

Background and Guidance for Applicants – second call for projects

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fund for Nature is a revolving fund to deliver enhancements in nature in line with the ambition to double the quality and quantity of rich wildlife habitats and natural green space, and improve access to them in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Fund will support projects that attract external investment, that can create a stream of revenue and ideally be financially self-sustaining, with an ability to return and revolve the capital back into the Fund and thereby enable it to fund further projects. There will also be a focus on financial innovation, increasing the benefits that projects deliver, such as climate-change mitigation and adaptation, health and wellbeing, prosperity, flood prevention, and/or water quality and retention, and learning how to put a value on these benefits.

The Fund has been created by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and is overseen by the [Natural Cambridgeshire](#). Monies from the Fund will need to be at least matched from other sources and preference will be given to applications that have a prospect of leveraging further investments, and/or that attract revenue so as to make them long-lasting. Examples of co-investors can include philanthropic donations, grant-giving trusts, public bodies, corporate sponsors, monetising ecosystem services such as public access, flood prevention or carbon capture, the new Environmental Land Management system of payments to the farming sector, and contributions from developers to meet their biodiversity net gain obligations. Benefits in-kind may be included, including notional sums attributed to volunteer effort, and long-term commitments of land that will be dedicated to nature recovery.

Applications received in the first round mostly cited pre-investment biodiversity net gain (BNG) to meet the financial innovation requirement. While BNG based applications will be acceptable for this second round, other forms of financial innovation may take preference in awarding some of the fund. There will be a strong expectation that monies awarded will in due course be returned either in capital repayments or by ongoing profit share of some sort to the Fund, so that in effect the fund's investments form interest-free capital for a period to the project, so enabling the Fund to re-cycle the repaid capital to fund further innovative projects. **In this round, interest-free loans for up to 7 years, with interest from 7 to 10 years are available.**

Natural Cambridgeshire intends to prioritise larger projects with a view of providing up to £300k to a single project. This can only be used for capital expenditure. If these larger projects do not emerge, then assistance will be offered to help project leaders to collaborate, both to bundle smaller, complementary projects together, and to create partnerships to make large applications to public funding offers, as well as to share expertise and experience in delivering their projects. Projects should benefit, and ideally be located within, one of six identified priority landscapes, more about which can be found [here](#), and

last up to three years. It is expected that proposals will come from nature organisations, public bodies including local authorities, landowners and farmers.

Expressions of interest for larger projects should be emailed using the attached form to fund@naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk no later than midnight on **24 March 2025**. Full applications from those chosen will be invited in **April 2025**, to be received by **18 June 2024**. Funding agreements will be issued to those selected by **30 September 2025**. Projects to begin work **no later than January 2026**. This process will be repeated every six months until the Fund is exhausted.

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Natural Cambridgeshire for an informal discussion prior to applying, which can be arranged by emailing fund@naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk.