
This form has been withdrawn.

You can no longer use this form. The deadline for this round of Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund grant applications was midday (12pm) on 16 February 2024.

For office use only

NEIRF application number:

Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund: third round application form

Use this form to apply for a Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) grant. Before you fill in this application, read the guidance ‘Apply for a grant from the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund’ on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). This includes the criteria which will be used to assess your application.

To fill in this form you must:

- **download it to your device**
- **save your changes**

If you don’t do this, you are at risk of losing your changes to the form.

If you have any difficulties using this form, please email NEIRF@environment-agency.gov.uk.

You can apply for an NEIRF grant within the application window stated in the guidance.

To complete your application you must:

- **complete all fields in Sections 1 to 6**
- **read Section 8: How we will use your information**
- **gather your supporting information and check against the list in Appendix 1**
- **sign the declaration in Section 7**

You must not change the format of this form or add additional pages.

Doing so could invalidate your application.

You must then email your completed form and supporting documents to NEIRF@environment-agency.gov.uk by the deadline stated within the guidance.

Contents

1	About your organisation	2
2	About your NEIRF proposal	5
3	Project location	6
4	Priorities and outcomes	7
5	Plan for delivery of the investment case	15
6	Costs for delivery of the revenue or investment-ready proposal	21
7	Sign your declaration	25
8	How we will use your information	26
	Appendix 1: Supporting documents checklist	27

1 About your organisation

1.1 Details of the proposed agreement holder

These should be the details of the person who will sign the declaration in Section 7 of this form, and will also sign the grant award letter if this application is successful.

1.1.1 Applicant name(s)

1.1.2 Applicant job title

1.1.3 Organisation or business name

This should be entered exactly as the organisation or business appears on Companies House or Charities Commission website (if applicable).

1.1.4 Main correspondence address

This should be entered exactly as the organisation or business appears on Companies House or Charities Commission website (if applicable).

1.1.5 Preferred telephone number

1.1.6 Email address

1.2 What are the details for the single main point of contact for this project?

Please leave blank if the details are the same as question 1.1

1.2.1 Lead contact name(s)

1.2.2 Lead contact job title

1.2.3 Organisation or business name(s)

1.2.4 Main correspondence address

1.2.5 Preferred telephone number

1.2.6 Email address

1.3 What are the details for the single main point of contact for this project?

Please leave blank if the details are the same as question 1.1

Partnership

Please specify type

Charity

Please add the Charity Commission registration number

Public body

Please specify: local authority, parish council, national park authority

Private company

Please enter company number

Other

Please specify type

1.3.1 If you are a public body, please describe your organisation

1.4 Please list the key organisations involved in this application and their roles

For example, lead applicant, advisor, partner, potential seller, potential buyer, other.

Organisation	Role <i>(e.g. lead applicant, advisor, partner, potential seller, buyer, other)</i>	Is this a farming business? <i>(Answer yes or no)</i>	Company Number

1.5 Will the activities you are requesting a grant for in this application receive funding from other sources?

You cannot get funding for activities already covered through other funding. Please provide details of any match funding in question 5.2.

No

Yes

1.5.1 If yes, please explain why this would not duplicate funding from the grant

(Limit of 1,000 characters).

2 About your NEIRF proposal

2.1 Proposal name

Use no more than 80 characters including punctuation and spaces.

2.2 Application description or summary

Give a high level summary of your proposal to get to the investment-ready stage and the capital project delivery as anticipated at this time.

Please make sure you describe:

- the financial potential of the proposed revenue or investment-ready model
- the activities you will use the funding for and how this benefits the farming community
- the economic, social and environmental outcomes the proposed revenue or investment-ready model will achieve (for example, number of jobs created, community engagement and so on)
- your capacity for delivery
- project potential, innovation and learning

(Limit of 1,500 characters including spaces, punctuation and returns).

2.3 List the 3 main objectives of the funded activity or proposal

Each objective needs to be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.

Please include capacity and capability building in your objectives. This information will be used within your grant agreement if this application is successful.

(Limit of 1,500 characters).

3 Project location

3.1 Please help us identify where your project will take place, being as specific as you can.

Describe where the geographical focus of your revenue or investment-ready model would be once it is ready for investment.

Make sure you include the county or local authority area, and any designated or protected areas you may work in. Please also indicate the size of the area the project will operate in.

If your project is not geographically specific, please explain why.

(Limit of 1,000 characters).

3.1.1 Where applicable, please supply the grid references for the site(s) where you will operate your proposed model.

This should be a central grid reference for the site(s) in a 10 or 12 digit format (for example, XY 1234 5678). To find out the 10-digit national grid references you can search on the UK grid reference finder website at www.gridreferencefinder.com.

Site name	Grid reference	Area or length

4 Priorities and outcomes

4.1 Environmental outcomes.

See **section 9.1** of the guidance.

