Northumberland National Park

Northumberland National Park
Funding Guide

Practical advice for project funding in and around Northumberland National Park

Guidance for those involved in bidding for funding, undertaking projects and managing externally funded budgets

FIRST EDITION

If you require this publication in an alternative format please email funding@nnpa.org.uk

Northumberland National Park Authority
Eastburn Headquarters
South Park, Hexham
Northumberland, NE46 1BS

T: 01434 605555

E: enquiries@nnpa.org.uk

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Supported by:

Northumberland National Park
Sustainable Development Fund

Encouraging Investment for Social, Economic and Environmental Purposes

The Northumberland National Park Funding Guide, First Edition has been primarily designed as an electronic tool. Designed by Julia Dobson Design and Illustration.
E: juliadobson@blueyonder.co.uk

Welcome

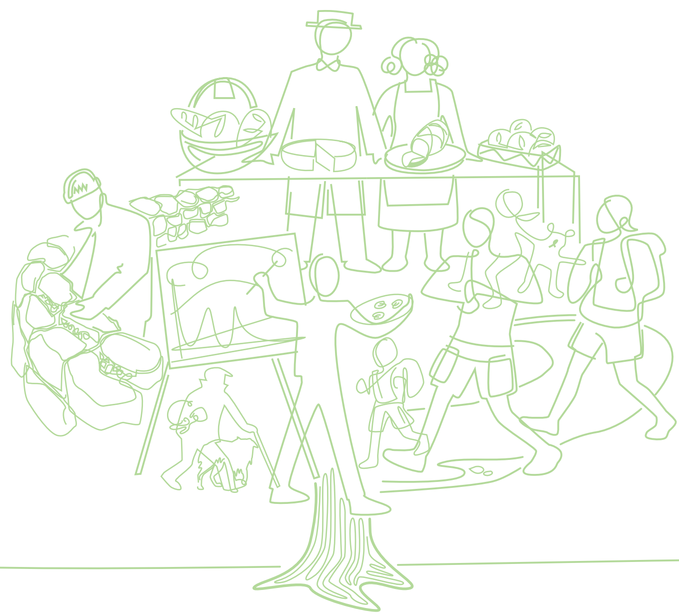
to the Northumberland National Park Funding Guide

Northumberland National Park is a living landscape, shaped by its communities and businesses, as it undergoes sustainable development. This process often takes the form of project work, requiring resources beyond those normally available. By implementing a successful approach to funding, local people can be empowered to run trial projects, deliver services in targeted areas, address new agendas, and engage in partnership activities, which would otherwise be restricted by a lack of core funds.

The purpose of this Funding Guide is to improve the overall approach of anyone seeking and utilising funding in and around Northumberland National Park. This can be achieved by ensuring that everyone involved in funding has access to examples of good practice and is aware of available sources of help, support and advice.

More and more people and organisations are becoming involved in bidding for funds and utilising the benefits of external resources. This Funding Guide provides straight-forward advice on how to develop projects and funding bids, helping you to get the most out of funding opportunities, while avoiding some of the commonly experienced pitfalls. Some parts of this handbook will be more relevant to certain people than to others, but the general principles are applicable to everyone.

Once you've familiarised yourself with the document, be sure to contact our staff, whose details you'll be able to find at the back of the Funding Guide. Our trained experts are there to help you every step of the way.



Map of Northumberland National Park

Northumberland National Park

Contents

Getting Started

The chances are, you already have a good idea what is meant when people refer to funding. For the purposes of this Funding Guide, funding is defined as:

Additional financial resources secured beyond those normally available

Essentially, this entails the acquisition of additional money that will help the idea for a new venture to be realised. Typically, funding is secured through a process of competitive bidding.

The majority of activities that funding is sought for can be defined into distinct projects. Inevitably, there will be occasions when funding is sought for an existing service or activity, but the fixed-term nature of funding often dictates a time-limited, distinct project. For the purposes of this Funding Guide, a project is defined as:

A distinct piece of work to be carried out, which is additional to the usual day-to-day activities of the organisation or individual

Funding Strategy

For organisations that are dependent on securing funding for their existence, the development of a funding strategy in the first instance can be a useful tool to guide progress at securing external support. A good funding strategy will identify organisational goals and ambitions, allowing for a planned and co-ordinated approach to achieving them through the pursuit and use of funding. The main elements of a funding strategy are as follows:

- Organisational aims and priorities
- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Planned activities
- Required activities
- Potential funding sources
- Retaining existing income
- Constraints and barriers
- Approach
- Exit strategy
- Tasks
- Available skills
- Co-ordination
- Targets
- Record keeping

When developing a funding strategy it is important to remember to be selective and only pursue the funding opportunities that genuinely help to progress the work of your organisation. You should also make sure that your targets are realistic and achievable, and in the context of the types and amount of funding available. This means that a written record should be kept which details what has been requested and from whom, and what the response was. This will help to narrow down likely sources of funding in future and avoid conflicting requests.

There is also an element of research which should be integral to any funding strategy. This not only means finding out about what is available and how to access it, but also being aware of examples of best practice from other locations, which will help you to avoid common pitfalls.

We are particularly interested in supporting community-based projects that can show that they will increase community involvement or help people who are most in need. By a 'project' we mean a piece of work that is not part of the everyday work of your organisation.

Big Lottery Fund

Internal Processes

As well as co-ordinating activity with partner organisations, there is also a need to ensure that activities within individual organisations are well managed. The varied nature of how individual organisations are structured will present differing challenges in co-ordinating funding work. Where an organisation has many departments or sections, it is vitally important to have an overall view of what the funding is being sought for, and what will be delivered with it. Within small organisations it will naturally be easier to identify what bids are being submitted.

Retaining control over who is bidding for what and how funds are subsequently being used is an important feature in maximising the benefits that funding can bring. The most effective way to achieve this is to co-ordinate all bids through a central point, so that an overall picture of what is being sought can be ascertained. This will also enable greater support to be offered into improving the quality of bids and addressing areas where success rates are low.

In circumstances where multiple bids are coming forward from the same organisation, then a process to co-ordinate and prioritise projects will need to be implemented - a situation which would be impossible unless bids pass through a central point. Competing bids, whether between different organisations, or from different departments in the same organisation, can ultimately limit the chances of success if there is an apparent lack of awareness about who is doing what at any given time.

Regardless of the size or structure of an organisation, it is important that any bid has widespread support. The most effective way to ensure that all bids submitted are in line with strategic priorities is to have them agreed by higher-ranking management. This is best done at the earliest opportunity. Ensuring that all potential bids pass through a central point and are in some way signed off prior to their submission will enable a more corporate view to be taken as to whether the funding will enhance the existing organisational work, or whether resources would be better targeted elsewhere. The level of risk can also be determined at this stage. If problems arise during the delivery of the project, additional pressure can be put on core budgets to 'rescue' projects or to provide continuation funding.

Projects can come about as a result of an idea for an activity or service, as a response to an identified need, or as a response to an available funding opportunity. Whichever way they are formulated, all projects will ultimately have to go through the same developmental steps to progress from a concept to a well-defined project, capable of being submitted for funding.

The first step is to write a project enquiry form, so that you can formulate a clear summary of the intention of your project.

Project Enquiry Form

A template for writing the project enquiry form is shown in *Figure 1*, with the form itself included in Section 10.

