



# How to raise money for your habitat project

## Introduction

You would like to start a project but how do you find the money?

Habitat improvement projects need not be expensive, and raising the money for good projects isn't difficult, once you know who to ask. This document will give you some basic guidance on sources of funds, but please ask the WTT for help and advice on your specific needs.

There is money available for projects, but you can waste a lot of time in unsuccessful funding bids.

Almost all funders have very clear criteria for giving money, so make sure you:

- Understand what are these criteria
- Match your project to their funding criteria – or adapt how you present your project so that it does.
- 'Tick all the boxes'. Make sure your funding application explicitly matches the project to the funding criteria

The WTT can help you by pointing you to potential sources of funding, helping you draft requests for funding and reviewing any funding bids to give them the best chance of success.

## Some basic principles

### What do you want to do?

Before you approach anyone for funds, be clear about your project objectives:

- what do you want to do and why ?
- who and what will benefit ?
- how much money do you need and when do you need it ?

### Matching your project to the funding criteria

Match your project to the most suitable funding source where the criteria closely matches your own objectives

All sources of funding will have a set of criteria against which they will judge your project and decide whether to fund it or not. Compare what you want to do with what the funder will fund - and be prepared to adapt your project.

This need not mean fundamentally changing what you want do. It may simply be a change of emphasis or a matter of presentation. For example, education may be one of the key criteria, in which case you could offer to run some open days for schools and colleges or create an education pack or host some field trips for local students.

If you are raising money from individuals, the criteria may not be obvious, but they will still be there. You need to find out what they are by listening very carefully to a potential individual donor, or by working out what will motivate a group of people like a school or community group to raise money for you.

### **Who will give you funding?**

These are the main sources of funds:

- Public bodies, for example Local Authorities, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, SNH.
- Charitable Trusts
- Landfill community fund (used to be called the Landfill Tax)
- Lottery funds
- Businesses
- Individual donors

Each of these categories is covered in more detail below.

### **Partnerships**

Partnering with other organisations is looked on favourably by most funding sources. It may give you access to greater expertise or give you broader appeal.

Consider partnering with local community groups, Wildlife Trusts, schools, local and central government agencies.

Some sources of funding are only available to registered charities, in which case you may consider registering as a charity (not a very quick or easy process) or, more likely, partnering with the Wild Trout Trust or another registered charity partner.

### **Match funding**

Almost all funding comes with strings attached. Most common is the need to obtain 'match funding'. This means that one funder will give you some money – but you have to match it from other sources before they will release the funds.

### **Saying 'thank you'**

Whether it is an individual or an organisation, don't forget to say thank you for the funding. Many organisations will ask for a formal report, but you should always be prepared to provide information on how the money is spent and what has been achieved.

## Sources of funding

### Public funding

This section deals primarily with England and Wales. Different public bodies exist in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and whilst similar principles will apply, please ask the WTT for specific advice.

#### The Environment Agency

The EA are a very good source of funds for river habitat improvement projects. They like to work with partners, and some funding is ring fenced for fisheries from rod licence revenue. Key objectives for the EA fisheries team include: delivering their various fishery strategies and increasing angling participation (e.g. introducing children, women and ethnic minorities to fishing). For instance there may be resources available under a local Salmon Action Plan which might have resource available for improving spawning and juvenile habitat for salmonids or improving access for migration.

An increasingly important objective for the EA is connected to the Water Framework Directive, which obliges the EA to enable rivers to reach 'good ecological status' or 'good ecological potential'. Look at your regional River Basin Management Plans to see what plans are in place for your river. If you can link your project to an action in this plan, this will help obtain funding from the EA.

Be aware that the EA is investing a lot of money in flood risk management, so a project that potentially helps to reconnect a river to its flood plain or reduce flood risk by removing a barrier is likely to be well funded.

The EA is complex organisation, and building relationships with a few key people can make it much easier to find funding and to get support in processing any required consents.

