# Seed Sourcing Grant

# Guidance to Applicants

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

# Part 1 Application Details

Note that the lead applicant must be a UK based business, sole trader, organisation, or landowner. Should the lead applicant not be UK based the application will be rejected.

Applications should be submitted to the Forestry Commission by 23:55 on 13 November 2022. To make an application, please complete the SSG application form and submit it to: ssg@forestrycommission.gov.uk  before the closing date. Applications must be supported by a completed finance spreadsheet. The Forestry Commission will aim to notify all applicants of the outcome of their application by 16 December 2022.

## Description of Project

Outline:

* Which of the eligible activities\* you are seeking funding for, noting that multiple activities can be included in a single application, and briefly what these activities will include.
* Which species your proposal is aimed at and, if relevant, which eligible category of FRM will be developed (i.e., Source Identified Seed Sources, Source Identified Seed Stands, Selected and Tested Seed Stands, Qualified and Tested Seed Orchards or Clones and Clonal Mixtures). Please refer to our detailed guide: [Seed Sourcing Grant](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/seed-sourcing-grant) for more details.

If you are applying to manage Seed Stands or Source-Identified Seed Sources which are already on the Register of UK Basic Materials, you will also be asked to provide the Basic Material IDs (BMIDs) for these.

\*Eligible activities are as follows:

1. **Management of existing seed stands to ensure they are productive for seed collectors.** Seed stands must either already be registered on the National Register of Basic Material or should be registered on the National Register of Basic Material as part of the proposed project. These must be time-bound rather than ongoing activities. Likely to include development of a site management plan, putting in site access, clearing undergrowth and adding fencing to protect from browsing. May include activities related to SI seed sources so long as these sources meet the criteria to be registered as SI seed stands and are registered as part of the proposed project. Management activities should take into account any existing management plan, particularly those relating to protected status of the sites.
2. **Desk studies and field studies to identify and bring additional seed stands onto the National Register of Basic Material.** This could be done by researchers or landowners taking data from the RBG Kew, Millennium Seed Bank UK National Tree Seed Project (UKNTSP) and other sources and identifying stands that meet criteria.
3. **Planning and planting of new seed stands, and their registration on the National Register of Basic Material.** Activities include planning what to plant, ensuring known and appropriate genetic provenance and capital costs for planting.
4. **Planning and planting of new seed orchards and their registration on the National Register of Basic Material.** Likely to include the planning, development and planting of new *ex situ* clonal seed orchards, seedling seed orchards, and seed production units.

Proposals can include a combination of activities from the list above.

## 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: Species seed strategies (20%)

Outline:

* To what extent your project will implement any of the 23 priority species strategies. Strategies are recommended but not prescriptive so a well explained alternative approach to increasing supply of a priority species is acceptable here. The 23 species are: Aspen, Beech, Bird cherry, Blackthorn, Dogwood, Elder, Field maple, Guelder rose, Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Hornbeam, Juniper, Norway maple, Small leaved lime, Spindle, Wayfaring tree, Whitebeam, Wild apple, Wild privet, Wild service, Wych elm and Yew.
* If your project is based around a non-priority species, outline why the activity is important and how the proposed activities will enhance quality, quantity, or diversity of English seed supply as well as explaining the rationale for your proposed approach.
* For projects related to planting seed stands and orchards be sure to explain your approach to selecting the origin and genetic diversity of the basic materials.
* Outline how the proposed activities will increase domestic treescape resilience to climate, disease or pests.

## Question 2: Sector capacity (20%)

Outline:

* The impact that the proposed activity will have on seed available for tree production and planting across England.
* The intended outcome of the proposed activities e.g., What kind of registered seed stand or orchard will your project result in with details of location, estimated size, estimated number of trees, etc.
* How and when the proposed activities will benefit the market. For example, when the seed stand or orchard will become productive for seed collections and how you plan on ensuring seed is collected and brought to market.

## Question 3: Longevity (10%)

Outline:

* How you will ensure that the proposed activity will continue to be used for seed collection in the future. For example, how you plan on maintaining the seed stand or orchard after the project delivery window.

## Question 4: Team resources and track record (10%)

Describe the roles, skills, and relevant experience of all involved partners in relation to the proposed activities.

Outline:

* You and/or your organisation’s track record in delivering similar projects.  The resources, equipment and facilities required for the proposed activities and how you will access them.
* The details of any vital external parties, including sub-contractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the proposal.

## Question 5: Deliverability (10%)

How will you manage the project?

Outline:

* The main milestones of the project, proposed timescales and how you plan to meet these. You may submit a supplementary Gannt chart or similar project plan in support of your response to this question.
* The approach to project management, identifying any major tools and mechanisms that will be used to ensure a successful outcome.

## Question 6: Risks (10%)

* Identify the main risks and uncertainties of the project, including any 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.

## Question 7: Additionality (10%)

Tell us if the proposed activities could/would go ahead in any form without public funding. If not, why? If so, explain the difference the public funding would make.

## Question 8: Costs and value for money (10%)

###### Please reference your finances spreadsheet (see below) where appropriate. Outline:

###### How much the different elements of the proposal will cost and how this represents good value for money for the Forestry Commission and the taxpayer.

###### Justify the total project cost in terms of the project goals, explaining how goods and services have been procured to ensure value for money.

###### Justify any sub-contractor costs and why they are critical to the project.

###### If the proposal is being match funded, outline where this match funding will come from.

The application Evaluation Panel will be formed of subject matter experts with a good knowledge of standard costs within the sector, which they will use to assess your evidence provided for this criterion.

## 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:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Description** |
| 0 | Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate how the eligibility criteria are met. |
| 1 | Poor - Response is partially relevant and/or poor. The response contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate evidence of meeting the eligibility criteria.  |
| 2 | Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence of meeting the eligibility criteria and covers the majority of points expected for a given criteria. |
| 3 | Good - Response is relevant and good. The response provides full details of how the eligibility criteria will be fulfilled covering all of the points expected for a given criteria.  |
| 4 | Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall, possibly exceeding requirements. A well thought through project with all elements of question fully addressed and detail provided that exceeds some or all of the requirements. The response is comprehensive and provides a high level of detail on how the eligibility criteria are met. |

For question 1 (Species seed strategies) and question 2, the scores will be doubled giving these criteria a 20% weighting. In the event of a tie and there being insufficient funds to support all projects, responses to ‘Species seed strategies’ will be used to break the tie, with the highest score winning. In the event that the applications are still tied, the decision will be up to the evaluation panel to discuss.

**An application that scores 0 in response to any question will be rejected**. **Proposals must score a minimum of 20/40 to be eligible for funding.**

## Example

For an application scored as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question | Score (out of 4) |
| 1. Species seed strategies (20%)
 | 3 |
| 1. Sector capacity (20%)
 | 2 |
| 1. Team, resources, and track record (10%)
 | 4 |
| 1. Market awareness (10%)
 | 2 |
| 1. Deliverability (10%)
 | 2 |
| 1. Risks (10%)
 | 3 |
| 1. Additionality (10%)
 | 3 |
| 1. Costs and VFM (10%)
 | 3 |

The score for Species Seed Strategies and Sector Capacity would be doubled (3 x 2 = 6, 2 x 2 = 4) and added to the remaining six scores giving a total score of 28/40.

## Part 3 Finances

You must complete an SSG Finance Spreadsheet and submit this in support of your application.

If you or your organisation is VAT registered, you will only be able to claim for costs exclusive of VAT so please reflect this in your proposed costs.

Eligible costs that may be claimed for include but are not limited to:

* Staff, or contractor, costs for project delivery, including for research and technical advice.
* Consumables necessary for creation of new seed stand or seed orchard, for example seeds and/or saplings.
* Consumables and temporary infrastructure required for management of seed sources, for example fencing.
* Contribution sought towards costs of equipment required to complete the project. For equipment costing more than £500, the grant contribution offered will be at the discretion of the Evaluation Panel.
* Travel and subsistence specifically for the SSG grant activity in the most economically and sustainable way possible.

 The following expenditure is ineligible:

* Ongoing maintenance of seed stand and seed orchard after the project delivery window.
* Insurance for capital items or staff. Repairs and ongoing maintenance to existing or purchased equipment.
* Any other travel and subsistence inclusive of other grant schemes.
* Costs or overheads such as rent, and utilities apportioned to those staff directly or indirectly employed on the project.
* Costs incurred outside of the project delivery window. Costs involved in preparing your application or work on another grant scheme.

## Part 4 Funded activities, outputs and outcomes

Detail the specific activities that will be funded and the expected outputs and outcomes of the project. For multi-year proposals, break down activities into the financial years in which they will be carried out. Where applicants are not applying for funding in a given financial year, they should leave the corresponding boxes blank. The activities and outputs stated in part 4 will form part of any grant agreement.

## Required outputs

## All successful applicants will be required to complete a full final report of the project when they make their final claim. This should detail achievement against stated outcome and outputs, lessons learnt, a complete cost breakdown outlining how the grant funding has been spent and any need for further development. Applicants with multi-year proposals will be required to complete and submit progress reports on an annual basis. A final report template will be provided to successful applicants.

All seed stands and orchards resulting from the SSG funding must be registered on the National Register of Basic Material and will therefore be subject to the usual FRM inspections (see [Marketing forest reproductive material for forestry purposes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/marketing-forest-reproductive-material-for-forestry-purposes#market-frm-from-registered-basic-material) for more detail). Due to the time-lag for inspection, this is not required for grant payment. However, should these inspections show that the seed stand or orchard is not being properly maintained and/or utilized the FC reserves the right to claw back funds.

## Terms and conditions

The terms and conditions that will apply to this grant are available online at the [Seed Sourcing Application form page](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seed-sourcing-grant-application-form).

## Grant payment

Payments will be made by BACS transfer following receipt of claim forms. In any given financial year, applicants will be eligible to submit claims at the final reporting stage, and on one additional date of their choosing. All claims, interim or final, must be supported by evidence of eligible expenditure (i.e. invoices/ timesheets) and, where not accompanied by a final report, a progress update to demonstrate that works have been carried out as per the activities and outputs stated in the grant agreement. Final claims and reports will be due by 27 March in each financial year.

## Confidentiality

If you consider the information contained within your application to be commercially sensitive, you must notify the Forestry Commission of this when submitting your application. This will then be considered when requests for clarification are received. If relating information is relevant to all applicants and you have indicated that you consider this commercially sensitive, we will discuss with you before releasing any information and may be unable to support the request due to the competitive bids process.

The Forestry Commission reserves the right not to answer clarifications where it considers that the answer to that clarification would or would be likely to prejudice commercial interests.

## Enquiries

You can contact the FC by emailing ssg@forestrycommission.gov.uk. Find out how to [make a complaint or appeal](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission/about/complaints-procedure).