The outcome of the project enquiry form is that everyone involved in it will be equally informed from the start. Once the project enquiry form has been developed, then a more in-depth look will be required to examine the issues, weaknesses and details that will need to be addressed, if the project is to move from aspiration to reality.

A common mistake by those seeking funding is to proceed from the project enquiry form to the application stage. This often results in the funder requesting further information at a later date, which should have been submitted at the time of the application. The risk is that this could reflect badly on the proposed project, if the funders perceive that the planning was insufficient.

OBJECTIVES	The purpose of the project
OUTCOMES	The difference or impact the project will make
DELIVERABLES	The specific products or services to be delivered
SCOPE	What is and what isn't included in the project (e.g. the users, geographical boundaries, and type of work)
APPROACH	The values underpinning the work
CONSTRAINTS	The areas that will need to be overcome (e.g. support, securing funding)
WORK SCHEDULE	Timetable, key milestones
RISK ASSESSMENT	Hazard awareness, especially with regards to health and safety
EXIT STRATEGY	Ongoing responsibilities, financial commitments, etc.

Figure 1. Template for the Project Enquiry Form

It is therefore very important to define your project prior to your funding bid being developed. Answering questions in an application form should merely be an exercise in summarising information which has already been agreed, and emphasising how the project meets the priorities of the funding provider. If the application is being used by the applicant to define the project then it is likely to fail – either at an assessment stage or during delivery. The level of detail required in the project enquiry form is usually minimal, determined by the scope of the proposed project, and the amount of funding that is being sought.

The next step from the project enquiry form is to develop the idea further by writing a project initiation document, which will further explore the scope and feasibility of your project idea.

Project Initiation Document

A good project initiation document (also known as a PID) will help you to test the business case. If the project progresses to the bidding stage, then the information required to complete an application form will be contained within the project initiation document and any supporting work flowing from it (e.g. feasibility studies, business plans, scheme design studies).

The level of detail required for the project initiation document should be determined by the size of the project – there simply isn't a rigid structure that is suitable for every undertaking. Not every project requires a project initiation document; it's only suitable for ventures of sufficient scale or complexity, which will require a significant amount of funding.

The Project Initiation Document defines all major aspects of the project and forms the basis for its management and the assessment of overall success. There are two primary uses of the document: to ensure that the project has a complete and sound basis before there is any major commitment to the project; to act as a base document against which the project can assess progress, change management issues, and ongoing viability questions.

Office of Government Commerce

There are various tools that are available to help people with their project development, such as Microsoft Project or PRINCE2. It is important that a suitable and appropriate tool is adopted which the project manager is comfortable using, and which is sufficient to leave a clear audit trail.

Once a project is underway, the project initiation document should be used as a baseline to track changes, evaluate progress, and ensure the project is still addressing the initial purpose.

The processes outlined in Section 2 are not exhaustive and will not be relevant to every project developed. It does, however, follow the methodology of PRINCE2, which is a recognised standard for major project development.

The following template can be used to complete a project initiation document.

Figure 2. The PRINCE2 Template for the Project Initiation Document

BACKGROUND	• Context • Origins • Work undertaken so far	
PROJECT DEFINITION	• Overall strategic aim • Objectives • Outputs and outcomes • Method of approach • Scope (where / when) • Who will deliver the activity	• Constraints • Exclusions • Consultation • Partners • Assumptions
INITIAL BUSINESS CASE	• Problem or service gap • Evidence of need • Impact required to make a difference • Organisational benefits • Strategic fit – organisational priorities • Strategic fit – relevant plans and strategies	• Outcome of consultations • Existing activity • Sustainability • Exit Strategy • Value for money • Marketing
INITIAL PROJECT PLAN	• Tasks • Timing • Internal and external approval process • Consents required	
BUDGET	• Detailed budget • Detailed cash flow • Internal resources required • Identify potential external sources	
QUALITY PLAN	• Testing • Monitoring • Evaluation	
RISKS	• Legal • Financial • Management • Organisational capacity	
CONTINGENCY PLAN	• Risk mitigation • Alternative strategy • How triggered	
PROJECT ORGANISATION STRUCTURE	• Management structure • Financial management • Delivery structure	• People • Roles • Assets
PROJECT CONTROLS	• Reporting procedure • Communication • Decision making • Review points	
EXCEPTION PROCESS	• Circumstances requiring change • Authorisation for changes	

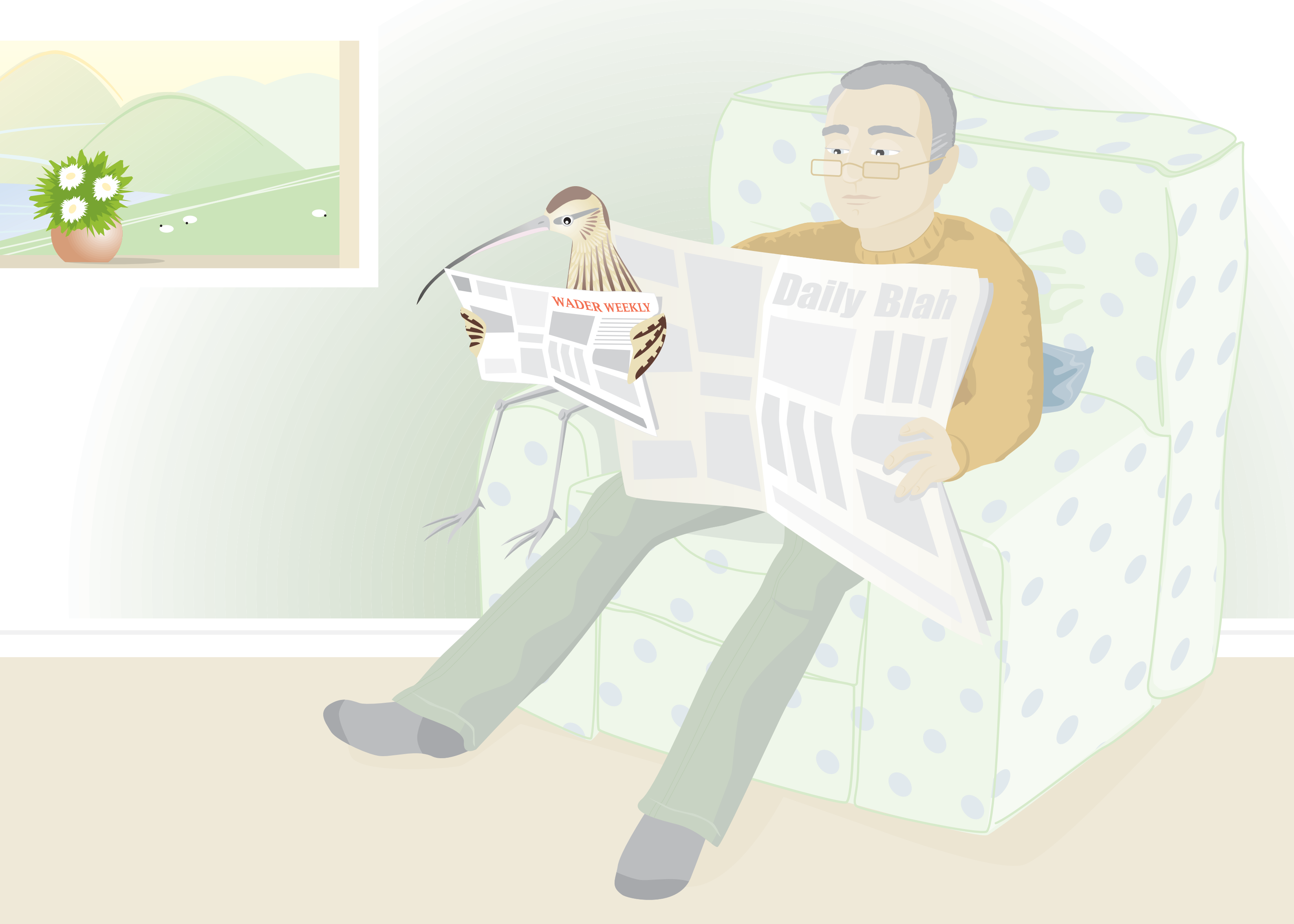
The ability of the project to meet the strategic priorities of an organisation, and those signed up to in other shared strategies and plans, is likely to determine whether or not you receive widespread support for your project proposal.

