

Guidance to applicants

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Introduction

What is the fund?

The Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) will fund Local Authority-led tree planting and assisted natural colonisation of trees outside woods, establishing more trees in settings such as parklands, riparian zones, copses and shelterbelts, as well as green lanes and small linear woodlands alongside roads and footpaths. Planting and protecting new trees that are intended to grow into mature standards within hedgerows is also permitted, though the creation of new hedgerows is not. The fund targets the restoration of treescapes that have been neglected or suffered damage in the past, including disused and vacant community spaces and those affected by tree diseases such as ash dieback (with ash being the most common species of tree found in non-woodland locations in many areas).

The fund aims to improve landscape connectivity outside woodland, increase natural colonisation and provide benefits to ecosystems and society, such as carbon absorption. Trees outside woodlands (TOWs) are particularly valuable trees to society as they often support biodiversity by connecting fragmented habitats, provide cultural and social benefits and reduce flood risk. They also have strong local amenity benefits, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas.

The fund is part of the Government's Nature for Climate Fund and will directly contribute to achieving our ambitious tree planting targets to restore habitats in England.

Funding will be awarded as capital only grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act (2003) as amended under Section 78 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (amended 2021).

In this round, applications are invited for up to two years of planting activities, followed by three years of maintenance. In financial year (FY) 2022/23 LATF funding will provide £5.4 million for tree planting and natural colonisation within this financial year. The LATF is inviting **bids from £50,000 to £300,000, through competitive bidding**. Any bids for two years of planting activities must ensure that **at least 50% of the total bid value falls into FY 2022/23**. This guide provides details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply.

Who is running the fund?

The Forestry Commission (FC) will be assessing applications and administering the LATF. If successful in your bid, you will be required to submit annual reports to the FC for three years after planting and may be subject to on-site checks.

Who can apply?

Top tier Local Authorities

Applications are invited from strategic level, top tier Local Authorities (hereafter referred to as 'LAs') in England. These are: the county councils, London boroughs, metropolitan boroughs, unitary authorities, and sui generis authorities (City of London Corporation and Isles of Scilly). This will allow coordination of other LAs, organisations, and private land managers. London Boroughs are allowed to apply both individually and as a group if "Greater London Authority" is the lead LA.

Lower tier Local Authorities and Group Bids

Lower tier LAs, including District, Borough and Parish Councils, will not be eligible to apply individually. If you are a lower tier LA and would like to participate, you should first contact your top tier LA to see if they plan to apply, and to ask if they will involve you as part of a group bid. If your top tier authority does not wish to bid, we would also be interested in receiving a group application from a group of lower tiers LAs. If your top tier LA wants to be part of a group bid, but does not wish to lead, or feels a lower tier LA would be better placed to lead, a lower tier LA may lead the bid – this should be indicated in the "Section one: Lead Applicant & contact details" section of the form. However, applications must be limited to one per top tier LA area.

What will the fund pay for?

The funding is exclusively for planting, or activities relating to natural colonisation, of trees outside woodlands¹ (areas of trees below 0.5 ha), and three additional years of maintenance costs. Bids are strongly encouraged to include match funding. Bids containing match funding will be scored more highly, but there are no set thresholds for match funding required (please see "Match funding" for more information).

Funded activities relating to planting or establishing trees (Table 5) must be delivered within FY 2022-23 and/or FY 2023-24 (see Table 1 and Table 2). The FC must have received your year 1 post-planting report and supporting evidence by 3rd March 2023.

If the proposed planting area is eligible for the Urban Tree Challenge fund (UTCf), any proposed standard size trees **must be like-for-like replacements of trees that have recently failed** to be eligible for LATF funding. You can see whether an area falls into this category by viewing the "UTCf Trees Close to People" layer on [this map](#).

If you are looking to fund standards in urban areas that are **not** like-for-like replacements, we encourage you to apply for those planting sites through the UTCf. The **UTCf and LATF are not mutually exclusive: LAs can apply for both grants at the same time, but not for the same piece of land.**

¹Woodlands are defined as groups of trees of 0.5 ha and over with a minimum width of 20 m and canopy cover of 20% or greater. Woodland planting is not eligible under the LATF.

For more information on the UTCF, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund>

Capital funds

LATF is a capital funding grant, and therefore, you should check with your finance department about whether project coordination counts as a capital cost. If your finance department decides that the programme coordination falls into the “resource funding” category, unfortunately LATF cannot fund the time of the programme coordinator. However, should you wish to include this value in your match funding contribution, this will improve your score for value for money (see “How will applications be assessed?”).

Applications can only cover activities related to tree planting or natural colonisation carried out in FY 2022/23 and 2023/24. Funding will not be awarded for work undertaken prior to the start date of an LATF grant funding agreement (the date when the MoU has been signed by the LA and by the Forestry Commission).

Capital funding schedules

Table 1 Schedule for applications for one-year planting

| Financial Year | FY 2022/23 | Three equal annual payments | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
| Funded activities | Planting and/or establishment of conditions for natural colonisation | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2021/22 | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2021/22 | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2021/22 |

Table 2 Schedule for applications for two-year planting

| Financial Year | FY 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | 2026/27 |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Funded activities | Planting and/or establishment of conditions for natural colonisation | Planting and/or establishment of conditions for natural colonisation; and maintenance of trees established in FY 2022/23 | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2022/23; and maintenance of trees established in FY 2023/24 | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2022/23; and maintenance of trees established in FY 2023/24 | Maintenance of trees established in FY 2023/24 |

Conditions of payments

Maintenance payments, to cover annual maintenance such as watering and weeding, may be made for up to 3 years from the date of planting, following annual submission

of maintenance reports by the LA and review by the FC (see 4c Recording and Collecting Data). You should attempt to replant failed trees wherever practicable and proportionate to do so and must ensure a minimum survival rate of 75% of planted trees by the end of the maintenance period. Losses greater than this will be subject to the FC's Performance Improvement Plan. Replacements are expected to be funded by the LA and must be carried out satisfactorily to receive future maintenance payments. The LA may choose to plant a higher number of trees at the outset, to offset expected natural losses, or else undertake compensation planting in the second or third planting season (i.e. during the maintenance period).