Get to know the following people at you local area or regional EA office:

- Fishery Officer and Fisheries Technical Specialist
- Biodiversity Officer
- Regional Strategic Fisheries Officer
- Development Control Officer
- Some regions have Partnership Officers, whose remit is to work with people like you!

It helps to know how the budget process works in the EA. This may vary and you should work with your EA contacts to get your project into the EA budgeting process. For example, funds from the Rod Licence are allocated based on funding requests made in the autumn each year. If projects are approved, funding is then made available from the following April.

Towards the end of the financial year (October – March), it is possible that some budgets may be under-spent. By getting to know your local contacts, and making them aware of your project plans, you may be able to help them out with any under-spend!

## SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency)

Like the EA, SEPA are charged with enabling rivers to reach good ecological status and have River Basin Management Plans for the various catchments in Scotland. In Scotland, the catchment restoration fund is known as the Water Environment Fund; £1 million is available annually and the fund is managed by SEPA with support from SNH, the Forestry Commission and Scottish Government. Projects funded by SEPA will:

- restore the morphology (i.e. the condition of the banks, bed and shore) of the water environment;
- remove barriers to fish migration
- control invasive non-native species;
- provide treatment for discharges from abandoned non-coal mines.

Like the EA, SEPA is a relatively complex organization but the first port of call for interested parties should be their relevant local Advisory Group coordinator. The AAGs are composed of representatives of the key stakeholders and responsible authorities for river basin management planning in their area. These areas cover all the river catchments in Scotland.

## Natural England

NE can be a source of funds for river habitat improvement projects. They have particular focus areas:

1. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats (including brown trout and chalk streams) but also consider if your project will positively affect other BAP species such as brook lamprey, water voles, otters etc.
2. Conservation designation areas, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

NE have targets to implement BAPs and to move SSSIs into 'favourable' status. They and may have funding available locally to work with project partners to achieve these objectives.

Like the EA, NE also have a regulatory role, so it is worthwhile working with them as you develop your project plans, to ensure that your work does not have a negative impact on other species (be aware, for example, of bat roosts impacted by coppicing work, or water vole habitat affected by bank revetment, avoid tree work in the bird nesting season and any work during fish spawning periods).

Get to know your local NE contact. And work with them as you do with your EA contacts.

## SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage)

SNHs funding streams are split into two distinct areas:

- **Community Action Grants;** applications that support, outdoor recreation, volunteering and outdoor learning, action to improve, protect and manage habitats, species and landscapes and citizen science and biological recording

- **Natural Project Proposals** that improve management of nature and landscapes specifically by:
  - improving the planning and management of landscapes
  - improving the management and use of natural resources
  - improving wildlife management

For more detail, click [funding priorities guidance](#)  before applying.

## Local Government

Local Government, at both a Country and District level, have responsibility for the local environment and will have Countryside Service team. It is worthwhile talking both to your local Councillor and to the Countryside Service or Biodiversity team to understand their objectives and priorities, particularly if your project is in an urban area (e.g. Trout in the Town) or has a strong local community component.

## Charitable Trusts

Charitable Trusts are organisations that have been set up to fund charitable works through a grant making process. There are hundreds of them!

Some are very large and national, others very small and local. Generally they have very specific objectives and will publish the criteria against which they will review funding requests.

The larger, well known trusts (such as the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) receive many more requests for funding than they can fulfil. Many small and local trusts actually struggle to give the money away – sometimes because the criteria they set are very tightly defined.

Finding a charitable trust which matches your funding needs is time consuming, but there may be sources of help locally. Many Local Authorities have a service which helps local charities make contact with local sources of funding, and they will be familiar with local charitable trusts. Local conservation groups such as your county Wildlife Trust may have a professional fundraiser who you can befriend for some advice.

