



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Guidance for applicants: SNH funding and local authorities – our policy

Background

In line with the changing nature of the concordat between central and local Government, in 2009 we stopped funding local authorities for statutory, routine, or recurring activities. At the time, around £4 million of funding for these activities was transferred from the SNH budget directly to the local authority block grant.

We have recently reviewed and updated our policy on funding for local authorities to take into account the increasing Government emphasis on the development and delivery of shared outcomes and greater partnership working through Community Planning Partnerships. We are also interested in projects which help demonstrate the case for investment in the natural heritage as part of the emerging 'preventative spend' agenda¹.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- Provide information on the activities we will consider funding
- Outline the criteria we will use to inform our decisions
- Re-state the routine and recurring activities we no longer fund

What we will consider funding

We will consider requests for funding partnerships and projects involving local authorities and affiliated bodies² where delivering natural heritage benefits are the key purpose of the activity. We will use specific **criteria** to inform our decisions. Examples of activities that we will consider funding these organisations to deliver include:

Building the evidence base (what works and why) that would support the roll-out of new approaches. For example, projects that look at:

- the contribution that nature and landscapes can make to health and regeneration outcomes
- the effectiveness of new ways of involving people in natural heritage related activity through green exercise, environmental volunteering and outdoor learning
- the social, economic and environmental impacts of 'preventative spend' realised through investment in natural heritage resources and activities

¹ By preventative spend, we mean investing in activities which prevent problems arising in the future for people and nature, to deliver better outcomes, increased value for money and reduced public spending in the longer term.

² This includes consortia of two or more local authorities working together and their delivery agents, cohorts and affiliates including arms-length service delivery organisations to deliver outcomes which elsewhere or previously have been provided by local authorities with SNH grant support, for example: Regional Parks, Countryside Trusts, local authority schools, Leisure Services organisations, etc.

Building capacity within local authorities to deal with natural heritage issues (but not funding the creation of new posts), for example:

- Sharing Good Practice types of events
- working with national bodies such as Architecture and Design Scotland to improve skills and experience in local authorities and their affiliates
- through developing strategic approaches to the natural heritage that inform better decision-making, such as the national programme of landscape character assessment and related work on capacity studies

Development or demonstration projects that involve several local authorities thematically or geographically, for example:

- a strategic route that runs through several neighbouring local authorities
- some local authorities working together to look at new ways of tackling an issue or demonstrating value

Projects seeking to develop new ways of delivering shared outcomes, such as through Community Planning Partnerships.

The criteria we will use to make decisions

Partnerships and projects involving local authorities and their affiliated bodies that wish to apply to SNH for these types of activity must meet **all** the following criteria:

- Are **additional** to the delivery of the statutory duties, core functions and routine, recurrent activities listed below
- Make a **clear and significant contribution to our priorities** (as set out in our corporate plan, grant guidance and programme plans)
- Are **time-limited** in nature (no longer than 2-3 years in duration)
- Are **innovative**, developing or demonstrating the value of new, innovative ways of tackling issues of concern (see below for examples)
- Offer significant **leverage**, bringing in additional funds from external (i.e. other than SNH/local authority) sources
- Are based on a **strong partnership**, involving the local authority (or affiliate), SNH, other stakeholders or local communities, to deliver shared natural heritage outcomes.

What we will not fund

Local authorities and affiliated bodies, and their statutory and routine activities, will generally be **ineligible** for SNH funding where this involves:

- **delivery of statutory duties and meeting Scottish Government requirements** including core path plans, development planning, open space strategies, implementation of biodiversity duty, delivering the Curriculum for Excellence in schools and school grounds, preparation of LBAP strategies.
- **Routine, recurrent activities to improve the management and enjoyment of the natural heritage** including Country and Regional Parks, Ranger services, Access Officers, Biodiversity Officers, visitor facilities, countryside management, surveys of sites of local importance