In essence, chasing funding without clear objectives can sometimes be counter-productive in both the time spent pursuing the funding and the delivery of a project - if it is not fundamentally addressing core aims and priorities.

Due to the nature of funding and the opportunities it presents, the person developing the project idea may not be the same person who is managing the resultant budget, delivering the activity or monitoring and reporting back to the funding distributor. It is therefore extremely important that the grant recipient establishes a clear internal communication plan, so that everyone is aware of their responsibilities, particularly if someone leaves the project before the completion date. This will mean that alternative arrangements can be made before a problem arises.

Section 3 will look at how your idea can reflect the strategic priorities of some of the key organisations that operate in and around Northumberland National Park.

The symbol of Northumberland National Park is the curlew. In winter the curlews migrate to coastal areas in this country and abroad where food is plentiful. Many local people have talked about curlews coexisting, quite happily, with us humans!



Reflecting Strategic Priorities

In order to make the strongest case for your project there will be instances when external support is required.

External support often takes the form of the reproduction of letters from partners endorsing the bid, or agreement to include signatures / logos on the actual bid itself. Demonstrating this widespread support can strengthen bids significantly and should not be left until the last minute before it is addressed. Early consultation with partners will enable them to discuss their support and input within their own organisation, and you should provide regular updates to them to keep them informed throughout the bidding process.

We aim to improve the quality of life throughout the UK. We do this by funding the charitable activities of organisations that have the ideas and ability to achieve change for the better. We take pride in supporting work that might otherwise be considered difficult to fund. Our primary interests are in the UK's cultural life, education, the natural environment and enabling people who are disadvantaged to participate more fully in society.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

As more and more bids are developed to address 'joined-up' agendas, then the need to demonstrate a wider range of strategic links will inevitably increase.

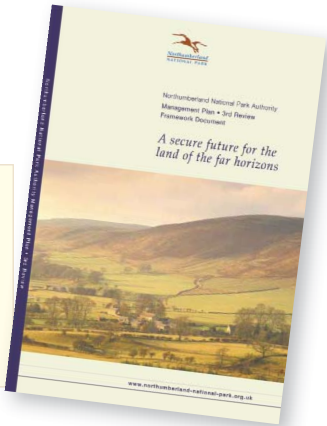
Ideally, Northumberland National Park Authority should be notified of all projects taking place in and around Northumberland National Park, no matter whether involvement in the project is minimal or extensive. Most funders will look to see if the Authority supports your venture, and if that support isn't obvious, they may request the reasons for this.

Section 5 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995, states that National Park Authorities in England have two statutory purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities by the public

From the same Acts, Section 11A, as amended by Section 62, it states that in pursuing these purposes,

National Park Authorities have the duty to foster the social and economic well-being of communities in and around the National Parks.



A Secure Future for the Land of the Far Horizons: Northumberland National Park Management Plan (3rd Review) (2003)

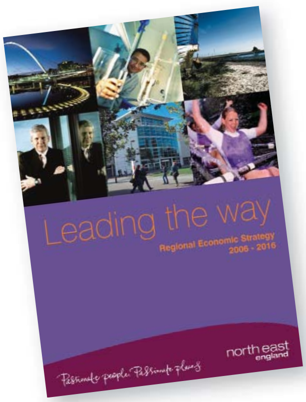
Northumberland National Park Authority will be proactive, innovative and forward-looking, working towards a National Park with thriving communities and a sustainable local economy grounded in its special qualities, including a richness of cultural heritage and biodiversity, a true sense of tranquillity and a distinct character associated with a living, working landscape, in which everyone has an opportunity to understand, enjoy and contribute to those special qualities.

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

The aim of Northumberland National Park Authority is to deliver this Vision by 2020. To achieve this, and deliver its legal purpose, the government department for English National Parks, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (defra), set five challenging objectives for National Parks to:

- Promote sustainable development
- Implement open access
- Promote greater use of National Parks by all sections of society
- Promote wildlife and cultural heritage
- Improve performance through regional and national working

Northumberland National Park Authority aims to empower local people to generate and run new ventures of all kinds that will enrich the economy and life of the community. Through a combination of our expert advice, grants, and active support, Northumberland National Park Authority has already been able to help a wide range of schemes to get off the ground.



Leading the Way: Regional Economic Strategy (2006-2016)

The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be a vibrant, self-reliant, ambitious and outward looking region featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential.

www.onenortheast.co.uk

The North East is the smallest of England's nine administrative regions in terms of population and, with the exception of London, is the smallest geographically. The size of the region maybe an advantage in that it has the potential to be more flexible and responsive. However, the economy is fragile and there is a need to consolidate and accelerate the restructuring process. Whereas the city region approach, based on thriving urban cores, will be the main growth driver for the region, the rural areas have a key role to play for both the regional economy and quality of life, contributing towards the identity and cultural distinctiveness of the North East. *Leading the Way* concentrates on three distinct themes: Business, People and Place.

Facing the Future: The Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food (2002)

Our vision of the future is of a world in which climate change and environmental degradation are recognised and addressed by all nations and where low carbon emissions and efficient use of environmental resources are at the heart of our whole way of life; where, here in the UK, rural communities are diverse, economically and environmentally viable, and socially inclusive with high quality public services and real opportunities for all. ...The pursuit of sustainable development, environmental, economic and social, is vital to achieving this vision.

www.defra.gov.uk

In the last few years, British food and farming has faced serious difficulties and pressures. Inevitably they have taken their toll on confidence and morale for those who work in the sector. External influences, like disease outbreaks of foot and mouth and blue tongue, have seen some of the worst traumas the industry has experienced. Borne out of these traumas was the realisation that planning for a new and sustainable future meant preparing and implementing change, evolution and diversification, for a new era of partnership working.

Releasing the Strength of our Communities: A Sustainable Community Strategy for Northumberland to 2021 (2007)

Our vision is that we work together to release the strength of all our communities so that by 2021 everyone in Northumberland has the same life opportunities, is broadly satisfied with the quality of their lives and is able to influence decisions that affect them.

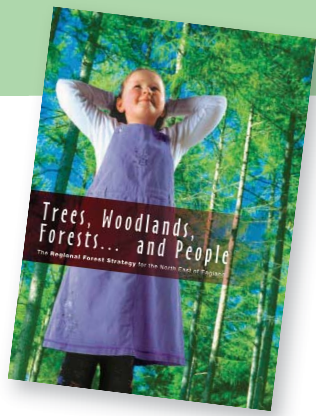
www.nsp.org.uk

This strategy is built around two fundamental principles. The first recognises the importance of place. If local people are to improve their quality of life, they will have to focus on improving whole areas rather just individual services. This strategy provides a county-based policy framework upon which future sub-county work and thematic activity will be founded. The second is working together in partnership. If local people are to improve the local quality of life, they have to bring together and better align all our activity to meet the needs of our communities.

By 2021, all Northumberland residents will feel that they are better able to:

- Enjoy a good standard of living
- Live safely and in comfort
- Lead healthier lifestyles
- Readily access the things they need
- Take part in cultural activity
- Care about our environment
- Get involved and bring about change

The endorsement of Northumberland Strategic Partnership can often be seen to strengthen bids submitted by individual organisations. People developing bids need to be clear from the beginning as to whether they are asking Northumberland Strategic Partnership merely to endorse their bid or whether they are asking them to take a more active role in its development, as the process and timing for each option will differ significantly.



Trees, Woodlands, Forests... and People: The Regional Forestry Strategy (2007)

Our trees, woodlands and forest will help this region become a better place for us all to live, work, visit and do business.

www.forestry.gov.uk

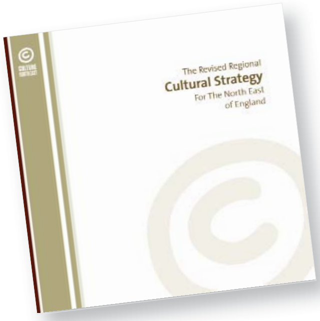
The trees, woodlands and forests of the North East are renewable natural resources that already make significant contributions to the economic growth of the region. The Vision of the Forestry Strategy is for the trees and woodlands to play an increasing role in the sustainable development of the region. Through the Regional Forestry Strategy, the aim is to identify where trees, woodlands and forests can deliver real public benefits to the North East.

North East Tourism Strategy (2005-2010)

The North East of England will become a sought after destination 365 days a year - for leisure and business visitors - with activities, attractions, facilities and accommodation that consistently exceed visitor expectations.

www.onenortheast.co.uk

Tourism is a key component of the region's economy currently supporting over 10% of jobs. Leading the Way highlights the key contribution that the tourism sector plays in boosting our prosperity. Given the inter-relationships between the different elements of the tourism economy in the North East (which range from heritage to hospitality) the only way that we will strengthen the sector is if the private and public sectors continue to work very closely together. The growth of the North East's tourism industry will also bring substantial social benefits to the region. More jobs and wealth in the region, with improved regional pride, will bring better prospects for environment, health, employment, education and social cohesion, resulting in a better quality of life for the resident population of the North East.



The Revised Regional Cultural Strategy for the North East of England (2005)

> *For the North East to be transformed into an innovative, invigorating and exciting region that is clearly recognised throughout Europe.*

www.culturenortheast.org

Culture North East exists as one of eight regional cultural consortiums charged by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to provide a framework of coherence and leadership across the cultural sectors in the regions. It is their belief that only by working closely with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, within a framework of complementary strategies and policies, can we fulfill these responsibilities and achieve real improvements in the quality of life of the people of the North East.

Links with Other Regional and Local Programmes of Activity

The following list shows some other complimentary strategies, which your project may be able to draw links to.

Regional Housing Strategy
North East Housing Board

Regional Sport Strategy
Sport England

Regional Transport Strategy
North East Assembly

Regional Skills Strategy
One NorthEast

Regional Spatial Strategy
North East Assembly

Avoiding Exclusion: The Challenge of Shaping the Information Society in the Rural North
Northern Informatics

Energy for a New Century – An Energy Strategy for the North East of England
Northern Energy Initiative

Regional Water Resource Strategy
Environment Agency

North East Strategy for the Environment
North East Environment Forum

Heritage Counts: The State of the North East's Historic Environment
English Heritage

Economic, Social and Cultural Impact of Heritage in the North East
North East Historic Environment Forum

Biodiversity Action Plan
defra

Regional Image Strategy
One NorthEast

4.0 Integrating the Principles of Sustainable Development

Many partners and funding distributors are now recognising that the principles of sustainable development must flow through projects that they support. It is definitely worthwhile thinking about what impact your project is likely to have on the community, the local economy and the environment. If any of these impacts are harmful, then unless you can either eradicate those adverse effects in the planning stage, or suggest remedial action to limit consequence of these impacts, there will be a chance that funding for your project idea could be rejected on these grounds alone.

Securing the Future

The UK government Sustainable Development Strategy, *Securing the Future*, was launched by the Prime Minister in 2005. It sets out the goal of sustainable development as enabling all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

Securing the Future outlined 68 indicators through which to review progress, in four priority areas:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and enhancing the environment
- Creating sustainable communities and a fairer world

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

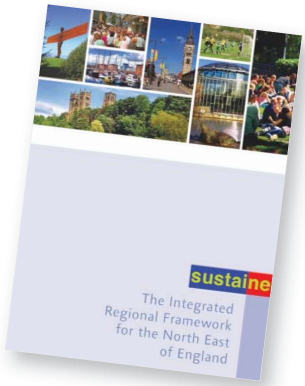
Sustainable development promotes ways of living and working that allows people to enjoy life, businesses to prosper and communities to thrive. At the same time, it is about enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of Northumberland National Park and affording opportunities for an understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities by the public.

Northumberland National Park Authority is making a decisive move towards sustainable development. Not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in the long-term best interests of the National Park and the communities and businesses in and around it.

The Community Foundation is committed to supporting sustainable development. By this we mean "achieving economic growth, environmental protection and social progress at the same time". We are encouraging voluntary and community sector groups to think about the impact they have on the environment.

Community Foundation Serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

Integrated Regional Framework



Sustaine is the independent regional champion body for sustainable development in the North East. The organisation is a champion body that works towards promoting sustainable development throughout the North East of England.

Sustaine work with policy makers, local government, public agencies and private business to advocate sustainable development in the region. The Integrated Regional Framework developed by Sustaine, and launched in 2008, provides a basis on which to assess the development of strategies, such as those listed in Section 3.

www.sustaine.com

Embedding Sustainable Development Indicators

Although sustainable development is a sophisticated concept, it is in essence a long-term process, with long-term benefits. Incorporating sustainable development principles requires good planning, management and design techniques, and will ultimately result in a more sustainable lifestyle. Reducing carbon emissions and maximising resource efficiency are particularly important, alongside the development of effective renewable energy systems and environmentally conscious waste reduction.

By embedding sustainable development indicators in the project that you are planning, your venture will adopt a sustainable development approach at an early stage strengthening the case for support.

The annual defra publication, *Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket*, is an excellent tool for assessing the degree to which your project meets the principles of sustainable development against a set of indicators, a selection of which are shown on the next page. For more information about sustainable development, you may wish to visit the Government's sustainable development website.

