



The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund 2009 Guidance notes

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has a grant scheme to help you develop projects that will look after the AONB now and for the future.

This guidance explains what the scheme is, what ‘sustainable development’ is, who can apply for a grant, and how to go about applying.

What is Sustainable Development?

There are various definitions of sustainable development. Set out below is the definition that we will use when considering projects for the fund.

Sustainable Development will promote and enhance the environmental, economic and community well-being of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

According to the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, achieving sustainable development requires working towards four main goals at the same time:

- *Social progress which meets the needs of everyone*
- *Effective protection of the environment*
- *Ensuring a diverse and prosperous rural economy*
- *Prudent use of natural resources*

What is the Sustainable Development Fund?

The Sustainable Development Fund supports projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It will provide grants to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to develop and test new methods of achieving a more sustainable way of life in this area of great beauty and diversity.

Why has the Forest of Bowland AONB been chosen?

The Forest of Bowland is one of 36 AONBs in England. They extend over more than 15 per cent of England’s land area and represent some of our finest landscapes.

They are statutory designations, set up with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the areas they cover. The Fund seeks to foster projects which are the best of their kind in these outstanding and vulnerable areas.

What kind of project is eligible?

Successful projects must demonstrate that they:

- Further the purposes of AONBs (ie they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of 'natural beauty' that includes landscape features; wildlife; geological; archaeological; architectural and vernacular features)
- Are sustainable against an appropriate test of sustainable development
- Have the demonstrable support or involvement of communities, Are complementary to key local, regional and national strategies (eg Local Agenda 21)
- Help deliver the AONB Management Plan
- Are located within, or bring significant benefit to, the AONB area and its population

Projects should also aim to support one or more of our local priorities for 2009:

- Conserve the important **landscape**, and **cultural and built heritage** of the Forest of Bowland
- Link the nearby **urban populations** with the AONB
- Conserve Bowland's most important **species and habitats**
- Provide **access for all**
- Create **sustainable forms of interpretation** for communities and visitors
- Develop the Forest of Bowland as a **sustainable tourism** destination

Grants can cover the costs of some or all of the following:

- ❖ Practical work
- ❖ Feasibility studies or research projects (up to £5000 only)
- ❖ Group or partnership development
- ❖ Awareness raising and training about sustainability

Examples of projects/project aspects you could include:

- ❖ sustainable transport and tourism
- ❖ environmental building design
- ❖ awareness campaigns
- ❖ innovative products or initiatives which demonstrate sustainability
- ❖ community youth schemes
- ❖ wildlife or conservation activities

Grants can be used to:

- ❖ Pump-prime new sustainable development projects which have been unable to find funding from other sources
- ❖ Provide match-funding for new sustainable development projects
- ❖ Add value to existing sustainable development projects
- ❖ Add a sustainable aspect to existing projects

Remember: - 'Quality counts' so those schemes that are able to offer more in terms of demonstrating eligibility and meeting local priorities set out above, are more likely to attract grant in competition with other schemes.

Who can apply?

Public, private, voluntary sector, individuals, businesses or community groups can apply. Individuals or businesses can only be beneficiaries where the project shows a clear benefit to the wider community.

You don't have to live or work within the AONB to apply. You must simply demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact upon the AONB and satisfy the core criteria of the grant.

How we assess your application

If you are interested in the scheme please complete a Project Information Form and return it to us. We will consider if your scheme is eligible for the fund, and will invite successful schemes to complete a more detailed, application and will assign an officer to support you in developing your project and completing the form.

Your completed application form will be assessed by an officer working for the Forest of Bowland AONB team, and then it will be taken to the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund Panel where a decision is made on which grants to approve. The panel meets regularly and is made up of representatives from a range of interests, including community, farming, wildlife, business and heritage.

Smaller grants, ie under £3000, will be assessed by the team and you will be notified of our decision more quickly.

Before you submit an application, please speak to us! The AONB team can guide and support the development of your application where appropriate.

Grants

- projects must be completed by 31 January 2010
- Grants will normally be in the range of £1000 to £10,000
- The scheme can provide up to 50% funding for a project, although in exceptional cases a higher rate of grant may be provided.
- Grants are usually paid in arrears, although we can provide funds in advance if necessary – please contact us to discuss your needs
- In all cases an agreement setting out what is required for satisfactory completion of the project will be signed prior to receipt of grant
- For match funding purposes, volunteer time can be included. It will usually be calculated at £50/day (£6.25/hr) for general volunteers and £100/day (£12.50/hr) for specialist, technical or professional volunteers.
- Support in kind, eg use of office space, or loan of equipment should be accurately costed and included in your application if relevant

How can the AONB team help?

If you would like more information or want to talk through a project idea please contact the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit: email cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk, or phone on 01200 426433 to obtain a project information form.

SDF is delivered locally by the Forest of Bowland AONB unit and co-ordinated by Natural England on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).