



Sustainable Management Scheme – Supporting Natura 2000 Restoration Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs are designed to support the detailed information provided in the scheme guidance documentation (<https://gov.wales/sustainable-management-scheme-supporting-natura-2000-restoration>). It is a live document which will be updated as new questions are posed.

Q1. What is the Sustainable Management Scheme – supporting Natura 2000 restoration (SMS –N2K)?

- A.** The SMS – N2K is funded by the Welsh Government and aims to support landscape-scale capital investment delivering action to improve the condition of Natura 2000 sites.

Q2. Why are you launching this grant scheme now and not earlier in the year?

- A.** It was the intention to launch the scheme earlier in the year but as a result of the Covid emergency it had to be delayed. As the delivery window is truncated, applicants need to be realistic about what can be delivered by the end of the financial year and how much to bid for.

Q3. What is being funded?

- A.** The SMS – N2K is specifically aimed at supporting action to help improve biodiversity across the Natura 2000 network and its surrounding areas. In line with the Welsh Government policy on Natural Resources these sites are not managed in isolation but seen as part of the wider landscape and vital in helping to achieve resilient ecosystems.

Q4. Why is the funding only available for 2020/21?

- A.** The funding has been made available as part of the budget settlement for 20/21. It is designed to provide capital investment to support the restoration of N2K sites while also helping to address the nature emergency as we start to recover from the Covid crisis. Discussions are ongoing with regard to future longer term programme of restoration and any associated funding.

Q5. How do I know if I am in a N2K area?

- A.** Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be able to advise if you are in a N2K area or sufficiently close to support the restoration of a N2K site. NRW can be contacted via: sitesactions@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk. You should discuss your project ideas with NRW at an early stage to ensure the proposals meet the requirements for that site.

Q6. Can individual farmers / landowners apply for the funding?

- A. Yes - this scheme is open to applications from SMEs and large businesses, education or research establishments, charities, farmers, foresters, community or voluntary groups (inclusive of all non-government organisations) This includes associations of owners and community woodlands, trusts, national park authorities and local authorities.

Q7. Are there limits on the amount of funding I can apply for?

- A. Yes – the minimum amount that you can bid for is **£10,000** up to a maximum of **£4m**. We expect the majority of bids to be in the range of £50,000 - £500,000 however this does not preclude applications for smaller projects with a minimum value of £10,000 or large collaborative multiple projects in excess of £500,000. Grant will be paid at 100% of eligible costs

Q8. How do I know what activities qualify for capital funding?

- A. The SMS –N2K guidance document provides detailed information of what is eligible or ineligible (Annex E). Further info can also be provided by the Welsh Government Grants team via: sustainablemanagementscheme@gov.wales

Q9. When will I know if my application has been successful?

- A. The closing date for applications is **11.59pm on 10/08/2020***. Each application will then be assessed against each of the criteria and the successful applicants will be notified in early September.

***Please note the date correction in this document is to align with the Guidance and Application Form.**

Q10. I am already in another scheme so will I be able to apply for this scheme also?

- A. Yes – provided that you are not receiving funding for the same activity under another scheme and the project meets the requirements of this scheme.

Q11. What happens if I'm unable to complete the work by 31 March 2021?

- A. All works are required to be completed and claimed by 31 March 2021 to be eligible for funding. However if you are experiencing difficulties please discuss at the earliest opportunity with the grants team.

Q12. Where can I get help with my application?

- A. General scheme advice can be obtained by contacting the Welsh Government grants team via: sustainablemanagementscheme@gov.wales. For advice on specific project proposals Natural Resources Wales can provide advice via: sitesactions@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk.

Q13. Will the grant fund capital works including staff time involved with delivering this work? Can both the staff time involved in delivering the project and the associated full cost recovery costs be included in the direct costs/ expenditure or would any of this come under the 10% which is just for project management/ administration costs? If some of the staff time included is for work such as assessing, preparing, finding contractors to do the work for example, would this come under the direct costs/ expenditure or the 10% for project management administration costs?

- A.** Under the conditions of grant the only staff costs that can be claimed are those that can be capitalised against the asset that is being created or improved. These are those directly associated to the asset creation or improvement. On a full cost recovery basis, this can include up to 10% of the total cost of the asset creation to cover the project management office to manage and oversee the work (management, procurement, invoicing etc.) . In addition to this we would accept where appropriate that the in house experience within the organisation and/or collaboration exists to undertake the work on the ground to conduct site feasibility, ground preparation, site survey, baseline data collection & analysis, post work assurance etc. In these cases and where the work is directly related to the creation or improvement of the asset – it can be included as capitalised staff costs (time sheeted evidence). You must ensure that in these cases that you evidence value for money and fair appropriation of time based on market averages or other sector specific methodologies. **Where at all possible** and certainly where the expertise sits outside the organization and/or collaboration **the project must contract work through fair and open procurement** (e.g. Ground works and hard landscaping, tree planting, river revetment works, independent asset assurance etc.) . Where you have any specific questions around the eligibility of activities in relation to the scheme guidance or capital allocations you should seek further advice through sitesactions@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk and/or sustainablemanagementscheme@gov.wales email addresses.

Q14 Can one organisation submit more than one application? It is appreciated that projects can and should where possible deliver more than one objective of the scheme but this question is applicable if an organisation had more than one project, which it was not possible to combine together despite the different projects potentially delivering multiple objectives.

- A.** A single organisation can submit more than one application or be part of more than one collaborative application. In these scenarios, the work within the projects must not be duplicating each other – particularly within the same location. Non duplication on multiple projects from the same location is also very important where project management is concerned this includes a potential issue of double funding posts. Organisations must be very specific on the staffing when they undertake the management of multiple projects. It is for this reason that we advise that organisations or collaborations operating over multiple sites consider a single project application. This may make evidencing a single project office easier and efficiencies of scale when procuring and contracting.