

Guidance to Applicants

In responding to the questions in the application form you should address the following points.

Part 1 - Application Detail

Note that the lead applicant must be an England based business, sole trader, organisation, or research organisation. Should the lead applicant not be England based the application will be rejected.

Description of Project

The public description of the project should be a brief non-confidential description of the project that the Forestry Commission may use in online or printed publications; please describe the project objectives and key deliverables and the expected project benefits.

Eligibility Criteria

This section seeks information to address the Eligibility Criteria: all projects seeking funding will be assessed against these eligibility criteria before progressing to evaluation against the Assessment Criteria.

Answer all questions. A negative or zero response to any question will result in the application being rejected.

Part 2 - Assessment Questions

All questions have a set word limit and any information exceeding this will not be evaluated.

Question 1: Approach and innovation (20%)

Explain:

- how you propose to respond to the identified need
- how it will improve on the nearest current options
- where the focus of the innovation will be in the project (application or development of existing technologies/approaches used elsewhere in the world, application or development of existing technologies/approaches used in other sectors or a totally new approach)
- how this project fits with current technologies/approaches
- and describe the nature of the outputs you expect from the project for example, report, demonstrator, know-how, new process, product or service design. Note these will be detailed in any agreement

Question 2: Team resources and track record (10%)

- describe the roles, skills and relevant experience of all members of the project team in relation to the approach you will be taking
- describe the resources, equipment and facilities required for the project and how you will access them
- provide details of any vital external parties, including sub-contractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project
- if collaborative, describe the current relationships between the project partners and if/how these will change as a result of the project
- highlight any gaps in the team that will need to be filled

Question 3: Impact of the project (10%)

Specify the impacts this project is expected to have

- will it purely be of benefit to the project team and its direct customers?
- or will it have wider applicability?

For highly innovative projects, explain:

- what the route to market could or might be
- how the project will seek to explore the market potential

Question 4: Project management (10%)

Outline:

- the main work packages of the project, lead partner assigned to each, and the total cost of each one
- and describe your approach to project management, identifying any major tools and mechanisms that will be used to ensure a successful project outcome

Highlight:

- your approach to managing the most innovative aspects of the project
- the management reporting lines
- your project plan in sufficient detail to identify any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones

Question 5: Risks (10%)

- identify the main risks and uncertainties of the project, including the technical, commercial, managerial and environmental risks. Highlight the most significant ones, providing a risk register if appropriate
- explain how each of these risks will be mitigated
- list any project inputs on the critical route to completion such as resources, expertise or data sets and how these will be met

Question 6: Additionally (10%)

- tell us if this project could go ahead in any form without public funding and if so, the difference the public funding would make; such as faster to market, more partners, reduced risk
- describe the likely impact of the project on the business of the partners involved
- tell us why you are not able to wholly fund the project from your own resources or other forms of private-sector funding (what would happen if the application is unsuccessful)
- explain how this project would change the nature of research and development activity the partners would undertake and related spend

Question 7: Costs and value for money (15%)

Note that this grant is intended to be a contribution to the total costs of the project:

- justify the total project cost and the grant being requested in terms of the project goals
- explain how the partners will finance their contributions to the project
- explain how this project represents value for money for you and the taxpayer
- justify the balance of costs and grant across the project partners
- justify any sub-contractor costs and why they are critical to the project

Part 3 - Finances

You must complete the accompanying spreadsheet and submit with your application.

The eligible costs shall include:

- personnel costs related to researchers, and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project
- contribution sought towards costs of equipment required to complete the project
- costs of contractual research, knowledge and patents bought or licensed from outside sources at arm's-length conditions
- costs of consultancy and equivalent services used exclusively for the project
- operating expenses, including costs of materials, supplies and similar products, incurred directly as a result of the project

Scoring

Scoring will be based purely on the detail included within the application form. The following evaluation system will be applied to each of questions:

- 0 – No response or an inadequate response
- 1 – Major Reservations. A simple response to question is provided with no indications that any thought has been given
- 2 – Some Reservations. Some thought given to question but significant lack of detail or some of the elements not addressed
- 3 – Fully Compliant. All detail required covering all elements of in the question
- 4 – Exceeds Requirements. A well thought through project with all elements of question fully addressed and detail provided that exceeds some or all of the requirements

In addition for the overall project the level of innovation will be assessed.

In the event of a tie and there being insufficient funds to support all projects, responses to 'Approach and Innovation' will be used to break the tie, the highest score winning.

Degree of innovation (15%)

- 0 – Not innovative
- 1 – Slight change to existing practices in England
- 2 – Use of practices used elsewhere in the world but new to England
- 3 – Use of practices from alternative fields but new to forestry in England
- 4 – Completely new approach

An application that scores 0 in response to any question will be rejected.

Part 4 - Funded Activities and Outputs/Outcomes

Detail the specific activities that will be funded and the expected outputs and outcomes of the project. These specifics will form part of any grant agreement.

Required outputs.

For all projects the mid-point payment claim shall be accompanied by a report detailing progress to date, and the final claim shall include a full report of the project (template provided), detailing achievement against stated outcome and outputs, lessons learnt and any need for further development.

Terms and Conditions.

The terms and conditions that will apply to this grant are available on the Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds application form page on GOV.UK.

Grant Payment.

Payments will be made by BACS transfer to the Banks Account provided in two instalments each of 50%, following receipt of claim forms. The first claim shall be made on Friday 29 October 2021 (or at the half-way point of projects that will not take the full time available), and the second on completion of the project (no later than 27 March 2022). Evidence of eligible expenditure must be provided with claims.