A full list of charitable trusts can be found here:

[http://www.funderfinder.org.uk/links\\_trusts.php](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk/links_trusts.php)

The rule about understanding the criteria applied to funding applications is especially important with charitable trusts so that you avoid wasting a lot of time on an application that will never succeed. Read the criteria they publish, and then go and talk to them about your potential application. They will often be willing give advice about how you might

present your project in such a way that they can say 'yes'. Just as importantly, they will tell you if you would be wasting your time!

## **Landfill community fund grants**

All of the operators of landfill waste disposal sites have to pay a tax, a proportion of which is put aside for community and environmental projects. The money available through this process runs into millions, and habitat improvement projects will often meet their funding criteria, so this is an important source of funding.

Some examples of the larger programmes are Biffaward and Sita Trust, but there are also local landfill operators that will run a fund for their local area.

Find out your local landfill operators (the rules say your project must be within given radius of a landfill site) and then check the website for their funding criteria.

The application process is generally straightforward, but competition for funds is high so (again) make sure your application closely matches their funding criteria.

## **Lottery funding**

This is potentially a large source of funds, but (yet again) the criteria they set are very clearly defined so you need to check carefully that your project matches the criteria.

The funds available will generally have a community engagement / public access flavour so money for projects on private land with no public benefit are not very likely to be successful, but it always worth checking. There are also different funds available in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The areas that are worth looking are:

Check the Big Lottery Fund, especially Awards for All – small grants aimed at local communities. The application process for this is quick and easy.

See : <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index>

The Heritage Lottery fund is (not surprisingly) about heritage, but this can sometimes include environmental type projects especially if there is an educational element to the project and it encourages 'participation'. Check out the website for current funds, and contact the WTT for specific guidance before you apply.

## **Businesses**

Most companies, large and small, have a corporate responsibility policy and will donate money to charities, usually (again) based on clearly defined criteria.

Most businesses prefer to donate money or give gifts in kind to charities and projects that benefit the local community and their staff, and often like their staff to be directly involved as volunteers either as a one off event or as long term volunteers.

There are broadly two methods of approach to businesses:

1. Understand their corporate policy and guidelines (often available on the web for larger companies) and work through the 'official' route. For example, the Co-Op regularly donates small amounts to local charities and projects.
2. Use your local knowledge and your contacts (e.g. employees of the company involved in your project) to make a direct approach for funding or for help in kind.

You will need to consider what the company will get out of helping you. For example, ticks in boxes for Corporate Responsibility, good PR, better employee relations, perhaps assuaging a guilty conscience if they have been associated with pollution incident.

Always think through and answer the question 'what's in it for them' in any discussion. You may be very enthusiastic and committed to your project, and this is extremely important. But you also need to communicate this to a potential business sponsor in such a way that means they can clearly see what they will get out of it.

## **Fundraising events, auctions, raffles etc.**

This method of fundraising results not only in money for projects but is also fun, widens the involvement of local people and raises the profile of the project, particularly if you get the local media involved.

The WTT may be able to help by providing raffles prizes or auction lots.

For sponsored events, using an online sponsoring facility makes collecting money very easy. This service is provided by [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com)

## **Individual donors**

Individual donations is an area often neglected, but many people make regular donations to charities and / or have a Charities Aid Foundation(CAF) account that they use to make donations.

Response to mail shots or letters is generally very poor and not cost effective on a small scale. What is very effective is using the network of people that you know, who may already

be part of your project or associated with it in some way, or are likely to be supportive. A personal approach, ideally face to face, is the most successful. Offer to show selected people around the river on a one to one or as a very small group, explain what you are aiming to achieve, and that you are trying to raise £x and ask if they help.

## **Gift Aid**

A quick note about Gift Aid and tax relief, which applies to individuals who are UK taxpayers only.

If a donation is made to a charity, Gift Aid is applied, which means the Government adds 23% to the donation. A Gift Aid declaration must be signed by the donor

If the donor is a higher rate tax payer, then they can declare their gift on their tax return and receive tax relief on the difference between the basic rate of tax and the higher rate.