The payment schedule and further details of the activity schedule are detailed in the Project Cost Calculator, MoU and Grant Determination Letter, which will be provided to all LAs selected to receive funding.

You may apply for either a one-year or two-year planting period. For each financial year, 50% of the funding for planting that year will be provided up front (following agreement of the MoU in year 1), and the remaining 50% will be provided upon receipt of the post-planting report (for planting work completed that financial year). This is the same for each financial year, regardless of if the planting period in your application is one or two years. Payments for maintenance will be made at the end of the financial year, subject to satisfactory evidence for the maintenance work completed.

The post-planting report will be submitted by the LA, and reviewed by the FC, and the instalment may be downward adjusted if the final planting within the post-planting report differs from the activity outlined in the MoU. Not all activities for the year must be completed by the time the post-planting report is submitted in early March, but you must be able to demonstrate high confidence that they will be completed by the end of the financial year before you submit a claim. All detailed requirements will be provided in the post-planting report form, provided by the FC to all successful LAs.

Match funding

Match funding refers to contributions, whether monetary or in-kind (e.g. volunteer time), contributed by the applicant or external persons/organisations to support the project in addition to the grant requested. Please outline clearly in "

Section five: Project finances" any match funding contributions to your bid. There is no set requirement for match funding for LATF. However, any match funding commitments will contribute to your value for money score, which is an important component of how your bid will be assessed. We encourage match-funding to engage more local partners in the success of your project and deliver more for the community.

For any match funding provided, please provide letters of support as evidence, and a financial break-down of contribution calculations in your application. As match funding is viewed as an additional contribution to the project costs on top of the LATF grant requested, this is allowed to bring the total cost of the project over the threshold of £300,000.

Eligibility

You must meet all the criteria listed below to be awarded LATF funding. Failure to do so will prevent the FC from assessing your bid.

- Applications are invited from strategic level, top tier LAs in England. We would also be interested in receiving group applications from lower tier LAs, but applications must be limited to **one per top tier LA area**. Please see "[Who can apply?](#)" for more information.
- The bid must be between £50,000 and £300,000. Any bids containing two years of planting activities must ensure that at least 50% of the total bid value falls into FY 2022/23. The highest scoring applications will be awarded funding until all capital has been allocated.
- Applications must only include capital costs. Please see "[Capital funds](#)" for more information.
- Each top tier LA area is limited to one application in this round: for either one year of planting in FY 2022/23, or two years of planting in FY 2022/23 and 2023/24, and maintenance activities for three years following planting. Please see "[Capital funding schedules](#)" for more information.
- Proposals intending to use natural colonisation must show that the activities will take place within 50m of an existing tree seed source.
- The planting site must not be ineligible under the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) rules. Please see "[Basic Payments Scheme \(BPS\)](#)" for more information.
- Applications must include details of the project plan to deliver the project's funding objectives, including an outline of costs to support the bid.
- Applications must include written confirmation from key confirmed delivery partners outlining their role and commitment to relevant funded activities.
- The LA must agree to all mandatory statements in section six of the LATF Application Form.
- The LA must agree in principle to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the FC as part of the Application Form.

Basic Payments Scheme (BPS)

The LA should check whether the land on which recovery planting is proposed is used to claim payments under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), and whether such planting will make that land ineligible under the BPS scheme rules. Details on the eligibility of trees under the BPS can be found on pages 34-35 12 of the [BPS Guidance](#). In cases where planting will make that land ineligible; the LA must notify the BPS claimant in question. If the land will become ineligible before the 31 December 2022 and the BPS claimant has already submitted a BPS 2022 claim for that land, the LA must remind the BPS claimant to withdraw the corresponding parts of their BPS claim, as per instructions on page 12 of the [BPS Guidance](#). Failure to do so will result in penalties for the BPS applicant.

How to apply

The LATF application window runs from Wednesday 2nd March 2022 until 23:59 on Tuesday 31st May 2022.

To apply for LATF, LAs are required to:

- LATF applicants are now required to [register with Rural Payments](#) to obtain a Single Business Identifier (SBI), which is a new requirement this year. This information must be provided in your application. Land submitted in an LATF application does not need to be registered on the Rural Land Register.
- Complete the written application form. Please see “[Completing your application](#)” for more information.
- Commit to reporting requirements. See “[4c Recording and Collecting Data](#)” for more information.
- Confirm they have carried out required due diligence in compiling planting plans.
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which underpins the relationship between the FC and the LA as permitted under section 31 (Local Government Act 2003), before receiving any funds. Please see “[Memorandum of Understanding](#)” for more information.

Send your completed application form and supporting documents to LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk

Indicative Timelines for Evaluation

The approximate time it will take to assess your application, inform you of our decision and finalise the MoU is outlined below.

Table 3 Indicative timelines for evaluation

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Application window | 02 March – 31 May 2022 |
| Application review | June 2022 |
| Oversight panel sits | By mid July 2022 |
| The FC communicate application outcome | By early August 2022 |
| MoU drawn up (£100,000+ reviewed by Director of Forestry Services) | By mid-August 2022 |
| MoUs sent to LA | Mid-August 2022 |
| Deadline to return signed MoU to the FC | Late August – Early September 2022 |

Completing your application

Section one: Lead Applicant & contact details

In this section, you need to submit details of the lead Local Authority (LA) – please see “[Who can apply?](#)” for more information. The LA named will complete and submit the application and act as the responsible body who agrees to and signs the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). They will act as the lead applicant, will become the sole named agreement holder and payee for LATF grant funds.

