

Terms and conditions for Boost for Biodiversity

Severn Trent has prepared this document to ensure that all applicants to the Biodiversity Boost Fund are aware of the requirements and conditions attached to the payments concerned, and to help in completing applications for Biodiversity Boost Fund.

Applicants to the fund accept that they are familiar with the Terms and Conditions outlined in this document and will comply with them.

Should applicants have any queries in relation to their application please contact our Biodiversity and Ecology Team, you can email them: EcologyMatters@severntrent.co.uk before submitting their application.

In the event that there are any changes to these Terms and Conditions they will be published on the Severn Trent website and available for download.

1.0 Key facts

- Our Boost for Biodiversity grant window opens on 15th March 2021, we will accept applications from this date.
- Grants will only be available to anyone within the Severn Trent region (see map in Appendix 1, a pdf version can also be found on our Boost for Biodiversity webpage).
- All projects must be designed to create or enhance habitats
- Projects should improve 0.5-30ha of habitats
- Applicants can submit up to 3 different project proposals
- For linear features such as hedgerows and rivers we are using the conversion 1ha=1km
- A scoring system (see section 11.0) has been devised to ensure that funding will go to projects that demonstrate a clear biodiversity improvement. Not all applications will be successful.
- Applications will close at 5pm on Friday 23rd April 2021
- All work must comply with relevant environmental legislation and have the appropriate planning permissions.
- We will not be able to fund areas that have previously received Biodiversity funding from us.
- All work must comply with the relevant health and safety legislation. Please visit the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk for further information.
- A map of the area to be improved and a photo of the project area must be submitted with the application
- The latest annual completion date permissible is 26th February, projects must include their completion date in the application.
- Any queries should be sent to ecologymatters@severntent.co.uk

2.0 Objective of scheme

- Improve, enhance and protect biodiversity
- Support development of multi-benefit projects
- Promote partnership working on a catchment scale, within the Severn Trent region only

3.0 Eligibility

- Grants will be available to anyone* undertaking biodiversity improvement works taking place within the Severn Trent region (Appendix_1). **Individual farms must apply as part of a farm group/network or with a neighbour to demonstrate a landscape scale approach.*
- All projects must be designed to create or enhance habitats
- The main applicant must be over eighteen years old or over on the date you submit your application.
- ST cannot fund projects which are already under an existing grant or stewardship scheme for the same type of habitat works.
- Projects must cover an area greater than 0.5ha and smaller than 30ha. The area can be split between several parcels of land.

4.0 Application procedure

- Applicants will be required to:
 - Fully complete the application form
 - Submit a map and photos (please see guidance on photos in section 5) of the area to be improved
- Members of Severn Trent's Biodiversity and Ecology Team will be available to advise with the application process but will not be responsible for the submission of the application form.

- A scoring system has been devised to ensure that funding will go to projects that demonstrate a clear biodiversity improvement. Not all applications will be successful. The scoring criteria can be found in section 11.0.
- Applications will close at 5pm on Friday 23rd April 2021
- All applicants will be contacted regarding the success of their application by the end of May 2021
- Not all applications will be successful. ST may reject applications if they are not likely to benefit biodiversity. The submission of a valid application does not guarantee funding will be received for your project.
- Successful applicants will be notified of their success and will receive further detail on how they can gain extra funding for the expansion of their project.
- A maximum of three projects may be entered by any one applicant.

5.0 Responsibility of applicant

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to familiarise themselves with these Terms and Conditions.
- Include a map and photos (please see guidance on photos in section 5) illustrating the project area when submitting your application
- Make sure that the area of land to be improved hasn't received biodiversity funding from Severn Trent previously
- Planning permission may be required depending on the project chosen. Consult your local planning authority or National Park authority to seek informal advice.
- Any capital items you install must comply with the relevant British Standards (BS).
- The habitat created or enhanced through this fund must be maintained until at least 31st March 2025.
- All works must comply with relevant environmental legislation associated with the project
- The Forestry Commission England Environmental Impact Assessment Checklist must be consulted for all woodland creation projects, all subsequent required actions must be undertaken before the project can begin. More information and the EIA checklist can be found here:
https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fuploads%2Fsystem%2Fuploads%2Fattachment_data%2Ffile%2F930979%2FEIA_Enquiry_Form_Afforestation.pdf&data=04%7C01%7CBryony.Harrison%40severntrent.co.uk%7Cad37eeca979b48ab7dd908d8ccd38aba%7Ce15c1e997be3495c978eeca7b8ea9f31%7C0%7C0%7C637484556232325608%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&data=jYptkWopRZ2Xp9xB8OMjDzfaf4K8j8mgWRvFTVnrms!%3D&reserved=0
- Hedgerow placement must be considered in context with the wider ecological environment.
- If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from the Environment Agency or from the relevant authority;
 - National Park
 - Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Protected Species
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Registered Parkland
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Registered Battlefields
 - AONB