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

Although this list is not exhaustive, it shows how the principles of sustainable development could be central to your project. How many of these indicators does your proposed venture include, and how many more could be feasibly included, with a little more planning at an early stage? That said, always remember that quality of delivery is far more important than quantity of indicators.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Engages local communities and / or volunteers in planning, delivery and operation
- Involves young people
- Engages people from an urban centre with the National Park
- Adds value or new dimensions to an existing sustainability project
- Supports cultural heritage
- Enhances the visitor experience
- Protects the historic environment
- Provides an event for the public to understand and enjoy the National Park
- Reduces the fear of crime
- Improves the wellbeing of local people
- Addresses health inequalities
- Improves access to rural services
- Any other social sustainability factors

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- Educates and raises awareness of the need for sustainable development
- Brings different organisations together as partners to tackle rural problems in the spirit of partnership
- Supports rural diversification
- Contributes to the development of local career structures by providing training
- Uses the Internet to promote the project as an example of sustainable development
- Results in an increased level of spend in the local economy
- Creates local employment
- Uses sustainable transport
- Conserves the energy produced
- Minimises the production of waste
- Uses local produce to support local consumption
- Helps to address rural homelessness
- Any other economic sustainability factors

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Develops models for sustainable living in the National Park that can be applied elsewhere
- Involves the sustainable management of land
- Involves sustainable organic farming practices
- Improves public access to the National Park
- Conserves and enhances biodiversity
- Reduces the project’s carbon footprint and offsets carbon wherever feasible
- Provides a new use for an existing site
- Generates energy in a sustainable way
- Uses recycling wherever feasible
- Reduces the risk of flooding
- Protects the quality of the waterways in the National Park
- Helps to safeguard protected species
- Any other environmental sustainability factors

5.0 Looking for Funding

When seeking project funding, there are number of resources available to people in and around Northumberland National Park. Northumberland National Park Authority can offer help and advice, and in some instances, provide grant aid to enable local aspirations to be realised. It is also worth remembering that when looking for funding, the eligibility requirements of funders must always be met. This means that larger bids, which may require match funding, will have to meet the objectives of more than one funding distributor if the overall funding package is to be secured.

Section 5 will consider the support available from Northumberland National Park Authority and the Northumberland National Park Environment Association, brief guidance on meeting the eligibility requirements of funders, and the importance of having a sound match funding strategy.

Support from Northumberland National Park Authority

Wherever possible, Northumberland National Park Authority will work with local communities and businesses to help them to improve the quality of bids being submitted, thereby maximising the overall amount of funding being brought in to the National Park. There are a number of tools which have been put in place to provide information for people developing funding bids.

Northumberland National Park Funding Bulletin and Funding Searches

Northumberland National Park Authority compiles a quarterly e-mail Funding Bulletin that includes the latest National Park funding news and calls for projects from external funding providers. The funding alerts are specifically aimed at local communities and businesses.

The Authority is also able to undertake a funding search, which will identify what funds may potentially be available for proposed projects. In order for Northumberland National Park Authority to undertake a funding search for you, you will need to complete a project enquiry form. Projects will then be included on the Northumberland National Park Authority project database.

Once you have submitted your project enquiry form, Northumberland National Park Authority will consider the most suitable source of support for your project. If your project does not meet the objectives of one of our own funding programmes, the Authority may be able to identify another source of funding from elsewhere. Even if your project does meet our objectives, if it will be a significant undertaking, you may require resources of two or more funders to contribute, in order to meet the total costs for the project. Northumberland National Park Authority will help identify other potential sources of funding, so that your initiative can go ahead.

For inclusion on the mailing list of the Northumberland National Park Funding Bulletin, or to request a funding search, please send us an email.

funding@nnpa.org.uk

Northumberland National Park Authority subscribe to Grants Online, an Internet funding search engine. This funding database is used for most of the funding searches that the Authority undertakes. A free alternative funding search engine can be found at Grants4info, which is sponsored by Northumberland Council. This site provides local groups, organisations and enterprises with a user-friendly search facility, to quickly find relevant grant funding sources.

www.grantsonline.org.uk
and
www.grants4.info

Grants4.info are free to use online information portals that provides local groups, organisations and enterprises with a user-friendly search facility to quickly and easily find relevant grant funding sources. Grants4.info funding portals allow users to access the latest information on funding opportunities from the European Union, UK Government, regional bodies such as the Regional Development Agencies, the Lottery and major Grant Making Trusts.

Grants4:Northumberland

Grants, Support & Advice

Northumberland National Park Authority can work with partners where projects and funding bids are likely to make a significant difference to the overall resource coming into Northumberland National Park. Grant support may also be available from Northumberland National Park Authority if your project can help to deliver its Vision.

Trained staff can also act as a 'critical friend' by reading through funding bids before they are submitted, and advising applicants on any areas where further work would be beneficial, perhaps to clarify and strengthen your business case. This consultation phase should take place in sufficient time before the funding deadline, to allow the proposed changes to be made. Wherever possible, staff will also draw linkages to relevant regional and national strategies which could further strengthen the case for funding.

Please see Section 3 and Section 4 for some indicative strategies, and Section 10 for further details on who to contact at Northumberland National Park Authority.

Project Database

Northumberland National Park Authority maintains a database of projects using Customer Relationship Management software. This enables the Authority to match new funding opportunities to existing project aspirations, and to identify the potential for joining up similar projects.

Although Northumberland National Park Authority is not able to monitor all bids submitted by organisations in the National Park, it is useful to notify the Authority of when funding is being sought, whether successfully or not. This will enable a general overview to be developed and opportunities for joint working to be maximised.

State of the Park Report

There are several very useful sources of facts and figures about Northumberland National Park and the communities that are located in and around this Protected Area. One of the most comprehensive sources of information is the State of the Park Report. The information contained in the State of the Park Report is intended to help the Authority, its partners and the public to identify and track changes in the condition of the National Park's special qualities so that the Authority can:

- Monitor progress in achieving the aims and objectives set out in the National Park Management Plan
- Measure whether the overall 'quality of life' in the National Park is improving using trend data
- Identify the key issues that will need to be considered in order to update the National Park Management Plan

When using data to provide evidence of need for a project it is always sensible to use the most up-to-date resource available in order to make the strongest case for funding to be approved. Two other sources of statistics are the national ***Census*** and the ***Index of Deprivation***.

www.statistics.gov.uk
and
www.communities.gov.uk

Northumberland National Park Environment Association

Northumberland National Park Environment Association is an umbrella body that represents any local interest or community that shares the objectives of Northumberland National Park Authority.

The Environment Association exists for charitable purposes, and supports practical action by:

- Offering funding for small, localised projects
- Supporting and endorsing suitable funding applications to other funding providers

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Other Sources of Support

If you wish to seek funding without the support of Northumberland National Park Authority, then information is readily available on the Internet, from regional seminar programmes, and from the community and voluntary sector.

Internet

The most up-to-date source of information of funding information is the Internet. Most organisations that distribute funding, or are involved in promoting funding opportunities, are represented on the Internet and use it as their main way of providing information.