The lead applicant will be the **nominated point of contact** for day-to-day enquiries. This allows us to contact you throughout the full grant lifecycle to provide updates, request information, communicate reporting requirements and notify you of site visits.

You may list the full contact details of **up to two further nominated points of contact of key partners** who may contact the LATF inbox directly. All other correspondence with the LATF email inbox from partners within the bid must be coordinated by the Lead Applicant. We hope this will mitigate the risk that the lead applicant is out of action (for example, due to illness). If a partner has a strong need to liaise directly with the LATF inbox but was not a nominated point of contact on the application form, if we receive written consent from either the lead applicant, or nominated point of contact, for us to liaise with the other partner then we can.

You must also provide details of all lower tier authorities and any other organisations such as local wildlife trusts participating as an ‘umbrella bid’ or group bid where applicable. If making an ‘umbrella bid’ or group bid the LA must be the Lead Applicant detailed in section 1a.

Include:

1a)

- *Full name of the Lead Applicant (Lead Local Authority)*
- *Local authority full address*
- *Names of all lower tier local authorities and/or other organisations you anticipate participating in an umbrella or group bid and/or or those that will receive grant funds for tree planting or natural colonisation, where applicable*

1b)

- *Full name of the single point of contact (plus up to two additional points of contact)*
- *Job title*
- *Phone number*
- *Email address*

Section two: assessment of current baseline of trees outside woods

The evidence provided in section two will be used to score and rank your application.

2a Current distribution of trees outside woods

In this section, you need to describe the current distribution of the non-woodland trees in the application area.

Provide a statement describing the approximate current distribution of trees outside woodlands in your application area. Detailed maps and exact locations are not required. You can estimate areas in hectares (ha), if available or numbers of existing non-woodland trees. We recommend using local surveys or publicly available datasets, for example those available via the [Countryside Survey](#).

Include

- *Approximate current distribution of trees outside woodlands across different settings (hedgerow trees, parkland trees, copses, roadside, or riparian trees etc.), within the LA application area*
- *If the data is available, provide an approximate indication (number of trees, species breakdown, percentage of cover), of the populations of trees outside woods in the LA application area.*

2b Overall condition of trees outside woods

Describe the overall condition of trees outside woods, including impacts of diseases such as ash dieback. You may detail losses caused by any factors as well as losses that are expected to occur soon. Please make your statements specific to the area covered by the application. Include numbers of trees at risk if you have this information, although this level of detail is not required (however, when proposed planting involves standards in urban or peri-urban areas, these must be shown to be direct replacements for trees recently lost to stress or disease). This will allow the FC to assess the severity of past, present, and future loss of non-woodland trees across multiple settings in the LA application area.

Include

- *Approximate loss of non-woodland trees to date across different settings (hedgerow trees, parkland trees, copses, roadside, or riparian trees etc.), within the LA application area*
- *Prevalence of tree pests and diseases (e.g., ash dieback), in the LA application area*
- *Any known and/or predicted decline of significant treescapes outside woodland (below 0.5ha).*

Case study example

Ash is a dominant tree in Gloucestershire's landscapes, providing up to 70% of the current tree cover in some areas. Ash Dieback, first confirmed in Gloucestershire in 2016, has now affected trees in both urban and rural settings, and trees are expected to succumb to the disease across the county. Gloucester City alone has approximately 500 standalone Gloucester County Council owned ash trees in open spaces across the city, all of which are in peril. Due to safety concerns Gloucestershire County Council

have a multi-year programme to fell a conservative estimate of 32,000 Gloucestershire County Council owned ash trees along public highways.

2c Effects of decline

Please outline the impacts of declines described in 2b. You will need to detail key environmental features that have been, or are predicted to be, impacted and any other known significant impacts from losses of trees in non-woodland locations. This includes the specific impacts on people and communities, including loss of ecosystem services and amenity value within your authority area.

Case study example

Following Dutch elm disease, ash dieback is creating even larger gaps in an already diminished network of trees in hedgerows, shelterbelts, and lining watercourses. In Gloucestershire, the violet click beetle seems to rely solely on ash. If the beetle cannot adapt locally to beech or oak, the species may eventually be lost to ash dieback. Furthermore, over 5,000 homes were flooded in the 2007 flood event in Gloucestershire. Climate change will make extreme weather events that lead to flooding more frequent and severe. Gloucestershire's ecosystems and cities are being strengthened against threats such as ash dieback through the Local Authority Treescapes Fund; planting trees to restore flood defences and wildlife corridors.

Include

- *The known and/or predicted impact on people, due to loss of ecosystem services in the LA area*
- *The known and/or predicted impact on people, due to loss of other key environmental features in the LA area.*
- *Other key areas, biodiversity and/or environmental features likely to be impacted by degradation of trees outside woods.*

2d The Current Baseline for Planting

Outline the current baseline of LA-led planting of trees outside woodlands in the LA area, for instance the number of non-woodland trees planted in previous recent years.

Include

- *approximately how many non-woodland trees are being planted each year*
- *estimate the average annual spend on non-woodland tree planting*

Section three: Restoration plan

The evidence provided in section three will be used to score and rank your application.

When designing your restoration plans you must ensure they meet one or more the following funding objectives: contribute to resilient future

treescapes; support local biodiversity; benefit local people and communities; and enhance landscape connectivity.

3a Plans for planting

In this section, you need to submit your plans for restoration of non-woodland treescapes across your LA area. Where exact planting sites are known, please include this information. If exact sites are not known at this stage, explain how you intend to select specific planting sites. Explain how the proposed planting / natural colonisation will **help recovery from the local impacts** outlined in Section 2a, 2b & 2c and meet additional funding objectives detailed above.

Planting activity or activity to support natural colonisation may take place over two years, but if you choose to make use of a two-year planting window, at least 50% of the planting must take place in year 1 (this must also be set out in the LATF cost calculator).

The following sources of information relating to species choice, resilience and optimal tree planting sites will assist you with your plans. Although some of the below guidance references woodlands, the guidance can also apply to trees outside woods. One of the objectives of LATF is to improve outcomes for biodiversity, so the use of native trees is preferred in rural settings and encouraged.

- [Forest Research guidance on species and provenance choice](#)
- [Ecological Site Classification](#)
- [Climate matching tool](#)
- [FC guidance on managing woodlands in a climate emergency](#)
- [FC guidance on managing ash trees outside woodland](#)
- [Restocking following the loss of ash](#)
- Sources of information for more urban areas are [Right Trees for a Changing Climate database](#) and the [TDAG database](#).

Include the rationale for the approximate locations. Consideration should be made to the overall landscape-scale benefits. For instance, if loss of mature ash trees in hedgerows is having a major impact in one area, you may explain that you intend to plant more trees in hedgerows in this area to ensure these trees and their associated benefits are replaced. Shadow planting close to trees that are expected to be lost within years is also encouraged.

Describe your species/provenance and size choices for these locations and how this will contribute to the funding objectives above. It is a requirement of LATF to replant with a mixture of tree species, to enhance resilience to future diseases and climate change. It is particularly important to plant or encourage native tree species in rural areas as this provides effective support for biodiversity and landscape connectivity, although in urban areas the use of non-natives within species mixes may be appropriate.

If your plans involve land in areas which qualify for UTCF, or involve the planting of urban standards, please use this section to show clear detail justifying how your plans qualify for LATF. Please see “[What will the fund pay for?](#)” for more information.

Case Study Example

[In Pennine Lancashire], LATF tree planting is serving to regenerate urban areas in green spaces, many of which were previously derelict or reclaimed. This round of LATF will provide a fresh layer of enhancement to these pockets of greenery.

[Meanwhile, Gloucestershire is enhancing] a vital ecological corridor between the Dixon Hill and Bredon Hill sites of special scientific interest (SSSI), enabling passage for the violet click beetle from the latter special area of conservation (SAC). And, importantly, tree planting in Salmon Springs by the Stroud Valleys Project will help to reduce the risk of a re-run of the devastating floods of 2007.

Include

- Describe the approximate locations where you intend to focus planting or natural colonisation, detailing those planting locations that align with the fund’s objectives such as planting in neglected community spaces, beside rivers or in urban areas.
- Include rationale for your planting locations e.g., how it will contribute to increased ecological resilience, provide benefits to local biodiversity, ecological connectivity and/or people
- Include descriptions of species/provenance and size choices if known. You must include your proposed broadleaf and conifer split, as an approximate percentage.
- Include explanations for any planting in areas not detailed in section 2, e.g., neglected green space or other areas where trees outside woods would be expected to produce significant benefits.
- If any sites are proposed that do not have public access, explain your rationale for planting in these sites. Please be aware that public access boosts your score.

3b Natural colonisation

Explain the rationale for any enhanced natural colonisation that you intend to undertake. Natural colonisation is the process by which trees colonise new ground from existing local tree development, typically over several decades. You must demonstrate: the suitability of sites for natural colonisation; that you understand and have considered key requirements for natural colonisation in your plan; and that you have the skills required to see the colonisation through the establishment phase and beyond. To be eligible for funding for natural colonisation sites must be within 50 m of existing tree seed sources.

The Forestry Commission recently produced new guidance on [using natural colonisation for the creation of new woodland](#) and we encourage you to review this when planning.

Case study example

In Pennine Lancashire, a recent ecology survey commissioned by Hyndburn Council recommended natural colonisation for two sites. One site, with ancient woodland and veteran oaks nearby, forms part of the main river network. Volunteer-led approaches for natural colonisation included protecting areas with natural materials, and the ancient art of "dead hedging" to protect saplings.

Include

- The approximate locations and the rationale for site locations
- How you will manage competing vegetation
- How you will manage or protect trees from grazing pressures
- What the seed sources for each site are, and whether there is sufficient diversity of seed sources to result in a resilient and diverse tree population (note that to meet eligibility requirements proposed natural colonisation sites must be within 50m of an existing tree seed source)
- Whether supplementary planting is required if seed sources are inadequate
- Any additional activities planned to assist natural colonisation (e.g., surveying, cultivation, ground preparation, supplementary planting)
- How you plan to mitigate and respond to any potential vandalism of the area
- Explain how natural colonisation will provide benefits to local biodiversity, ecological connectivity and/or people in areas described in section 2, above
- If any sites are proposed that do not have public access, explain your rationale for choosing these sites
- Describe the predicted outcomes and timescales, should your plans for natural colonisation be successful
- Describe plans for medium/long term monitoring of natural colonisation projects, to ensure that intended outcomes are met.

3c Local Nature Recovery Strategies (where applicable)

If your Local Authority area has any current or emerging Nature Recovery Plans or Strategies, please consider any environmental outcomes that align for the nature recovery plan and your LATF restoration plan and detail them in 3c. This information will not be used to score your application but will provide the FC with a better understanding of how LATF might better interact with your nature recovery plans.

Include

- List those environmental outcomes that align for LNRS and LATF, detailing any potential opportunities for scheme collaboration

Section four: Project delivery

The evidence provided in section four will be used to score and rank your application. Applications that provide a clear strategy for managing project delivery, support a collaborative approach and demonstrate strong communication links with key contacts will be scored more highly (see Table 6 and Table 7).

4a Your delivery plans

In this section, you need to provide a brief overview of your capability to deliver the restoration project/s. Explain how the project will be managed and who will be involved and responsible for which activities. You must provide details of activities to be delivered by sub-contractors, private land managers or lower tier LAs.

The LA is encouraged to work in partnership with delivery partners (e.g., community organisations, the NHS, local Wildlife Trusts, schools, NGOs, private land managers or private companies) to implement the proposed project. If you intend to work with other organisations to deliver the project, detail the delivery partners you expect to be involved and in what way. If applicable, confirm they have agreed to their involvement and land access requirements and attach written confirmation from key partners. Also use this section to detail any volunteer groups you intend to utilise, including the names of organisations and groups and confirming their availability.

We encourage you to review the [UK Forestry Standard](#) and in particular page 138 elements 1-3 relating to consultation, engagement and communication. Please note that as per the Memorandum of Understanding, the principles of the UK Forestry Standard require use of community engagement. Anticipated benefits to local people will be scored more highly (e.g. by trees being found in publicly accessible places).

Describe how you will deliver ongoing maintenance and replacement of any newly planted trees which have failed within three years of planting, including your expectations regarding the proportion of trees that will survive and fail. Also use this section to detail any staff or volunteer groups you are planning to utilise, including names and other details if possible. LAs are encouraged to use innovative approaches, such as involving local communities in tree planting to maximise value for money and societal benefits.

Applicants who provide clear evidence to demonstrate their ability to deliver will be scored more highly. Evidence can include, but is not limited to, letters from delivery partners and volunteers confirming their commitment and availability.

If you are planning to use natural colonisation and have detailed this in your plan

Section three: Restoration plan), you must provide details of the resources and time available to see the colonisation through the establishment phase and beyond, including medium-long term monitoring to ensure the objectives are met.

Case study example

Last year the Pennine Lancashire group made their LATF bid work through partnership and innovation, harnessing each partner's individual strengths, and distributing the benefit across all. When approached by the Ribble Rivers Trust, who buy tens of thousands of trees every year, nurseries went out of their way to supply 40,000 trees. Following negotiations, Burnley District Council utilised their established tree planting procurement processes to purchase, then care for, all trees for the group bid - getting good value bulk purchases done quickly.

In Gloucestershire the Highways Team were able to utilise their existing procurement know-how to order and deliver all tree stock to parish councils, FWAG utilised their connections to help reach even more landowners, and Wotton Climate Action Network and Stroud Valleys Project provided vital volunteers on the ground.

Pennine Lancashire were encouraging people to plant trees to increase levels of outdoor activity among children, improve mental health among adults, and help deal with the high levels of obesity found in some areas. This tree planting has the added benefit of improving publicly accessible green spaces. One new planting site neighbours an NHS healthcare centre, and the direct contact with the practices will likely lead to tailored health-related activities for the patients and NHS staff. LATF enabled Ribble Rivers Trust and Prospects Foundation to massively scale up their school planting this winter - from a few schools to 40.

Include

- Briefly detail the key individuals and their roles & responsibilities that will help deliver your project e.g., oversight & co-ordination with delivery partners, other LAs and key organisations. Include resource management, community engagement, planting management and administrative responsibilities including key communications.
- Detail delivery partners involved in the project where applicable and confirm that you have made contact and have agreed to their involvement in the project (attach written confirmation from delivery partners to your application).
- If applicable, detail any volunteer groups you are planning to involve and their role in delivery.
- Applications that name individuals, partners, and organisations (including volunteer organisations) are likely to achieve higher scores as they will be seen to better demonstrate and evidence their delivery plans.
- Explain how you will secure all the necessary permissions/due diligence for potential planting or natural colonisation locations described in section 2.
- Describe how you will deliver funded activities, including maintenance and replacement of newly planted trees which have died.
- If applicable, explain how you will resource plans for enhanced natural colonisation, including monitoring, through the establishment phase during the grant period.

4b Approximate Timescales

You must provide a basic timeline of delivery milestones to demonstrate that you have considered a project plan to deliver planting within the years agreed (see below example). Detail your month-by-month milestones in a timeline.

Table 4 Example project timeline

| |
|--|
| <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sign MoU & submit first claim to FC · Communicate successful funding outcome to relevant parties · Identify resourcing requirements · Identify suppliers for Autumn/Winter planting 2022/23 · Obtain relevant consents, licences, or permissions for tree planting <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Train volunteers if required · Complete any assessments of special features · Procure equipment · Partnership co-ordination/steering group meeting <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Arrangements with contractors · Procurement of trees · Steering group meeting <p>November/December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Begin tree planting · Site visits by LA Tree Officers <p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Continue tree planting <p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finish tree planting and begin to collect evidence – invoices, photographs etc. <p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Submit Post Planting Report · Submit second Claim Form |
|--|

4c Recording and Collecting Data

In this section of the application form, you must explain how you will achieve LATF data reporting requirements. The reporting requirements are to record planting sites, to record places of purchase of planting stock, to co-ordinate partner returns, to submit post-planting reports (PPR), invoices, maintenance reports (e.g., photos or invoices to show that maintenance is carried out). You are encouraged to use innovative approaches, such as involving local communities in monitoring, to maximise value for money and societal benefits.

Recording and reporting data in the post-planting reports is essential for continued payments to be made (see “[Conditions of payments](#)” for more information). You must be able to map out how many trees of what sizes and species have been planted where to meet this requirement. Please collect data on what nurseries you have used, see “[4d Procurement Plan and Biosecurity](#)” for more information. All detailed requirements will be provided in the post-planting report, provided by the FC to all successful LAs.

Include

- *How you will collate data for reporting before your Post-Planting Report submission and annual maintenance submission.*

- *How you will record the number of trees planted in your LA area.*
- *How you will record the sizes and species that have been planted and location.*
- *How you will report on natural colonisation sites (e.g., activities carried out, progress towards establishment).*

4d Procurement Plan and Biosecurity

You should explain how you will ensure that high biosecurity standards will be met when sourcing your trees. It is important the plants and trees you use are free from pests and pathogens. We would encourage applicants to source their planting stock from nurseries with robust biosecurity measures in place, for example, those with Plant Healthy certification, or similar. **Bids which can show evidence that plants will be procured from biosecure stock will be scored more highly. Such evidence may include a biosecure procurement policy from an LA.** You can use [Plant Healthy](#) to check if the nurseries you buy your plants and trees from are certified. You may also wish to consider:

- Working with volunteer-led or community tree nurseries, where these employ robust biosecurity practices – are there opportunities to grow more locally to minimise transportation of trees?
- Planting a diverse set of tree species – are you selecting species mixes that support long-term resilience against environmental change and plant health threats?
- How will you ensure all local partners and groups involved in delivering tree planting are aware of biosecurity measures and are consistently adhering to them?

