



# Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

## Application form

### Important information about your application – please read

Read the Applicants guide relevant to your scheme year to make sure you are eligible to apply and to help you fill in your application.

For the application to be eligible for funding you must be able to meet all of the eligibility criteria.

Some questions have a limit applied to the number of characters they will accept. It is important that you read through your answers before submitting your form, especially if you have copied and pasted an answer in. If you do go over the limit, any additional characters will be automatically deleted and some of your answers may be lost.

Before you submit your application, make sure that you:

- have filled in all parts of the form and answered all questions that apply to you
- attach any supporting documents and maps
- check any scanned information can still be read
- have the appropriate permissions in the Rural Payments service.

You must not start any project activity, or enter into any legal contracts, including ordering or purchasing any services before your application has been formally approved and you have entered into a grant funding agreement. Any costs incurred before the approval date are at your own risk, may not be reimbursed, and may make the project ineligible for support.

### When to submit your application

You must submit your application no later than **midnight on 15 January 2024**. Applications received after this date will not be accepted.

### How to submit your application

Email your completed form and any supporting documents to [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk) using the verified email address you set up in the Rural Payments service. You must have 'Submit' permission levels for CS applications and CS agreements to fill in the application form.

Use the subject heading 'CSFF Application' and

include your SBI number.

You need to attach all documents to this email that will support your application.

### Get help with your application

Contact us if you need more help with your application by emailing [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk) or calling us on 03000 200 301.

### Using and sharing your information

For information on how we handle personal data go to GOV.UK [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search 'Rural Payments Agency personal information charter'.

## Section 1 – Your details

SBI number

Name

Name of group

Address

**1. Are you, or have you been the Facilitator for any other CS Facilitation Fund groups?**

Yes

No

If Yes, give the group reference number(s) for all groups you have managed (include current and expired groups)

**2. Are you working with other Facilitators as part of your facilitation group?**

Yes

No

If yes, tell us their names, roles and responsibilities. Tell us who the lead Facilitator will be.

**3. Please give details of all staff who will help you deliver the Facilitation Fund. Tell us their roles and responsibilities within the facilitation group.**

**4. If you are applying on behalf of an organisation, have they formally agreed to you applying for this funding?**

Yes

No

N/A

Your form must be certified by the person responsible for agreeing your role as a Facilitator for their organisation. This person will need to have the relevant permission levels set up in the Rural Payments service.

5. The CS Facilitation Fund will not pay for the same activity twice through different schemes or grants. This is referred to as double or duplicate funding. As part of our application checks we need additional information from you to confirm there will be no duplicate funding for activities.

**Please provide details of possible sources of duplicate funding activities. For example, if you are or will be claiming for Landscape Recovery.**

Grant	Issuing Body	Reference number
(Example) Landscape Recovery	(Example) Defra	(Example) 123456789

## **Section 2 – Your experience**

6. **Tell us about your relevant experience of bringing people together to act cooperatively.**  
(Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

7. **Tell us what qualifications/experience you have in agriculture, forestry, water management and/or ecology.**  
(Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

- 8. Tell us about the experience you have working on the priorities covered by Countryside Stewardship and how these are linked to your application.**

(Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

- 9. You must provide two independent referees to support your application. Each referee should be able to confirm your experience and any previous outcomes achieved. They may be subject to checks, so it's important to make sure their contact details are correct.**

**Referee 1:**

Name

Email address

Phone number

**Referee 2:**

Name

Email address

Phone number

## Section 3 – Your group

### 10. When was your group first established?

We can support new and established groups as long as their members are receiving training and advice that is new to them.

Month

Year

### 11. How many members are currently in your group?

Each member must complete a 'CSFF group member details' form and send the original signed version to you. You should keep the original signed forms and send scanned copies to us in support of your application.

### 12. Confirm that you have a Group Agreement in place to cover how the group will operate and manage disputes etc. and that this has been seen and signed by each group member.

Tick to confirm

Please keep the group agreement for your records. We may ask to see this during the length of your agreement.

