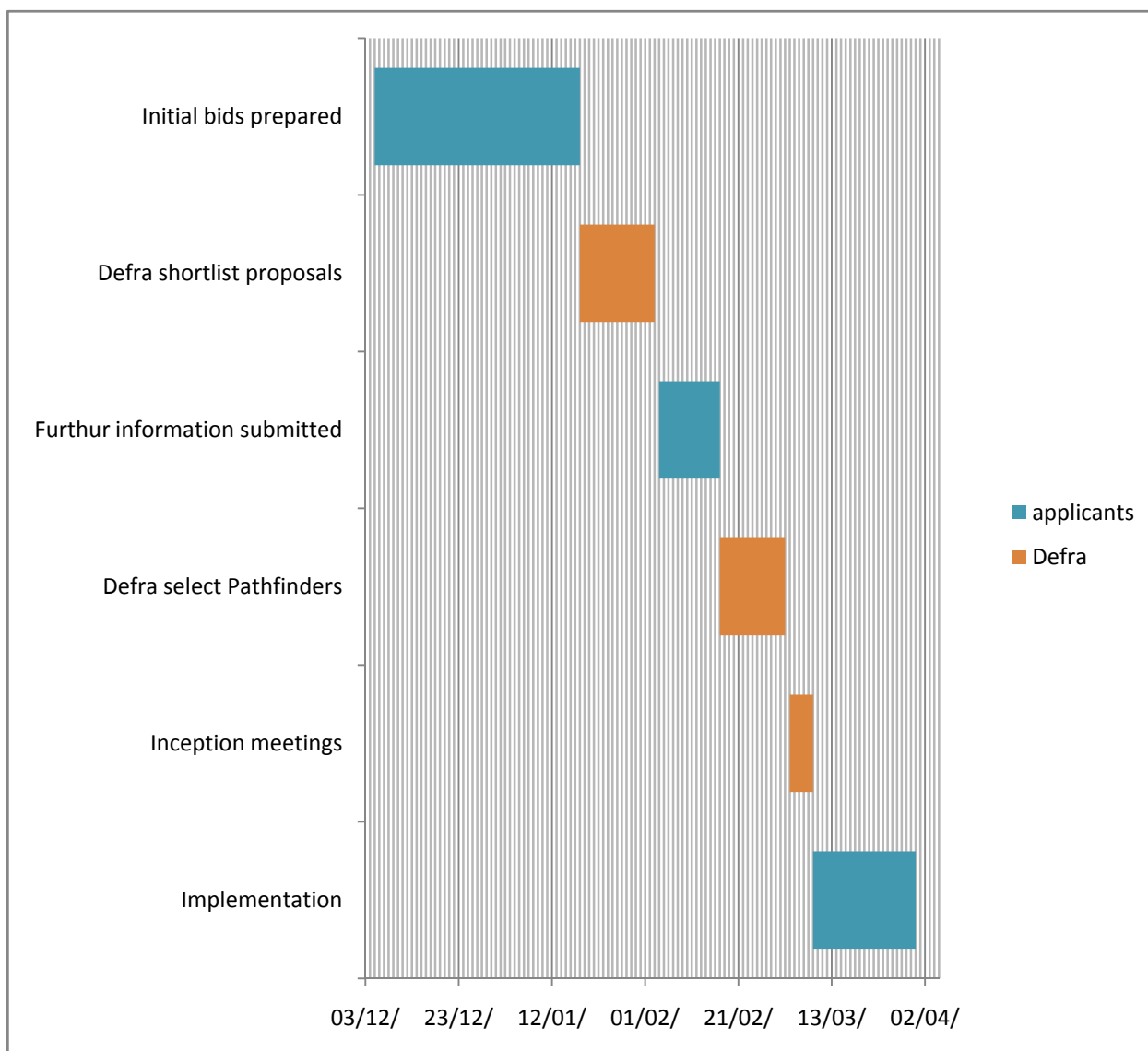
⁷ Property Level measures of the type previously funded through the Property Level Grant scheme that Defra and the Environment Agency operated between 2009 and 2011, are now fundable through the Partnership Funding approach that also funds (engineered) community scale schemes.

Application process

We will sift and prioritise initial applications based on the extent to which they address the objectives set out in this prospectus. Applications designed to improve resilience in communities with high levels of social deprivation will be particularly welcome. The applicants whose proposals best meet the objectives will then be invited to submit full applications which will be considered further by an assessment panel.

Projects should be able to quantify how the level of flood or financial risk has been reduced.

The timetable is shown below.



If you are potentially interested in bidding under this scheme, you should register your local authority on the Defra e-tendering portal; Bravo, <https://defra.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

Project Outputs

In terms of this scheme, an output is a product from activities or interventions (the work packages) that are deployed in trying to reduce flood or financial risk for a community. At a practical level these will depend on the nature of the proposals supported. An output might for example, include: establishing a local flood group, specific awareness raising initiatives or arranging community meetings.

Project Outcomes

In terms of this scheme, an outcome is what happens when the outputs developed through a project are applied to the people whose flood resilience the project is seeking to improve. Outcomes will depend on the nature of the interventions and their outputs. For example, one work stream in the project might be the production of awareness raising and engagement material. The output from this activity would be a range of materials that could be used by teams seeking to engage local people in a flood resilience initiative. The outcome would therefore be the number of people who then participate in the initiative.

Evaluation of project plans

From the outset, an aim of each project should be to ensure that the approaches and methodology being developed have the potential to be readily understood and implemented by other communities.

Projects should clearly demonstrate how the intervention has changed the pre-existing situation in a way that is sustainable beyond the term of the project, by reference to relevant national/local data.

We will be seeking projects where applicants have developed a clear approach to evaluation. Ongoing evaluation helps ensure that the methodology developed by the project is transferable. We consider the ability to produce such a plan to be a key part of the skill set needed within each project team.

Evaluation of the Pathfinder Scheme

It is important that the funded projects provide good case studies and practical guides that would help others apply the learning from the project.

To ensure consistency and rigour across all the interventions funded through the scheme, a fund level evaluator will be appointed by Defra at the outset. The evaluator will report to

Defra, and will provide a framework to draw together the individual evaluation plans developed by each project funded through the scheme. Successful projects will be expected to cooperate with the evaluator and provide information to help them carry out their role.

The purpose of the final evaluation will be to examine how well the interventions have met the targets that were agreed at the outset, as well as to evaluate the process, draw out learning against good practice and share it. The evaluation will help Defra, local authorities and others understand what works best when engaging communities on flood resilience.

Where a funded project has delivered valuable learning which is likely to have significant wider application, funding may be made available to help disseminate the findings further, to encourage its take-up by others.

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This document/publication is also available on our website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/>

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