4.1.1 What natural environment is the main focus of your proposed revenue or investment-ready model?

Select all that apply:

- Urban or peri-urban
- Enclosed farmland
- Mountain, moor and heathland
- Freshwaters and wetlands
- Woodland
- Coastal margins
- Semi-natural grassland

4.1.2 Which of the following Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) goals will your proposed revenue or investment-ready model address?

Select all that apply:

- Thriving plants and wildlife
- Clean air
- Clean and plentiful water
- Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides
- Using resources from nature sustainably
- Mitigation of and adaptation to climate change
- Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards
- Enhanced biosecurity
- Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment

4.1.3 What are the local or regional environmental problems your project will address?

Please refer back to the EIP goals in 4.1.2.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.1.4 What are the environmental activities and interventions that will take place on the site and how will these lead to the environmental outcomes selected in 4.1.3 above?

Please include quantified evidence in your response.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.1.5 Please set out your understanding of the long term delivery and maintenance likely to be needed for delivery of your proposal.

Please refer back to the EIP goals in 4.1.2. (Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.1.6 How will environmental change be measured in order to quantify and measure the outcomes?
(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.1.7 What are the environmental benefits that you anticipate generating revenue from?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.2 Financial potential

See **section 9.2** of the guidance.

In your supporting information, please provide:

- letters of support from land managers or farmers selling the environmental outcome (if you are applying on their behalf)
- letters of support from buyers
- letters of support from investors
- your financial model, if developed.

Please confirm in the check list in Appendix 1 which of these items you are submitting as part of your application.

4.2.1 What type of finance model are you proposing?

Investible project

Any project with a path towards generating revenue and attracting private finance by developing an ecosystem service, through a loan or private investment. For example, a habitat bank, the creation of a wetland selling carbon credits (standard project), or an environmental impact bond.

Market enabler

Any project that seeks to develop a market or create scale through the development of a platform or standard. For example, a code, or a trading platform.

4.2.2 Please describe how you will generate revenue from the environmental benefits described in 4.1.7, and using which markets

Please include your rationale for focusing on these particular markets.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.2.3 Who are the farmers or land managers selling the environmental benefit?

Including:

- who are the leads and who are contributing farmers or land managers.
- How far have you progressed in engaging with contributing farmers or land managers?
- What, if any, legal structures or agreements are already in place to support collaboration?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.2.4 Who are the buyers of the environmental benefit and how far have you progressed in securing their interest?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.2.5 How will you measure benefits for buyers and those selling the environmental benefit, including your methods and data units, in ways that meet their expectations?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.2.6 Have you identified potential investors and, if so, how far have you established their current level of interest?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.3 Innovation and learning.

See **section 9.3** of the guidance.

4.3.1 Describe how the proposed revenue or investment-ready model will lead to change through new techniques, methods or products in the market.

For example, engaging investors, growing the market, matching buyers to sellers and so on.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.3.2 Describe your plans to capture, retain and share learning.

Your plans should include how you will retain learning within your organisation and how you would disseminate knowledge beyond your project group and geographical area.

You must provide at least one output that will be publicly available to support these plans and include this in the key milestones table in 5.3.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

4.3.3 What potential does your proposed revenue or investment-ready model have for replicability or scalability?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5 Plan for delivery of the investment case

See **sections 9.4 and 9.5** of the guidance.

5.1 Estimated start and end dates for NEIRF grant funding.

You cannot claim for any costs incurred before the start of your grant agreement. The elements of your project you are seeking funding for should be completed by 31 March 2026.

5.1.1 Estimated start date.

Click here to enter text.

_____ (MM/YYYY)

5.1.2 Estimated end date.

Click here to enter text.

_____ (MM/YYYY)

5.2 What will your project management approach be?

Set out the basis to be followed in managing and delivering your revenue and investment-ready proposal in order to meet your SMART objectives in 2.3. Include project plan, project structure and governance, roles and responsibilities and management of risks and issues. Please provide a project plan, such as a Gantt chart, with your supporting information.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.3 Summarise the key milestones and outputs for the delivery of your revenue or investment-ready proposal.

See **section 9.5** of the guidance.

Focus on the main outputs the NEIRF funded activities will deliver. If your application is successful, these details will form the deliverables within your grant agreement.

Payment of grant claims will be linked to the attainment of these milestones.

Refer to the monitoring and reporting requirements in Section 9 of the guidance for applicants.

Description of milestone or output	Evidence to be provided	Date (MM/YYYY)

5.4 Summarise the top 5 risks to the production of your revenue or investment-ready proposal and how these will be managed.

What risks could prevent or limit the achievement of the objectives outlined in 2.3 on time and to budget?