Include

- *Explain how and where you intend to procure trees and any key planting materials covered by the fund*
- *Demonstrate sourcing of trees that will ensure high biosecurity*

Section five: Project finances

The evidence provided in section five will be used to score and rank your application. This section will also be used to inform us on your funding allocation.

The Project Cost Calculator

When completing the Project Cost Calculator, you must detail capital expenditure using (£) sterling.

This is a competitive grant, and those applications that can offer best value for money will be scored more highly.

You must complete the Project Cost Calculator, which is an MS Excel worksheet. Instructions for how to complete the Project Cost Calculator are embedded in the worksheet. You will be asked to indicate an estimated quantity and unit price for each capital cost in your project budget. Some of these will be compared against standard

costs set by the FC to help us with our assessment. **This is for our guidance only and you should always use realistic costs.** You will also be asked to detail any funding you have sourced from external providers to contribute to your project, including any contributions in kind, in the match funding section.

Always make sure you include costs for the full specification of tree planting in your estimated unit price – see [Table 5](#) below for a breakdown of these. You should not include items listed in the planting specification as additional capital items on Part Two of the Cost Calculator. For example, if you apply for funding to supply and plant a feather tree, you cannot include a stake for that tree as an additional capital item (see [Table 5](#) for more guidance).

Definitions of Tree Sizes

The standardised items in [Table 5](#) use the following tree size definitions, please note that these are a guide:

1. **Standard**

Standards are trees with a clear stem up to 1.8m from ground level with a head of branches. They come in a range of sizes and age is dependent on species and growth rate, with trunk widths of 10-12cm up to 16-18cm. They are classified according to measurement of the circumference at 1.5m from ground level: 6-8cm STD, 8-10cm STD, 10-12cm STD, 12-14cm STD, 14-16cm STD. They can go up to as much as 30cm. The standard cost is based on a 14-16cm STD. Most standards for urban and peri-urban street planting are in the range 10-12cm STD to 14-16cm STD. Generally larger trees are selected for more vulnerable areas such as near schools, pubs and high footfall locations, smaller ones are used in quiet suburban roads.

2. **Feather**

Feathers are small trees that have a central stem with some side branches and are usually between 150cm and 175cm in height. They are usually between 4 to 6 years old depending on species and growth rate. Feathers are suitable for planting singly, in small groups or stands in school-grounds, parks, woodland, wider highway verges and informal open space.

3. **Whip**

Whips are very small single stem plants with little or no side shoots usually just about a year in age. They are usually between 100cm to 125cm in height. Whips are suitable for planting in larger groups or blocks to create a feature, create impact in school grounds, parks, wider highway verges and informal open space.

Standard costs for trees

Capital costs for LATF include costs associated with initial planting.

Please refer to [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) in the section “[Capital funding schedules](#)” to see when planting may take place.

Table 5 Standard costs

| Tree type | Activity | Specification | 100% Standard Costs (£) |
|------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Standard | Tree Planting | Supply containerised standard tree. Size used dependent on location. Prepare tree pit for standard tree in grass verge. Plant standard tree with twin softwood stakes as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing), watering tube and mulch. Supply appropriate standard tree guard. | £270.44 |
| | Annual Maintenance | For a period of three years, water young tree in pit via watering tube, applying a minimum of 60 litres per visit with 14 visits per season. For a period of three years, seven visits per year combined weeding, tie and stake checking. | £189.00 per year |
| Feather | Tree Planting | Supply and plant small tree. Supply a 1.2m tube, treated softwood stake (as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing), and labour. | £3.38 |
| | Annual Maintenance | For a period of three years carry out suitable weed management, such as spot spraying. | £0.14 per year for 3 years |
| Whip | Tree Planting | Supply and plant whip tree. Supply a 0.7m tree shelter, mulch, and labour. | £1.88 |
| | Annual Maintenance | For a period of three years carry out appropriate weed control such as spot spraying. | £0.14 per year for 3 years |

Details of Tree Planting Costs

The cost for large trees is based on planting using a tree pit in a grass verge. Other settings are acceptable, but any additional costs must be justified. Protection measures to encourage establishment and improve survival rate must be appropriate for the planting location and anything not listed in the standard costs [Table 5](#) will have to be funded separately. The following items are examples of this:

- Fencing can be included as a separate item.
- Greater protection than included in the standardised items may be required for trees positioned in areas prone to natural risks such as squirrels or rabbits and this can be costed separately.
- We encourage planting in areas which will provide social and community benefits such as education, recreation and health and understand that greater protection

may be required for trees positioned in community areas (such as those close to schools and pubs) where there is a potentially higher risk from vandalism.

5a Project Costs Supporting Statement

You will need to provide a supporting statement in the application form explaining how you have estimated the costs in your bid and achieved value for money. Include details of any external funding secured and any contributions in kind. This information will be used to assess value for money so it is important you demonstrate where you have been able to make savings when sourcing products, as this will result in a higher score for this section. Please include your calculations for the monetary value of your match funding (i.e., volunteer time) – see “[Match funding](#)” for more information. Please note that as per the Memorandum of Understanding, the principles of UK Forestry Standard require community engagement.

Include

- *Any additional information that shows how you will deliver value for money (e.g. use of external funding to cover some costs, sourcing trees from own stock, use of volunteer groups, use of existing equipment).*
- *Where you have sourced additional funding from external providers, please give details of this, including how you have reached any estimations of the value of contributions in kind.*
- *If your estimated delivery costs (planting or maintenance) differ from the standard FC cost by more than 10% above or 30% below, make sure you explain clearly why you think costs will exceed or fall below this figure. The FC may seek further clarification on this after you have submitted your application.*

Section Six: Declarations

You must agree to all statements in this section for your application to be considered. Failure to comply with any of the mandatory requirements will result in your bid being rejected. Details of the consequences of making any serious misrepresentations in relation to any declarations made are recorded in the MoU. LATF funding may be rescinded and the LA excluded from further LATF funding if having agreed to statement 10 of the Declarations and receiving funding, the LA is found to have made serious misrepresentation in relation to those offences listed in the [‘List of Mandatory and Discretionary Exclusions’](#)

Section eight: Authorisation

Your application form must be signed by someone with the authority to represent your organisation in making the application.

Document checklist

We will only assess fully completed applications, so please ensure you complete all actions and attach and annotate all required documents on the application form.

Need to know

- **The deadline for applications is 23:59 31st May 2022.** This deadline may be amended at the FC's discretion. Applications received after the published deadline will not be assessed.
- If you wish to amend your application before the published deadline or withdraw your application at any time, please email LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk.
- You may apply for either a one-year or two-year planting period. For each financial year, 50% of the funding for planting that year will be provided up front, and the remaining 50% will be provided upon receipt of the claim form, following submission of the post-planting report (for planting work completed that financial year). This is the same for each financial year, regardless of if the planting period in your application is for one or two.
- Applications for one-year planting will only be considered for the FY 2022-23. Applications for two-year planting will only be considered if the planting starts in the FY 2022-23 and finishes in the FY 2023-24. Any bids for two years of planting activities must ensure that at least 50% of the total bid value falls into FY 2022/23.
- If the information that you submit in the text LATF Application Form differs from the information that you submit in Project Cost Calculator, the Project Cost Calculator values will be taken over the values in the LATF Application Form.
- If you wish to include any additional supporting Annexes not detailed in this guidance or the LATF Application Forms you MUST seek advance agreement by emailing LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk. The FC will not assess unauthorised supporting documents.
- If you wish to clarify part of the application process, please email LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk. If we consider information requests relevant to any applicant, we will provide additional guidance to all applicants (via Point of Contact provided) by email to ensure fairness and openness. We may be unable to respond to other support requests due to the competitive bid process.
- The FC will consider the commercial sensitivity of all information requests received before providing additional guidance to all applicants. If relating information is relevant to all applicants and considered commercially sensitive, we will discuss with the enquiring applicant before releasing any information and will only release info in line with the privacy notice detailed in the LATF Application Form. We may be unable to support requests due to the competitive bidding process.
- The FC reserves the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of the funding application process at any time and will notify all applicants via the Point of Contact by email. If the change occurs within the LATF application window, FC will notify interested parties via [eAlert](#) (you can [subscribe here](#)).
- All costs of applying to LATF are to be borne by applicant, regardless of outcome and irrespective of whether the FC chooses to make a grant award to the applicant.
- The name of the LA and details within your Application Form will be shared with Defra and could be shared with other government departments or contractors to

ensure that duplicate payments are not being made, and as part of the Application Review process.

- LATF must not fund felling activities. Any tree felling may require a Felling License from the FC; trees within Conservation Areas or subject to Tree Preservation Orders may require permission from LAs.
- The LA must declare if you have received or have applied for the Urban Tree Challenge fund. The FC will carry-out checks on each application using a variety of government tools including the Cabinet Office's automated grants due diligence tool.
- Applications remain valid until the end of the financial year in which the application is made.
- The LA shall provide the FC with full assistance in relation to obligations under Data Protection Legislation and any complaint, communication, or request. The LA shall notify the Data Controller immediately if it receives any requests relating to personal data or any other request, complaint or communication relating to obligations under the Data Protection Legislation. The LA shall maintain complete and accurate records and information and allow the FC to audit records and information upon request. The LA will not release any information relating to the FC without prior notification, consent, and written agreement from the FC. The LA will remain fully liable for all information released or mishandled by any third-party organisations. The LA agrees to take account of any guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office. The LA agrees to all data protection requirements as outlined in the MoU.
- The FC will use any personal data provided by the LA to the FC for the purposes of reviewing application information and performance of the LA against the information provided in the MoU and Application Form. It is the responsibility of the LA to notify partners and private individuals their information will be shared with the FC for the purpose of administering and monitoring performance, including inspection.

How will applications be assessed?

Your application will be appraised by the FC, with each criterion scored on a scale of 1-5. Each question must score a minimum of 3 points (see [Table 7](#)) to pass the minimum evaluation criteria. If any question scores less than 3 in an application, that application will not be considered for funding.

The FC reserves the right not to award grant funding to applications that do not meet this threshold. The FC reserves the right not to award grant funding for some or all the available funding for which applications are invited. The FC has the discretion to reject applications where it is deemed that funding would provide economic benefits to the recipient and/or the potential to distort competition.

Bids that are recommended for funding by the FC will be verified by an Oversight Panel. For applications that are confirmed as successful by the Oversight Panel, the Panel

secretariat will inform the highest scoring applications, until the capital allocation for the LATF has been committed.

When multiple bids score equally, we will prioritise the bid(s) that; a) demonstrate the greatest severity of estimated impacts on trees outside woods, and b) deliver the most benefits as detailed in [Table 6](#). The Oversight Panel will seek supporting advice from FC to decide on which application(s) should receive funding based on these criteria.

Timelines of the final funding decision as detailed in "[How to apply](#)".

The evaluation of applications will be based on the following criteria and weightings:

[Table 6 Evaluation criteria](#)

| Evaluation criterion | Weighting (%) |
|--|--|
| <p>Severity of need in the local area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Severity of issues relating to trees outside woods in the LA area (historical, current, predicted). - Local percentage canopy cover / number of trees outside of woodlands <p>More severe impacts demonstrating a need for intervention will be scored more highly.</p> | <p>20%</p> |
| <p>Benefits the plan will deliver, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rationale for the approximate planting locations. - Species/provenance and size choices for locations and how this will contribute to increased ecological resilience. - Anticipated benefits to local biodiversity. - Anticipated increases to ecological connectivity in authority area. - Anticipated benefits to local people and communities, for example by trees being found in publicly accessible places or by community involvement in planting or maintenance. - Rationale for any enhanced natural colonisation to be undertaken. - Evidence of consideration of sustainability. <p>Plans that demonstrate the greatest benefits across these categories will be scored more highly.</p> | <p>The value for money score, derived from costs and benefits, will represent:</p> <p>60%</p> |
| <p>Costs of the plans, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence in Project Cost Calculator and supporting statements of matched funding and use of volunteer sector. - Efficiency measures such as tree sourcing from existing stock or use of existing equipment. - Higher levels of match funding will be scored more highly. <p>Plans that will deliver more trees per unit cost will be scored more highly.</p> | |
| <p>Project delivery, such as quality of supporting evidence and robustness of plans, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of evidence provided under sections 2, 3 and 4. - Effective and considered project outline. | <p>20%</p> |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of necessary consents, permissions/due diligence for planting locations. - Demonstration of ability and capability to deliver, including confirmation of commitment and availability from partners involved. - Plans for maintenance and replacement of newly planted trees which have died. - Ability to deliver planting plans i.e., partnerships, resource, and co-ordination of resource to reflect planting plan. - Evidence of high quality such as biosecurity and sustainability standards. <p>Plans that provide comprehensive and credible evidence, including a robust delivery plan, will be scored more highly.</p> | |
| TOTAL | 100% |

The evaluation in [Table 6](#) will be given scores in the following categories:

[Table 7 Scoring categories](#)

| Score | Description |
|--------------|--|
| 1 | Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate evidence. Fails to demonstrate an ability to deliver the requirements or objectives. |
| 2 | Poor - Evidence is partially relevant and/or poor. The response contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirements or objectives will be fulfilled. |
| 3 | Acceptable - Evidence is relevant and acceptable. The response demonstrates sufficient ability to fulfil basic requirements or objectives. |
| 4 | Good - Evidence is relevant and good. The response provides full details of how the requirements or objectives will be fulfilled. |
| 5 | Excellent - Evidence is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response clearly exceeds expectations, is comprehensive and provides details of how the requirements or objectives will be met in full. |

If you are offered a grant

You will be notified of the outcome of the bid via email and if successful you will receive a Grant Determination Letter, formalising the offer of funding and outlining the LA responsibilities. You will then be required to submit an LATF claim form to LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk to claim your initial down payment.

To support the Government's commitment to transparency and accountability, all Section 31 Grant Determinations will be made public, and all grant recipients notified.

Memorandum of Understanding

You will need to sign an MoU before receiving any funds. This document will underpin the relationship between the FC and the LA as permitted under section 31 (Local Government Act 2003). The MoU and Grant Determination Letter will formalise the LA's responsibilities to plant and maintain trees and obligations such as reporting fraud. MoUs for funding over £100,000 will have received final approval from the relevant FC

Director. The MoU will detail inspection and reporting requirements. It will also detail the processes to be followed if a LA does not meet expectations for the work carried out. The signed MoU must be returned to the FC. Details of the approximate date you will need to submit the signed MoU have been provided in [Table 3](#), and exact dates will be confirmed to those awarded funding. Please visit gov.uk to view a standard version of the MoU.

If you do not sign an MoU, you will not receive funding. The FC may terminate a Section 31 agreement where it determines that its MoU with a LA has been breached.

Payments

FC may consider your project finance estimates to be beyond the expected costs FC would tolerate and amend the value of your Offer accordingly. The value of your Offer will be communicated to you in the Offer Letter which you will sign and return to the FC, at which point your Agreement will be live.

Funds will be available to claim in two or four instalments over your planting period (depending on the number of years that this covers). The first instalment will cover 50% of the total agreed for your planting period and can be claimed before works have been completed. After your initial 50% down payment, you will claim for the remaining 50% for that year at the end of the FY, alongside a post-planting report and supporting evidence in the form of photographs, maps and invoices. Note that this second payment may be adjusted by the FC if agreed work has not been carried out, as evidenced in the post-planting report. If you have a two-year agreement, the same pattern of claims will take place in year two.

You can find an example of the post-planting report [here](#). Further details of what will be expected in the post-planting report will be provided to all successful applicants.

Reporting requirements and maintenance awards

The importance of maintenance for planted trees is reflected in the annual reporting requirements Year 2 - 5. Maintenance payments will be made in annual tranches for up to 3 years from the date of planting, following maintenance activities, relevant reporting and claims to FC. A review of evidence and an assessment of a random sample of photographic evidence from each LA will take place during the maintenance claims approval process.

Inspections

In each year during the 4–5-year grant period, planting undertaken on both public and private land will be subject to random or at-risk on-site inspection by FC. The LA will be given 48 hours' notice prior to any inspection and are required to provide access to FC staff.

A representative of the LA need not be present at the time of inspection, but the named agreement holder on behalf of the LA (or their confirmed agent) must sign the FC's subsequent inspection report to confirm that they understand the inspection outcome.



Inspections may look for evidence of defrayal, necessary consents, licences, and permissions (in particular, that they were in place prior to planting), and evidence that the grant-funded works have been undertaken in accordance with the MoU and published prescriptions, and to an acceptable standard.

Enquiries

You can get further help from the FC by emailing your enquiry to LATF@forestrycommission.gov.uk. Find out how to [make a complaint or appeal](#).