Seminars

There are many funding seminars held each year to help keep the regional awareness of the latest funding opportunities at a high level. Organisations like European Structural Funds Voluntary Organisations Northern (ESFVON) hold regular seminars aimed at benefiting the voluntary sector, whereas other organisations like EUCLID can provide information on specific rural schemes. Funding fairs also take place from time-to-time, where a collection of mainstream funding distributors can provide direct advice to potential applicants. Whether finding out more information through attending a seminar, or speaking to the funders directly at a funding fair, you are likely to find out some useful information which may not necessarily be in their guidance notes for applicants.

www.esfvon.org.uk *and* www.euclid.info

Community Organisations

Nationally, around 140,000 local community groups and voluntary organisations are assisted by Community for Voluntary Service (CVS) organisations. These bodies often work in partnership with local authorities to provide services, regenerate neighbourhoods, and increase volunteering, while also providing specialist advice to community and voluntary groups.

www.ca-north.org.uk

Eligibility Guidelines

The range of funds that can be accessed is often limited by the nature and role of the body submitting the bid. The main restrictions can be summarised as follows:

Statutory Organisations

If the organisation developing a project is a statutory body, they may be prohibited from applying to the majority of charitable trusts and independent grant giving bodies. The main funding sources which statutory organisations can access are government sponsored funds, and therefore these should be prioritised when undertaking grant searches.

As Government funding is increasingly linked to policy initiatives, the type of funding available will also tend to be through one-off funding rounds with short lead-in times. This places an emphasis on good strategy development and having projects ready 'on the shelf' to be put forward when an appropriate fund is created.

Schools

Schools are subject to similar statutory body restrictions as those listed above, and are perhaps disadvantaged still further by funds which specifically prohibit schools from applying. There are, however, a limited number of charitable trusts and endowment funds which specifically focus on educational projects, and schools are frequently targeted for funding themed rounds by some of the larger lottery distributors.

The main opportunities for schools are traditionally those made available through the Government, or when they are acting as partners in wider funding bids submitted through a local authority.

Religious Organisations/Churches

Applications from religious groups for projects which work within a community are welcomed by the majority of charitable and grant giving trusts. The nature of the projects undertaken can, however, be subject to restrictions. For example, projects are likely to be prohibited where they are designed specifically to promote religion or where participants must take part in religious services to benefit from a project.

Charitable Organisations

Organisations with charitable aims are eligible for the majority of non-government funds and are less restricted in the range of projects they can apply for. Registration with the Charities Commission is not always necessary to apply for funding through charitable trusts, although organisations will generally be asked to provide evidence of their structure and viability. This would include documents such as the:

- Constitution
- Terms of Reference
- Articles of Association
- Memorandum of Association
- Statement of Accounts
- Annual Report
- Buildings Occupied Lease

The Charity Commission website provides information about applying to become a charity, and the legal requirements that this will entail.

www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Practical assistance on becoming a charity may also be available from CVS organisations.

The type of funds available to charitable organisations tend to either be open all year round or subject to a number of fixed submission dates which will be advertised well in advance, rather than the short notice, one-off rounds which are the usual for public sector bodies.

Match Funding Advice

When seeking funding for a project, there is rarely a single fund or funder who will provide the complete solution. Many funders require their resources to be part of a package of funds going into a project. Funders will quite often be specific about the level of funding they will provide, either in percentage terms or up to a financial limit. This information will be crucial to the approach required to progress a project, as failure to secure the full 100% of the required funding will either prevent a project commencing, or will result in a scaling-down of the original aspirations, which would have to be agreed with the funders that have already offered support.

The most effective way to secure the full funding required is to identify a range of potential sources and co-ordinate the development and submission of funding applications so that secured grants are available at the same time. This is known as 'match funding'.

Match funding is when:

- Funding is secured from more than one funding provider

It is worth keeping in mind that generally, any contribution made by the applicant to the operation of the project after the commencement of a grant can be included. This includes an employee's project management costs for the time spent working on a project, or the costs of accommodating an additional person within the organisation's premises. This is called the in-kind contribution. However, funding distributors will have their own definition of in-kind, which the applicant must adhere to. The main variance between what the different funders will allow as in-kind match funding are items such as on-going costs or staff / project management costs.

When including in-kind match funding it is important to remember that the financial value of the contribution may need to be proved to an auditor and should be clearly identifiable as an actual cost to the applicant.

The financial value of the in-kind contribution, in terms of the hours and type of work that is being provided, must always be reflective of the task and realistic of the going rate. It is a common misconception that if an applicant inflates the value of the in-kind contribution it will appear to the funder that their work is of a higher value, and therefore more deserving of support. In reality, an unrealistic in-kind contribution raises questions about the honesty of the applicant, only serving to undermine the overall project that is being appraised.

Applying to more than one source of funding for the same item should be avoided wherever possible, as success in more than one bid will result in others having to be refused. In addition, if an offer of funding isn't accepted without good reason, it may adversely impact on any future applications made, thus affecting the overall reputation of the applicant.

The presence of multiple funding sources within a project will introduce a host of timing issues that can cause projects to fail. It is therefore worth emphasizing that fundraising for a project can be a very slow process and may take significantly more time than is originally anticipated. This will need to be monitored in the context of an organisation's ongoing financial position.

State-Funded Aid

State-funded aid rules aim to ensure fair competition and a single common market. Giving favoured treatment to some businesses would:

- Harm business competitors
- Risk distorting the normal competitive market
- Hinder the long-term competitiveness

That is why state-funded aid that would favour certain businesses or goods production is prohibited. State-funded aid rules can be complex and you should seek advice at the earliest stage. This will help you to avoid problems later on, which could not only avoid a lot of time, effort and worry, but if the rules are broken, then there financial penalties are also likely to follow.

As a general guide, profit-making businesses should not collectively receive more than 50% of the total project costs from state-funded aid sources. Different funders have different rules and interpretations, therefore you must always check the latest guidance with the funder that is supporting your project. For instance, some funders consider the National Lottery Distributors to be state-funded aid, whereas others do not.

6.0 Writing a Good Bid

Once a project has been fully developed, the next stage is to bid for resources. Section 6 sets out the key principles of a good funding bid and offers tips on how to write a good bid in order to maximise the chances of success. The principles covered are relevant to almost all types of bids and funding sources.

Planning the Bid

When preparing a bid for funding it is vital that you plan thoroughly for each step in the process. Poor planning will inevitably lead to problems at the end of the process and could compromise the quality of the bid or even prevent its submission.

Read the Guidance

Although an obvious point, it is often something that is overlooked until someone sits down to actually write the bid. Bidding guidance regularly contains a number of steps which applicants must go through prior to submitting a bid. Applicants may be requested to submit an initial outline of proposals, undergo eligibility checks, or submit a project enquiry form / expression of interest, prior to getting further detailed guidance on the final bid.

Careful consideration of what steps the funder requires can have a great impact upon the timing of the bid.

The guidance will also show the priorities of the funder. In many cases, how strongly their priorities are met within your application will determine the level of support that is offered.

Step-by-Step Planning / Timetabling

Planning out the various steps in the process should provide clarity of what is required. This is especially important when preparing the bid if it involves co-ordinating the contributions of many different individuals or organisations. Ensuring the process is mapped out against an appropriate timetable is also important, as slippage often leads to key elements being overlooked or the opportunity to review the bid prior to submission being lost.

Tactics

Depending on the funding body or the type of arrangements being used to stimulate bids, there may be an issue of how much to request. Calls for projects where large amounts of money are available over a long period of time may allow more speculative or aspirational projects to be submitted. Bids of smaller, more focussed funds will demand a more realistic approach, requiring a demonstration of value for money and clear budgeting.

The best approach to follow is to be realistic and bid for the actual cost of a project.

