# Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds

# Guidance to Applicants

The Forestry Commission will be hosting a “Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds – How to Apply” webinar event at **2pm on Monday 3 April 2023**. During this session, applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions about the Forestry Innovation Fund application and evaluation processes. If you would like to attend the Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds – How to Apply webinar, please register at: [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woods-into-management-forestry-innovation-fund-webinar-tickets-579033884937).

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 a UK based business, sole trader, organisation, or research organisation. Should the lead applicant not be UK based the application will be rejected.

Applications should be submitted to Forest Services by 23.55 on 15 May 2023. To make an application, please complete the Woods into Management (WiM) Forestry Innovation Funds application form and submit it to: [wimfif@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:wimfif@forestrycommission.gov.uk) before the closing date. Applications must be supported by a completed finance spreadsheet. Notification of success will be made to all applicants by 22 June 2023.

Projects can be single year with output(s) that will be fully developed by 27 March 2024 or run for up to two financial years, ending 27 March 2025. Applicants submitting proposals spanning two financial years should state this on the application form and clearly outline the activities, milestones and outputs that will be delivered by the end of each financial year. Multi-year agreements will be subject to an annual performance monitoring review by the FC. Where applicants are failing to deliver against agreed outputs and objectives, or it becomes clear that avenues of research are no longer worth pursuing, multi-year agreements may be terminated at the discretion of the FC.

## 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, key deliverables and expected 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 the proposals 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 develop as a result of the project
* highlight any gaps in the team that will need to be filled

## Question 3: Impact of the project (20%)

Explain how your proposals will help to achieve the objectives of the grant to which you are applying.

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? How will you ensure the outputs are widely beneficial?
* Where possible, demonstrate potential impacts using quantitative information.

For highly innovative projects, explain:

* what the route to market might be
* and how the project will seek to explore the market potential

## Question 4: Project management (10%)

In support of responses to this question, applicants may submit a supplementary Gantt chart or equivalent outlining key activities, milestones and deliverables with their application.

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 (10%)

Match funding is not a requirement to be eligible for the WiM Forestry Innovation Funds. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to consider match funding where possible to demonstrate better value for money. Please reference your finances spreadsheet where appropriate.

* justify the total project cost and the grant being requested in terms of the project goals
* Outline any financial contributions (match funding) the partners will be making
* 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
* Outline how goods and services will be procured to ensure value for money

## 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. |

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.

In addition, for the overall project, the level of innovation will be assessed by the evaluation panel as follows:

## Degree of innovation (10%)

* 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

## Please note that the WiM Forestry Innovation Funds are not capital grants. Proposals must be innovative in order to be eligible for funding.

## 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. Approach and innovation | 2 |
| 1. Team, resources, and track record | 4 |
| 1. Impact of the project | 3 |
| 1. Project management | 2 |
| 1. Risks | 3 |
| 1. Additionality | 3 |
| 1. Costs and VFM | 3 |
| 1. Degree of innovation | 3 |

The scores for “Approach and innovation” and “Impact of the project” would be doubled and added to the remaining six scores giving a total score of 28/40.

## Part 3 - Finances

You must complete and submit a WiM Forestry Innovation Funds Finances Spreadsheet 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
* Travel and subsistence specifically for WiMFIF related grant activities, carried out in the most economically and sustainable way possible

The following expenditure is ineligible:

* 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.
* Costs currently being met by another grant scheme.

## Part 4 - Funded Activities and Outputs/Outcomes

Detail the specific activities that will be funded and the expected outputs of the project. For multi-year proposals, break down activities into the financial years in which they will be carried out and outputs into the financial years (FY) in which they will be delivered. Where applicants do not wish to apply for grant funding in FY 2024/25, they should leave corresponding boxes blank.

Please note that 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 report of the project, detailing 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, by 27 March 2024. A preliminary report covering progress made towards project milestones, expenditure, emerging results and next steps must also be provided by the 31October 2023. Templates for both preliminary and final reports will be provided to successful applicants by the FC. Applicants with multi-year proposals will be required to complete and submit preliminary and final reports on an annual basis.

## 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 following receipt of claim forms. In any given financial year, applicants will be eligible to submit claims at both the preliminary and final reporting stages, and on up to two additional dates of their choosing. All claims must be supported by evidence of eligible expenditure (i.e., invoices/ timesheets) and, where not accompanied by a preliminary or final report, a progress update to demonstrate that works have been carried out as per the activities and outputs stated in the grant agreement. In 2023/24, the due dates for preliminary and final reporting are 31 October 2023 and 27 March 2024, respectively.

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 get further help from the FC by emailing your enquiry to [wimfif@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:wimfif@forestrycommission.gov.uk). Find out how to [make a complaint or appeal](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission/about/complaints-procedure).