



## Guidelines for Applicants to the AONB Sustainable Development Fund

### First steps

These guidelines are to help you with your application for grant aid to the Sustainable Development Fund. Before filling in the application form you are strongly advised to discuss your ideas with your local Sustainable Development Fund contact to ensure that you and your project are eligible for funding. Details of how to get in touch with your local contact are at the end of this note.

### What is the Sustainable Development Fund?

The **Sustainable Development Fund (SDF)** provides an exceptional opportunity to apply for grant aid for innovative, sustainable, environmental projects, which involve local communities in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). AONBs are nationally important landscapes, designated for their spectacular scenic beauty. The five AONBs in Wales are: Anglesey, the Clwydian Range, Gower, Llŷn and Wye Valley. The Welsh Assembly Government has set up this exciting scheme which will be co-ordinated by the Countryside Council for Wales.

### What are the aims of SDF?

The SDF aims through partnership, to develop and test ways of achieving a more sustainable way of living in a countryside of great natural beauty and diversity. The scheme seeks to conserve and enhance the local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community. Sustaining the social well being and economic viability of communities are also important aims of this scheme.

### What are the objectives of the scheme?

- ! To explore ways of simultaneously pursuing the principles of sustainability whilst overcoming any obstacles to sustainability.
- ! To develop models for the sustainable management of the

countryside that could be applied more widely in Wales.

! To generate greater awareness and understanding of sustainability.

### **So, what is sustainability?**

The principles of sustainability can be expressed in various ways, including social progress that recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources, whilst maintaining of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Sustainability is about balancing environmental, social and economic requirements, so that our present needs can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to adequately meet their own needs.

### **How much money is available?**

Applications can be for small grants of less than £3,000 or larger grants of up a half of the fund's annual sum (This varies year to year).

### **Who can apply for funding?**

The scheme is available to any organisation including community or voluntary groups, local authorities, as well as the private sector and individuals. The private sector and individuals must demonstrate that their projects have a wider public benefit. The proposed project must meet the aims and objectives of the scheme and be located in or have direct benefit to an AONB. Your project must also comply with any relevant regulatory requirements eg planning permission, building regulations etc.

### **What type of projects will be supported?**

SDF is primarily for practical, innovative schemes, which engage local communities and young people in projects in Welsh AONBs. The types of projects that will be supported are those which meet the sustainable aims of the SDF and AONBs, which are:

- X to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB, including the built environment.
- X to promote sustainable forms of social and economic development in AONBs.
- X to promote the economic and social well-being of local communities.
- X to promote quiet enjoyment of the AONBs.

**Priority will be given to projects which:**

- X demonstrate innovation or best practice.
- X involve local communities and young people.
- X lever in contributions from other sources in cash or in kind.
- X overcome barriers to sustainability and promote a wider understanding of sustainability.
- X promote sustainable forms of social and economic development or add value to existing sustainability projects.
- X raise awareness of AONBs and generate jobs or income for local communities, without damaging the landscape.

**Examples of projects which may be funded by SDF:**

- X sustainable schools projects – such as the management of grounds for wildlife; energy, waste, and traffic reduction initiatives.
- X sustainable transport projects to reduce car use and improve health by increased activity.
- X enhancement of village open spaces for local use and wildlife.
- X restoration of historic features eg village pond, community orchard or traditional boundaries.
- X training programmes to safeguard traditional skills through modern apprenticeship, skills exchange eg hedgelaying, stone walling, conservation management.

**Grants and grant rates:**

- X The scheme can offer:
  - \* project grants;
  - \* management grants to support staff costs and;

\* development grants to provide a catalyst for new action or partnerships.

- The scheme will normally provide up to 50% of total project costs but may consider applications up to 75% in certain circumstances. However, any partnerships involving local authorities will normally be funded at 50%.
- These figures include an element of up to 12% for overheads directly incurred by undertaking the project eg postage and other administrative costs.
- Applicants will be expected to provide at least 25% of the total project costs, either from their own funds or those of others for example:
  - \* private sector funds;
  - \* 'in kind' contributions such as officer time or loan of equipment;
  - \* other grant funds;
  - \* European Funds;
  - \* Lottery Funding.

The source of any match funding should be clearly identified to avoid the possibility of double funding.

X Payments will normally be paid retrospectively.

### **How are projects assessed?**

Applications over £3,000 will be assessed by a panel of local people made up of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Assessment Panel will assess the project based on whether it meets the aims, objectives and priorities of SDF, which are set out in these guidelines, and how well it meets the criteria listed in these guidelines. Small projects of less than £3,000 will be assessed on the same basis by the nominated local authority and National Resources Wales officers. They will report their decisions on these small projects to the Assessment Panel.

## Criteria for assessing projects

Your application will be assessed against the criteria listed below. There are two sections in the application form which allow you to show how your proposal meets these criteria.

It is expected that **successful projects will meet all of the core criteria but will not necessarily have to meet every criteria in the other sections.**

### Core criteria Your project must meet all of these criteria:

- conserves or enhances local characteristics of culture, wildlife, landscape, land use and community
- is not contrary to the core purposes of AONBs
- is located in an AONB or directly benefits an AONB
- demonstrates good practice or innovation which can be transferred to other parts of Wales
- involves the local community and / or young people

Your project should meet as many as possible of the following environmental, social, economic and cultural criteria:

### Environmental criteria

- continues beyond the life of the SDF scheme
- conserves or promotes biodiversity
- promotes natural capital
- promotes reduce, reuse, recycle
- contributes to raising awareness of environmental issues, AONB purposes or sustainability
- achieves aesthetic improvement to the built or natural heritage
- fulfils part of a management plan, Local Agenda 21 or Community Strategy

### Social criteria

- can demonstrate local support (eg Jigso appraisal or community consultation)

- involves young people and / or local community (either in working on the project itself or as an end product)
- breaks down social or cultural barriers / promotes equality
- addresses local social needs
- has appropriate community structures / networks in place to co-ordinate project
- contributes towards healthier lifestyles

#### Economic criteria

- draws in funding from other sources
- demonstrates value for money
- contributes to the local economy by generating own income
- business plan in place
- contributes to local employment, training or volunteering

#### Cultural criteria

- contributes towards maintaining local culture
- has cultural or historical links
- uses of traditional materials or skills in managing the countryside (including the built environment)
- high quality design and use of sustainable materials / technique
- provides interpretation
- involves using the arts

#### How and when to apply

You are advised to discuss your ideas with your local contact before applying. Fill in as much of the application form as you can and attach any supporting information which will help the Assessment Panel when they consider your application. The Assessment Panel may come back to you if they need more information about your project. Once you are satisfied that you have provided all the relevant information please send your application to the address at the end of the application form.

There are no set dates which you need to get your application in by, but remember that money will be spent as the financial year goes on. Your

local contact can also tell you when the Assessment Panel will next meet, so this will give you an idea of when to submit your application. You will normally expect to hear whether you have been successful within 14 days of the date of the Assessment Panel meeting or if the application is under £3,000 within 28 days of your application. If you are proposing a new project then you should not start work on the project until you have received a decision from the Assessment Panel as to whether your submission has been successful.

Further information and applications forms are available from:

Llyn AONB Unit  
Gwynedd Council Offices  
Ffordd y Cob  
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