Realistic Expectations

Depending upon the funding body, there may be an opportunity to discuss your proposals with them at an early stage. This can often lead to advice as to how much they are likely to put into your project (either as a percentage or an actual amount), subject to a suitable bid being submitted.

Be Informed

In circumstances where a call for projects has been issued and bids will be coming from different applicants in the same geographical area, it is often advantageous to find out what they are submitting and perhaps, more importantly, the amounts others are bidding for. However, as much as this information is advantageous, it is often difficult to come by. Working arrangements between organisations often dictate how much information is likely to be shared prior to bids being submitted. Working together to ensure complementary bids is usually beneficial to all parties.

Plan Multiple Bids Together

Where projects require the submission of bids to more than one funder, the requirements of each funder should be assessed together. Ensuring that all documentation produced meets the standards of all funders should save time and effort. Planning the submission of multiple bids to meet deadlines of different funders will also be crucial as each may depend on the others to commit themselves first.

Many funders will also have their own application form, which will have been designed to meet their own priority needs. It is important that your project description is written to meet those particular priorities. If seeking match funding, each project description should be specifically written with the aims of the funder in mind. Duplicating the content of one application form to a variety of different funding distributors may save time, but it is likely to also weaken the case for widespread support.

Assessment Criteria

Where scoring or other criteria are to be used by funders to assess projects, it may be possible to obtain these before writing the application. Where available, these will give an indication of what each question specifically needs to address.

There is no exact definition for what makes a good business idea. It could be an invention, a new product or service, or an original idea or solution to an everyday problem. It could also be a gap in the market that you can fill, a business related to the work you do already or an interest or hobby that you can turn into a business. Business Link offers a free and confidential service for anyone who wants to start a business. The support you can get from us is tailor-made to your needs, whatever stage you have reached.

Business Link North East

Writing the Application

When writing a funding bid there are a few key points to remember, regardless of how the application form is structured or the type of supporting documentation that is required. These can be summarised:

- Never forget that you are making a case for the funder to invest in your project – they must get something out of it in return
- Bids should 'stack up' as a sensible business case i.e. the funder is being given the opportunity to purchase a set of outputs for their requested contribution. This must represent value for money for the funder
- Back the case with appropriate facts and statistics, as this will be the only way they will be convinced that there is a need for the project
- Bid writing often involves making a case for support. This needs to be balanced up by offering a solution to the problems rather than just appealing for money. Once the need for the project has been demonstrated, the focus of the bid should be what the project is going to achieve
- Bids should always be assessed against the organisational priorities of the funder. Bids should aim to reflect these priorities throughout the application
- Management arrangements and how the project is to be delivered is often as important as what is being delivered. Funders need to know that their money is going to be managed effectively
- Demonstrable partnership bids are often more appealing to funders than those from a single applicant

When completing an application form there is usually a set of core issues that need to be addressed, however the questions are constructed or phrased. Although guidance notes provided with an application form will detail what is required to answer each question, there are a number of good practice points to consider when deciding how to answer each of the following typical questions:

What are the project aims and objectives?

Meeting the original aims and objectives of the project will usually determine the level of success.

Project description

Describe the project in detail by considering, who, what, why, where and when. The project must show a clear progression from activity to achievement of outputs.

Why is the project needed?

Alongside the obvious demonstration of why the project is needed, the bid needs to demonstrate why funding is needed to solve the problem.

What is the strategic context of the project?

List strategies and quote links to specific elements of your project. Use the most relevant national, regional, sub-regional and local strategies to demonstrate links at all levels.

What consultation has taken/will be taking place?

The bid needs to give the funder confidence that the proposed project has good support. Demonstrate all consultation (e.g. partner organisations) and not just the local community.

What measures will be in place to enable successful monitoring?

The bid needs to show how activity can be tracked from action to output / outcome. How monitoring information is to be used also needs to be explained.

What are the outputs and outcomes of the project?

Most funders want to see practical outputs that can be directly achieved as well as what the overall outcomes will be for the area, and how the two are linked.

Many people confuse the terms output and outcome but they mean entirely different things. Outputs are the services or products you put in place in order to achieve the desired change. Outcomes are the changes, benefits or other results that happen as a result of your activities. For example, if your aim is to increase the number of young people in farming in your area, an output might be a regular farming classes and an outcome might be an increased number of young people working in the industry.

What alternative options have been considered and why they have they been rejected?

Outline up to four other methods of delivering the same types of outputs / outcomes and conclude why the chosen option demonstrates better value for money. Capital projects often require costed options to be included.

What is the exit strategy for the project?

Demonstrate how their money will not have been wasted if the project comes to an end. If the project is to continue, sustainability needs to be demonstrated without compromising the need for the money in the first place.

More often than not, the exit strategy should recognise the educational element of the project. Consider whether those involved will have learnt something that will stay with them for life. The dissemination of the lessons learned is also a good exit strategy, so that those who weren't involved with the project will benefit from the outcomes, especially if they may undertake a similar venture in the future.

What are the potential risks to the project?

Identify risks and outline contingencies. This may include legal risks, financial risks, management risks, organisational risks, match funding risks, risks to health, etc. The project may also depend on the securing of consents, such as planning permission. Therefore until they are acquired it is also a risk to the progression.

How does the project offer value for money?

Demonstrate how the unit costs for outputs compare favourably with other projects or alternative ways of achieving them or explain the reasons why, if they don't.

How does the project complement existing / planned activity?

Show how the project is additional to the usual day-today activities undertaken, and how their funding is paying for this new element. It is also important in some cases to demonstrate statutory support for the project and show where the line between statutory provision and added value exists.

Preparing the Financial Package

The finances of a project are often the area which is scrutinised the most, yet are often poorly defined or thought through when putting a bid together. As with writing the application form, there are a number of key principles to consider when developing the financial information of a project.

- Develop a clear cash flow forecast to demonstrate the organisation can afford to take the project on, remembering that most grants are paid for in arrears
- The match funding package for a project needs to be complete. Bids should never be submitted unless the other sources of funding for the project have been defined and that all contributions added together will meet the total project cost
- All financial tables must add up correctly and must match project cost tables exactly. This is the most common reason why projects are sent back for revisions. Preparing the financial tables in a spreadsheet will save time as this area is the one which is most commonly subject to last minute changes
- The bid should be clear about what is capital and what is revenue, as it is common practice for funders to offer successful projects a capital allocation and a revenue allocation, with little flexibility between the two.

  Capital costs are those of tangible or lasting items, purchased wholly or partly out of the grant provided under the agreement, such as land and buildings and items of equipment or other movable or immovable assets, which have a useful life of more than one year. For example major works to village/community halls, play area equipment, the purchase of land for community use (e.g. a playing field), fencing work to secure a community area, new community buildings, etc.

  Revenue costs are all those costs that are not classified as capital costs. For example: salary payments, lease or rental payments, uniforms, small sports equipment (e.g. footballs, portable equipment), day trips, day-to-day running costs, routine repairs and maintenance (e.g. painting), computer equipment, furniture etc.

  If you are unsure whether items and activities of your project should be classed as capital or revenue funding, you should seek advice from the funder.
- Multiple funding requests for the same activity should be avoided. The bid should be clear as to who is paying for what and that the funding requested is not available from anywhere else

It is sensible to work out the cost of what you actually require last.