- Any work carried out near the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the Environment Agency (Tel: 03708506506 or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk).
- Once offered a grant, applicants can't change their capital works, or amend their agreement unless given permission by Severn Trent.
- Fixed point before and after photos of the project site should be taken, the number of photos needed is as follows:
 - <2ha – at least 1 set of fixed point before and after photos
 - 2ha-10ha – at least 1 set of fixed point before and after photos per 2ha e.g. 10ha project would need at least 5 sets of fixed point before and after photos
 - 10-30ha – at least 1 set of fixed point before and after photos per 2ha up to 10ha and at least 1 set of fixed point before and after photos per 5ha over 10ha e.g. 25ha project would need at least 8 sets of fixed point before and after photos
- Projects should be completed by 26th February 2023, any projects to be completed in the financial year 2021/22 should be completed by 26th February 2022.
- The number of hectares of improvement quoted on the application form should be the area of habitat improvement, rather than the wider area impacted. For example:
 - Wildflower meadows – the hectares of meadow created
 - Tree planting or management – the hectares of new land/existing woodland that the trees are planted on or managed
 - Ponds – hectare area of the pond
 - INNS removal along river bank – km of riverbank worked on
 - Litter picking - km of riverbank worked on
 - Fish pass/barrier removal – km of river unlocked for fish passage
 - River restoration – km of river worked on
 - The exception to this is for features such as bare ground scrapes or wetland scrapes – the hectares of land they are created on (rather than the area of each individual scrape)
 - Habitat boxes – unfortunately we can not count an area improved from the installation of habitat boxes e.g. bird boxes, insect hotels etc
- Applicants agree that ST may publish details (omitting all personal data) of their project as case studies both internally and externally.
- Applicants may be required to partake in engagement for the 'Boost for Biodiversity' scheme, including; site visits, photographs/videos and written or verbal interviews.

6.0 Responsibility of ST

- Assess applications in an unbiased manner using the specified scoring system
- Provide application advice through the Biodiversity and Ecology Team
- Respond to queries within 7 working days via our Biodiversity and Ecology Team
- Keep all project and financial information confidential. This does not however affect our duty to report any breaches in cross compliance to Environment Agency.

7.0 Monitoring & evaluation

- Contracts are non-transferable except in the case of:
 - Certified serious illness of applicant
 - Death of the applicant
 - Long term professional incapacity of the participant

- You must inform ST of any change to a selected project and a written reason displaying your actions. You will then receive a letter of approval
- You will not be entitled to funds to meet the costs of any maintenance or normal wear and tear.

8.0 Payment procedure

- Payment will be split 50-50. The first 50% of the funding will be paid following the project pitch, the final 50% of the funding will only be paid **on completion of the project and receipt of fixed point before and after photos** (please see guidance on photo in section 5).
- Applicants accept that on-the-spot inspections may be required before final payment can be authorised.

9.0 Force majeure

- Where an applicant is unable to continue within the project commitment(s) due to reasons beyond his/her control, a case may be made under force majeure. The following categories of force majeure will be recognised:
 - Death of the participant (individual only)
 - Long term professional incapacity of the participant (individual only)
 - A natural disaster affecting the project area
 - The accidental destruction of the project area e.g. destruction of property via a fire
 - An outbreak of disease affecting all or part of the inhabitants in the project area
 - The disposal or vacation of land to satisfy a court order or legal settlement in cases of marital breakdown.

10.0 Breach of agreement

- This may result in the non-payment or recovery of some or the entire grant payable or already paid. Note that applicants are responsible for the work carried (even if work was contracted to an external contractor).

The following are classed as breaches of agreement:

- Refusal to allow Severn Trent's Senior Biodiversity Coordinator access to the project area for inspection on reasonable notice
- Providing false or misleading information
- Lack of project photos and report
- Failure to comply with the appropriate standards, planning rules and agricultural codes of practice.
- Missed deadlines.

11.0 Scoring Criteria:

- Area (or length) of biodiversity improvement
- Number and quality of wider project benefits (e.g. community engagement, natural flood management, water quality)
- Value for money (project benefits against cost)
- SSSI improvement to help reach unfavourable recovering or favourable status

Appendix 1

Severn Trent Biodiversity Funding Area