### 13. What is the total area of the holdings covered by the group? (in hectares)

You'll need to submit clearly annotated map/s showing the location of all group members' land to support your application. If you do not have access to mapping software you can use MAGIC. For more information, please read the Applicants guide relevant to your scheme year.

### 14. If the total combined area of holdings is smaller than 500ha, or holdings are dispersed (not all linked together by boundaries), provide details of how your proposal fits a smaller obvious environmental boundary and how you plan to improve the connection and interaction between such boundaries.

(Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

This could include, but is not limited to clusters of woods, meadows, marshes and/or sub-catchments which gives the opportunity to improve the connection and interaction between them.

**15. Is your group currently receiving any other funding, or are you planning to secure funding on behalf of your group?** This would be from sources outside of Countryside Stewardship to support delivery of your group's ambition.

Yes

No

If yes, you need to tell us who is providing, or will be providing funding to you. Tell us how the funding will be used to help deliver the group's Countryside Stewardship priorities (maximum 1000 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

## Section 4 – Your Delivery Plan

### 16. Select the priority areas of activity you will work on (choose all that apply).

Air Quality

Increasing Biodiversity

Net Zero

Water Management

Priority Species

Water Management (Beaver Management)

### 17. Which National Character Area(s) (NCA) does your application cover?

(Maximum 1000 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings). For more information about NCAs read the Applicants guide relevant to your scheme year.

### 18. We need to know what your plans are to support CS priorities as a group. In the following questions you should include how you will do this and when you plan to complete any training (including who will be running the sessions). You should also tell us when you plan to schedule meetings for your group.

The information you give us in the Delivery Plan below will be used to develop your facilitation plan (agreement) if your application is successful. Make sure you add enough detailed information here as we will use this to determine what you can claim for if you are successful.

We understand that things may change over time. If you are successful in obtaining funding and find you cannot do what you have set out below, you will need to request an amendment to your facilitation plan using your agreement Change Log. For more information on how to do this, read the Applicants guide relevant to your scheme year.

If you will be relying on a sub-contractor to provide training to fulfil any knowledge and expertise needs, you must comply with the requirements set out in the Countryside Stewardship: Facilitation Fund scheme manual.

#### **Tell us what your agreed group objectives are.**

(Maximum 1000 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

**Tell us which CS Priorities are to be delivered by the group.**

(Maximum 1500 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

**How will you (the Facilitator) and your group members take ownership and work together to develop the cooperation needed to achieve your objectives?**

Include clear and specific group member roles here. (Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).



**Tell us about your planned activity with other initiatives.**

(Maximum 1350 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

**Tell us about new activities your group will undertake as a result of acting cooperatively and how these will be delivered.**

(Maximum 1500 characters including bullet points, numbers, and headings).

## **Year 1**

**Period covered: 1 June to 31 August**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 September to 30 November**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

## **Year 1 (continued)**

**Period covered: 1 December to 28 February**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 March to 31 May**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

## **Year 2**

**Period covered: 1 June to 31 August**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 September to 30 November**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

## **Year 2 (continued)**

**Period covered: 1 December to 29 February**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 March to 31 May**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

## **Year 3**

**Period covered: 1 June to 31 August**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 September to 30 November**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

### **Year 3 (continued)**

**Period covered: 1 December to 28 February**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

**Period covered: 1 March to 31 May**

Group meetings  
planned:

Training activities  
planned:

Training  
consumables to  
be purchased:

## Section 5 – Project financial information

### 19. Tell us how much funding you need to achieve your plan

	Year 1 £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Grand total £
(A) Group activity (minus VAT)				
(B) Facilitation and administration costs (minus VAT)				
(C) VAT				
<b>Total of funding applied for (A + B + C)</b>				

### 20. Are you able to reclaim VAT costs from HM Revenue and Customs?

If you are successful with your application, you'll need to provide evidence (a letter from an independent Chartered accountant or HMRC) that you can include VAT.

**No** – no costs

**Yes** – all costs

**Yes** – partial costs

If yes, what is your VAT registration number?

If you are only able to reclaim partial costs, tell us what VAT you can reclaim and on what items.

- it is up to you to determine what VAT you are able to reclaim from HMRC, if any
- we will **not** fund reclaimable VAT
- if you cannot reclaim VAT from HM Revenue and Customs, all of your costs should include VAT.

