Sustainable Development Fund GUIDANCE NOTES

We are here to help you put together your application. Please talk to us from the very early stages of your project or idea so that we can help you to develop it and secure the funding. Further information can also be found on our website at www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/living-and-working/sdf

What is the Sustainable Development Fund?

The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) aims to support projects that result in positive benefits for the Yorkshire Dales National Park - its environment, its economy, and its communities. It provides a simple and accessible source of money for local projects. It is open to any individual, business, community group or voluntary-sector body.

The type of project we can fund

We want to keep the SDF as flexible as possible. A project will be eligible for consideration if it:

- contributes in some way to looking after the National Park's natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage **or**
- promotes opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy those things

  and
- it will provide some local economic benefit, **or** some benefit to a local community in the National Park.

We'd encourage all applicants to think about how their project can provide:

- **multiple benefits** – although a project may have a particular economic, social or environmental focus, it is always worth thinking about how it can be designed to secure additional benefits across all the three elements of sustainability or, at the very least, to ensure it does not harm any other interests.
- **value for money** – think carefully about how and where the money is being spent and whether it maximises positive outcomes making sure direct benefits are felt on the ground.
- **clear outcomes** – so that we know what it will deliver and so that its success can be measured and learnt from/built upon.
- **a legacy** – we want the benefits to be long term, so think about what happens when the SDF money runs out and the project ends.

Applicants should refer to the National Park Management Plan, which sets out shared ambitions to secure a prosperous future for the National Park and its communities. Applicants need to show how their project will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the objectives in the Management Plan. The Management Plan can be found at National Park Management Plan 2025-30

What we won't fund

We won't normally fund:

- applications by, or on behalf of, public sector bodies
- applications relating to areas outside the National Park boundary, unless a clear benefit for the National Park itself can be demonstrated
- fixed-term project officers employed solely for the purpose of delivering the proposed project
- the cost of preparing or submitting applications for statutory consents
- repeat applications where a project is substantially the same as one previously funded
- the purchase of land or buildings
- ongoing revenue costs for established projects, events or enterprises
- retrospective applications or items where costs have already been incurred

How much can you apply for?

There is no set minimum or maximum amount. The total annual fund is £100,000 and we normally aim to support at least 10 projects with this amount. The average award is around £5,000, but you should apply for what you need to make your project happen. Awards of £10,000 or less will normally be in the form of a grant; however, for larger requests, we will consider whether a loan is a more suitable means of support. Funding requests can be for capital items or revenue costs.

Registered charities and voluntary/community and not-for-profit groups can apply for up to 75% of a project's costs. All other types of applicants can apply for up to 50% of project costs. It is therefore important to consider match funding. This can be sourced from other grant programmes, private finance or from 'in kind' contributions[1]. SDF could itself be used as a form of match funding for a larger project where the principal source of finance comes from elsewhere.

[1] Non-cash contributions can be anything you need for your project that you do not have to pay for eg donation of building materials or volunteer time. To work out the financial value of the time volunteers contribute the following rates will apply: unskilled £50/day; skilled £150/day; professional £350/day. A day is based on 7 hours.

Subsidy control legislation places certain legal obligations on public authorities, including the Yorkshire Dales NPA, aimed at preventing them from giving financial advantages to enterprises in a way that could distort competition. As part of your application, it will be necessary for us to establish whether any offer of financial assistance from the SDF would fall within the scope of subsidy control measures. This includes establishing whether the financial assistance would confer an economic advantage on one or more enterprises. If an SDF grant for your project would fall within the scope of subsidy control measures, we will require you to confirm that your enterprise has not exceeded cumulative Minimum Financial Assistance thresholds, prior to making the grant offer. Further information can be found in this guidance: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-subsidy-control-statutory-guidance

The process

If you are thinking about applying, please talk to us first. We can offer some pointers that will give your project the best chance of being funded and prevent time being wasted in abortive or deferred applications.

If your project is eligible, the next stage is to complete an application form. For applications of £5,000 or less we generally require no further information, provided the project is clearly described and justified. For requests above £5,000, we may need additional information and can advise you on what might be appropriate. For applications above £10,000, or for projects involving a newly establishing business, we will normally expect a more detailed project management or business plan to support the application.

For individual items of expenditure over £10,000 at least three quotes must be obtained and provided as part of the application. It remains good practice to obtain quotations for items of expenditure below this threshold. The Authority therefore welcomes the submission of quotations for any items of expenditure between £5k and £10k and, on occasion, may require this information for smaller items of expenditure, in the interests of demonstrating value for money. Where the chosen supplier of a product or service is not the cheapest available, please provide an explanation as to why you have opted for the higher quotation.

If you have included car travel as part of your project costs, then the mileage rates below will apply[2].

Applications can be submitted at any time. If your grant request is £10,000 or less, we will normally aim to decide within four weeks of receiving the application.

Applications for more than £10,000 will be reported to our Finance & Resources Committee for a decision. This Committee meets every three months so larger requests will be subject to a longer timeframe for a decision. You can still submit your application at any time, but please enquire to find out about our deadlines.

[2] The current mileage rate is 30p per mile for any unaccompanied journeys and 40p per mile for journeys carrying passengers.

If you are successful in obtaining a grant, you must be willing to sign up to our grant conditions. These will typically cover items such as the need to credit the SDF when publicising and reporting outcomes of the project.

Grant payments are normally made in arrears, so you will need to claim the grant after expenditure has been incurred. We will aim to pay valid claims within two weeks of receipt and payments can be phased flexibly in accordance with project needs.

We will normally expect projects to complete within 12 months of the grant offer being accepted. It is therefore preferred that all necessary consents have been obtained prior to the submission of an application, so that there are no delays in commencing the project.