Score each risk as high, medium or low on the:

- chance of it occurring
- impact it could have on producing the investment case

Description of risk	Chance of risk (high, medium or low)	Impact of risk (high, medium or low)	Planned action to manage or mitigate the risk

5.5 What permissions, consents and so on are required or are in place for the implementation of your revenue or investment-ready model?

This may include a range of permissions such as planning permission, environmental permit, specific licence, as well as continued engagement with other farmers or land managers.

We encourage you to have a full understanding of the permissions and consents of your project.

Please outline why these are necessary and what steps you have taken towards identifying requirements. (Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.6 Describe how the implementation of your revenue or investment-ready model will go beyond compliance with your regulatory obligations.

You cannot get funding for meeting your own regulatory, statutory or other legal obligations.
(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.7 What relevant experience does your project team and your partners bring to this proposal?

You should consider ecological, financial (particularly investment), legal and land management experience.
(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.8 What are your long term plans for implementation of your revenue or investment-ready model, once the agreement period has ended?

(Limit of 1,400 characters)

You should include:

- how will you ensure that these plans progress to investment after the agreement period has ended
- what your key milestones will be
- who is going to take the revenue or investment-ready model forward

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.9 Monitoring and evaluation

See **section 9.5** of the guidance.

5.9.1 Referring back to your objectives in question 2.3, how will you evaluate whether these have been achieved?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.9.2 Once your NEIRF proposal has been delivered:

5.9.2.1 How will you monitor and evaluate the environmental outcomes and benefits as a result of model implementation?

Please refer to the answer provided in 4.1.5.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

5.9.2.2 How will you monitor and evaluate the levels of investment and revenue generation as a result of model implementation?

Please refer back to the answer provided in 4.2.5.

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

6 Costs for delivery of the revenue or investment-ready proposal

You must include 3 quotes or other cost justifications as supplementary information.
Important – you cannot claim costs incurred before a grant agreement starts.

6.1 What is the total cost for the delivery of the revenue or investment-ready proposal?

£

6.2 How much grant funding do you need to deliver your revenue or investment-ready proposal?

£

6.3 What are the key activities that will be involved in the delivery of your revenue or investment-ready proposal?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

6.4 How does your project proposal show value for money?

See **section 9.4** of the guidance. You should include:

- how public money is being used efficiently
- the wider benefits and outcomes that the project will deliver, for example economic and social benefits
- in-kind funding, profits foregone, match funding?

(Limit of 1,400 characters).

6.5 Summarise the breakdown of costs you are requesting for each year of the proposed NEIRF funded activities

Refer to the guidance for applicants for information on eligible and ineligible costs. You will not get funding for ineligible costs.

All activities must be completed by March 2026.

You must provide evidence in your supporting information that the costings shown are reasonable and include day rates where applicable.

For examples of proof of costs and a check-list see Appendix 1: Supporting documents.

Only third sector organisations can apply for costs recovery, to a maximum of 20% of your staff costs. If you are applying for these, please separate out full cost recovery from your staff costs.

Describe the activities and amount the grant will be spent on under the relevant headings by completing the table. If your application is successful these details will be used to form the basis of the payment schedule within your grant agreement, which you must follow.

Staff costs:

Description of costs (please provide day rates)	09/2024	12/2024	03/2025	06/2025	09/2025	12/2025	03/2026	Item totals
Staff costs sub-total								

Technical assistance costs:

Description of costs	09/2024	12/2024	03/2025	06/2025	09/2025	12/2025	03/2026	Item totals
Technical assistance sub-total								

Other costs:

Description of costs	09/2024	12/2024	03/2025	06/2025	09/2025	12/2025	03/2026	Item totals
Other sub-total								

Grand total								
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6.6 VAT Status

Please confirm your VAT status. The answer to this question determines if VAT can be claimed against your grant. If you intend to include VAT costs within your grant budget you must provide a confirmation from an accountant that the VAT you incur is irrecoverable from HMRC.

VAT registered and recoverable from HMRC (VAT costs not included in project costs)

VAT registered but not recoverable from HMRC (VAT costs included in project costs)

Not VAT registered (VAT costs included in project costs)

7 Sign your declaration

Important

Before applying for an NEIRF agreement you must ensure that you have read and understood the NEIRF guidance. If you are successful, your agreement offer will set out the detail which you must follow should you accept the offer.

Declaration

We declare that:

- the details we have provided in this form, the supporting documents (see Appendix 1) are correct and we accept full responsibility for them
- We have read and understood the requirements contained in the relevant NEIRF guidance for applicants, and the terms and conditions that will apply and that we will follow them for the duration of any agreement subsequently offered to and accepted by us

Undertakings

In signing this form we undertake that we:

- are capable and willing to fulfil the obligations which will be required of us if my/our application is successful
- agree to disclose all information relevant to this application, provide any additional information as may be required by the Environment Agency or auditors and co-operate with or take part in any economic, environmental or other monitoring and evaluation of the scheme (including any research and case studies) conducted by the Environment Agency, Defra, or by anyone appointed by it for that purpose
- have full authority and capacity to represent and bind the applicant(s) named at Section 1 of this form

Warning

If you knowingly or recklessly make a false statement to obtain payments to yourself or others, you risk prosecution, termination of any resulting agreement and recovery of any money paid to you under the scheme.