Read the Applicants guide relevant to your scheme year for more information.



## Section 6 – Supporting Documents

Confirm the supporting documents that you're including with your application. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to ensure all documents are completed in full and correct. Missing documentation may result in the application being rejected.

Supporting document	Number included
Group member details form for each group member	
Group Map(s)	
Two independent references (if referees are from an organisation, references should be on letter headed paper including organisation name, address and logo if applicable).	
Other documents - please specify:	

## Section 7 – Declaration

### **Important – please read**

Before applying for a Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund agreement, you must make sure that you have read and understood the Applicant's guide relevant to your scheme year and the terms and conditions that will apply to your agreement. If you are successful, your agreement will set out the details which you'll need to adhere to if you accept the offer.

### **Declaration**

The declaration must be completed and submitted by someone holding 'Full' or 'Make Legal Changes' permission on the Rural Payments Service.

I declare that:

- to the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information contained in this application, and any other supporting documentation, is true and correct and I accept full responsibility for it.
- if this application is successful, I understand that I may be required to supply additional information. If there is any change to the information I have provided, I will notify the Rural Payments Agency straight away.
- any information I supply may be used by public bodies or their appointed agents in connection with the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund and that I may be contacted from time to time, whether or not my application is successful.
- I am an eligible applicant as detailed in the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund manual.
- I am aware of the conditions that apply to this application and have complied with them. I declare that I have read, understood and complied with all of the relevant guidance information relating to the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund.
- I/my organisation will comply with all relevant legislation, such as health and safety regulations and have appropriate public liability and other insurances to undertake this.
- my business may be visited as part of scheme checks and I agree to give access, cooperate, and provide any help needed during such visits.
- details of anything or any persons connected with my business (including employees) and this grant application that may impact on, or cause a conflict between my business and any part of this grant application have been disclosed.
- if my application is successful, I will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement, and payment of any grant funding will be conditional on compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement.
- if I knowingly make a false representation to obtain grant aid for myself or anyone else, I understand that I risk prosecution, the recovery of all grant payments, and exclusion from other schemes operated by the Rural Payments Agency.
- I understand that my information may also be shared with other government departments and agencies for the purpose of fraud prevention and detection. The application and evaluation of grant funding is also subject to audit and reviews by internal auditors who may need to access the information I submit in my application.
- the monies from this grant will not be used to cross-subsidise any related, linked, parent, subsidiary, partnership, joint venture businesses or operations based in Northern Ireland. Funds from this grant will solely be used for the purposes of England business operations only.
- I/we have not received (and will not seek) funding for this activity under any other European Union or domestic publicly funded agricultural support scheme or programme

By agreeing to the contents in this application form and submitting it to the Rural Payments Agency, you are agreeing to the declaration.

When completing your declaration, you should be aware that in some cases grant support may be refused or withdrawn in full. These are when the Rural Payments Agency determine that:

- a serious non-compliance by the grant beneficiary has occurred
- the grant beneficiary has provided false evidence
- the grant beneficiary has failed to provide the necessary information due to negligence.

The withdrawal of grant support may be applied for both the calendar year you are notified of withdrawal and the following calendar year. Funding may also be refused for other grant schemes. Grant beneficiaries will be notified and will be able to contest this decision if they do not agree.

**Warning:** if you know or recklessly make a false statement to obtain payments for yourself or anyone else, you risk prosecution, termination of any resulting agreement and the recovery of all grant payments. You may also be excluded from other schemes operated by RPA.

By submitting this form, you are confirming that you have read and agree with the above declarations and you consent to us processing the information that we collect from you in accordance with our Privacy Policy and personal information charter.

I hereby apply for a Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund agreement as set out in this application form.

Title	First name	Surname	Date
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If you work as part of an organisation you will need to ask the person responsible for agreeing your participation as Facilitator to confirm below.

**In completing the details below you are confirming that you agree for the above named person to submit an application to us on behalf of your organisation and that you will make sure they have the relevant permission levels set up in the Rural Payments Service.**

Title	First name	Surname	Date
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Position held