



## **Sustainable Development Fund 2015 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 therefore 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.

### **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’ and deliver actions from the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan which you can view at <http://www.forestofbowland.com/Management-Plan>

- Are sustainable against an appropriate test of sustainable development
- Have the demonstrable support or involvement of communities
- Are located within, or bring significant benefit to, the AONB area and its population. See map <http://forestofbowland.com/main-map>

**Projects should also aim to support one or more of our local priorities for 2015. Those which support local priority 1 will be more likely to attract grant in competition with other projects:**

1. Develop **innovative** and **sustainable** solutions to **local issues** – eg local food growing schemes, mobile or outreach services for rural young people, opportunities for commercial recycling, community owned businesses, developing new markets for local products etc
2. Conserve and enhance the important **landscape**, and **cultural and built heritage** of the Forest of Bowland
3. Conserve and enhance the AONB's most important **species and habitats**
4. Provide accessible opportunities for people to **learn about and/or enjoy** the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland. For more information on special qualities see our work on Sense of Place at <http://www.forestofbowland.com/Sense-Place>

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

- ❖ Practical work
- ❖ Materials and equipment
- ❖ Awareness raising and training about sustainability

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 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 the local priorities set out above, are more likely to attract grant in competition with other schemes. SDF must be seen to 'make a difference' and should make up a reasonable proportion of your total project costs,**

### **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, however you must demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact upon the AONB and satisfy the core criteria of the grant.

Organisations who have previously been awarded grants from SDF must show that their application is for a demonstrably different project, and may be given lower priority than new applicants.

### How we assess your application

If you are interested in the scheme please contact Cathy Hopley to discuss your project idea, on 01200 448000 or [cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk).

You can also download an application form from our website  
<http://forestofbowland.com/Sustainable-Development-Fund-0>

Your completed application form will be assessed by an officer working for the Forest of Bowland AONB team, and you may receive a call or visit to discuss your project further. Your application will then be taken to the AONB's Sustainable Development Fund panel where a decision is made on which grants to approve. The panel is made up of local representatives from a range of interests, including community, farming, wildlife, business and heritage.

From May 2013 the SDF will be administered by Champion Bowland, and runs alongside their small grants scheme for projects requiring up to £500.

### Grants

- projects must be completed **within 12 months of your offer of grant**
- Grants will normally be in the range of £500 to £5,000. However larger grants will be considered if a project is viewed by the panel to be particularly innovative
- The scheme can provide up to 75% funding for a project run by voluntary and community groups, 50% to public sector or business led schemes
- The remaining 25%+ of funds can be made up of volunteer time, grant, gifts in kind or cash
- SDF **cannot** be matched by a small grant from Champion Bowland, or spent on a project previously funded by the AONB or Champion Bowland
- For match funding purposes, volunteer time can be calculated at £50/day (£7/hr) for general volunteers and £100/day (£12.50/hr) for specialist, technical or professional skills
- Support in kind, eg use of office space, or loan of equipment should be accurately costed and included in your application if relevant
- Contributions to staff costs will not normally be eligible for grant support
- Grants are usually paid in arrears, although we can provide 50% of 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 must be signed prior to receipt of your grant

**SDF is delivered locally by the Forest of Bowland AONB unit and Champion Bowland on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).**