We now apply for an NEIRF agreement as set out in this application form, and provide the relevant supporting documents as detailed in Appendix 1 of this form.

This application must be signed by someone within your organisation with the appropriate authority. If you are a partnership, it can be signed by either the lead partner or all partners.

To sign your declaration you must either:

- print the declaration page, sign it in black ink, then email a scan or photograph of the signed page with your application
- add an electronic signature (such as a JPEG), along with an email from the signatory's organisational email account confirming they allow the submission of the application form

Signature	Name	Your role	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)

8 How we will use your information

How we use your personal data

We are the Environment Agency and we run the Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF). We are the data controller for this service. A data controller determines how and why personal data is processed. Our personal information charter (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/about/personal-information-charter) explains how we deal with your personal data. Go to GOV.UK and search 'Environment Agency personal information charter'.

The data we need

The personal data we collect about you includes:

If you are applying on behalf of an organisation:

- your full name
- your contact details including addresses, emails and phone numbers

If you are an individual or sole trader applying for this fund all of your application will be your personal data. The lawful basis for processing your personal data is to perform a task in the public interest that is set out in law. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has delegated authority to the Environment Agency to administer the NEIRF under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

What we do with your personal data

If you are applying on behalf of an organisation, we will use your personal data to contact you.

If you are applying for a grant as an individual or sole trader, we will use your personal data in your application to help decide whether to award you a NEIRF Grant.

We do not use your personal data to make an automated decision or for automated profiling.

We will share your full application with Defra, Natural England and the Green Finance Institute for the purposes of assessing your grant application.

The NEIRF is subject to transparency obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

How long we keep your personal data

If your application is successful, we will keep your personal data while your project is active and for 7 years after the end of the Grant Agreement.

If your application is not successful, we will keep your personal data for 1 year after the grant award decision.

Where your personal data is processed and stored

The Environment Agency, Defra and Natural England store and process your personal data on servers in the United Kingdom.

The Green Finance Institute stores and processes your personal data on servers in the United Kingdom.

Contact details

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) is responsible for independent advice and monitoring of the Environment Agency's use of personal information.

If you have any concerns or queries about how we process personal data, or if you would like to make a complaint or request relating to data protection, please contact our DPO:

Data Protection Officer, Environment Agency, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AH

Email: dataprotection@environment-agency.gov.uk.

You can find out about your personal data rights from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at www.ico.org.uk. The ICO regulate the data protection legislation. You have the right to lodge a complaint with them at any time.

Appendix 1: Supporting documents checklist

Below is a checklist of supporting information that can accompany your application form.

Some supporting documentation is required alongside your application to enable us to undertake eligibility and due diligence checks. If you do not include the mandatory items your application may be deemed ineligible.

Optional items provide evidence to support your application. Without this supporting information your application may not score as highly.

You must supply copies, scans or photographs (not originals) of all supporting information and evidence. You should label these documents clearly before submitting with your application.

Mandatory supporting information required for eligibility and due diligence checks

Evidence of organisation type

Charity registration number, company number, constitution, public body terms of reference, HMRC registration, partnership agreement and proof of status as a legal entity.

Evidence of procurement processes

Organisation procurement policy that shows the process is open, transparent, competitive and awards the most economical bid.

Financial/management accounts

For the most recent 3 years of trading, or most recent tax return for new businesses without 3 years business accounts, or statement of income and expenses from your accountant if you're self-employed or a new business.

Independent accountant's letter

If irrecoverable VAT is included in the proposal costs (see question 6.6).

Authority to use electronic signatures

If you have used electronic signatures for your declaration, you should include emails from the signatory's organisational email account confirming they authorise the submission of the application form.

Optional supporting information

This evidence is used to support assessment of Criteria B (financial potential) and D (value for money):

Letters of support from:

- Farmer or land manager letter of support
- Buyer(s) letter of support
- Investor(s) letter of support

Project plan

For example a Gantt chart.

Proof of costs

Breakdown of costs including internal salary cost calculations and day rates (based on employee gross salary, employer national insurance and pension contributions).

Comparisons of proposed costs with similar works demonstrating project costs are representative of market value.

Three like-for-like quotes – cheapest quote to be used unless there's strong justification for why a higher quote provides better value for money.

Reason for using single award where tender process not undertaken.

Other related evidence to show the costs are reasonable.