Demonstrate that the organisation can afford to take the project on.

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation should only be provided if it is necessary as part of the application process, as determined by the funder. The documentation should not duplicate information contained in the application form - its purpose is to provide greater detail to further explain the business case.

In addition, applicants should always refrain from bypassing sections of the application form by simply cross-referencing information to the supporting documentation. In many cases, funders will numerically score the application form, and the appraisers do not want to spend extra time searching for absent information elsewhere.

There are other forms of documentation that may be requested, and the funder will determine these.

Business Plan

A business plan is one of the most useful and effective tools used by anyone seeking funding. It is essentially a report showing a set of business goals, the evidence of how they are attainable, and the plan for achieving those goals. The business plan will usually also contain background information about the organisation or team attempting to reach those goals.

The level of detail required in the business plan is determined by the scope of the project that is being initiated. Although there is no set format, here are some tips from Business Link as to what should be included:

- An executive summary. This is an overview of the project that you would like to undertake. Many funding distributors make judgments about your business based on this section of the plan alone
- A short description of the business opportunity. Literally who you are, what you plan to do, why, and what the benefits will be
- Your marketing strategy. This is the evidence of need for your project. It is much better to use clear evidence in the form of statistics, rather than vague sweeping statements. You should also include information on your markets, competitors, and sales strategy
- Your management team and human resources. This section will show your credentials and the credentials of the people you plan to recruit to work with you. You will need to show that the people involved have the appropriate skills to deliver the project
- Your operations. This section will provide information about your premises, production facilities, and your management information systems
- Financial forecasts. This section translates everything you have said in the previous sections into numbers. The financial section may also incorporate a cash flow forecast, depending on the scope of the project

Depending on the type of activity you want us to support, you may also need to include extra information. We will assess your application using the form, your proposal and any other information we ask you to send. We consult other organisations, including local authorities, about most applications. We use these comments and the knowledge of our staff to help assess applications.

Arts Council England

Project Work Schedule

Before a project work schedule can be created, the project manager should typically have a breakdown of the work structure, which will detail all the tasks that need to be undertaken, and the time it is going to take for each task to be completed. An example of a Project Work Schedule is shown in *Figure 3*.

They say time is money. This familiar saying actually comes to us from the ancient Greeks. Antiphon, an orator who wrote speeches, recorded the earliest known version of the saying as 'The most costly outlay is time' (c. 430 BC).

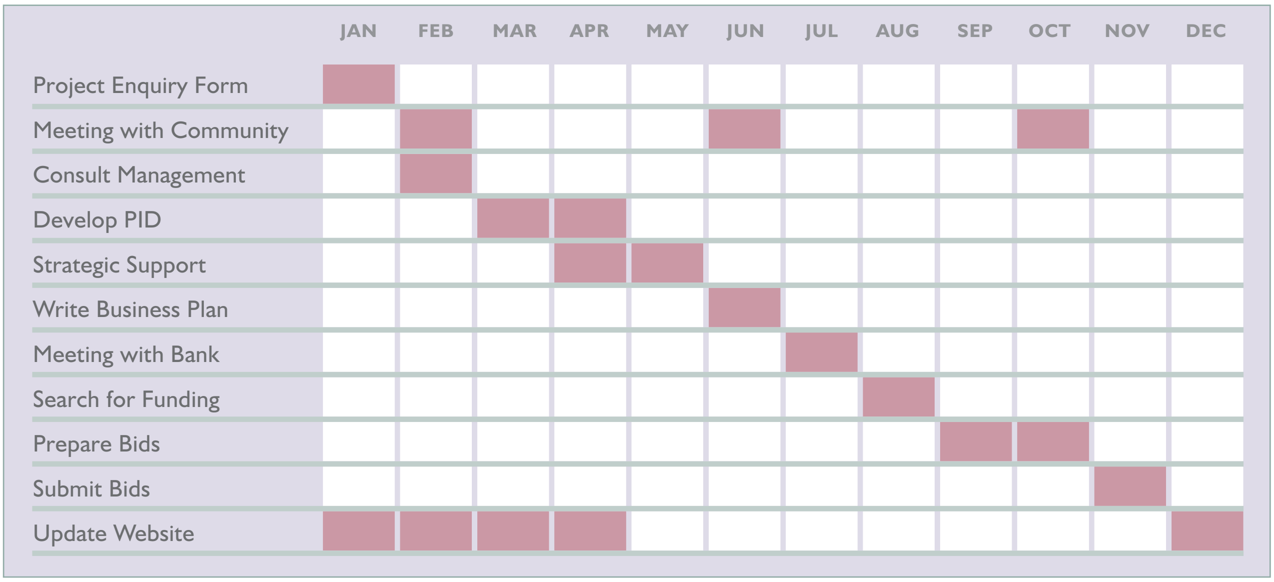


Figure 3. Example of a Project Work Schedule

The project work schedule needs to be flexible, so that if unforeseen circumstances arise, any slippage to the project delivery can be accounted for, and the consequences minimised.

Human Resource Plan

The human resource plan will primarily account for the staff time involved in the project, whether paid, as part of contracted work, or in-kind. The human resource plan will provide a clear summary of the personnel involved.

Cash Flow Forecast

A good and simple cash flow forecast is an important aspect of a funding bid, because it will demonstrate to the funder that their investment will be well managed.

The cash flow forecast will show how the costs are going to be managed, in most cases, on a month-to-month schedule for either 12 or 24 months. Even if the project will last more than two years, it is sensible practice not to forecast spend ahead of this initial duration. An updated cash flow forecast can be developed during the project once the initial period is coming to an end.

The cash flow forecast should be managed and maintained throughout the duration of the project, using a suitable management tool. Ideally, during the business cycle, you will have more money flowing in than flowing out. This will allow you to build up cash balances with which to fill cash flow gaps, seek expansion, and reassure funders about the health of your venture.

www.businesslink.gov.uk

Project Risk Assessment

A project risk assessment is a tool used to minimise the risks involved in your undertaking. When thinking about your risk assessment, remember:

- A hazard is anything that may cause harm. For example, the use of chemicals or electricity, working from a ladder, etc.
- A risk is, whether high, medium, or low, that the hazard could turn into reality, thereby having a severe negative impact on the successful completion of the project. For example, the risk to people, the financial risk, the legal risk, and the risk to the reputation of the organisation if things go wrong, etc.

There are five steps that you will need to take:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide what the extent of the hazard is
- Evaluate the risks and decide on their management
- Record your findings and implement them
- Review your assessment and update if necessary

The person undertaking the project risk assessment will need to identify each hazard involved in the activity, and then the type of risk that it presents. The risk is then evaluated to determine the risk-rating, which will assess the likelihood and the severity of the outcome, if the hazard is realised. The risk-rating is often determined using a simple matrix, like that shown in *Figure 4*. In some cases, for example, a high risk area will require remedial immediate action, a medium risk area within three months, and a low risk area within 12 months. Further details on the project risk assessment, and a template form, is included in Section 10.

		LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE		
		PROBABLE	POSSIBLE	REMOTE
CONSEQUENCES	SEVERE	High	High	Medium
	SERIOUS	High	Medium	Medium
	MINOR	Medium	Low	Low
	NONE	Low	Low	Low

Figure 4. A Template Matrix of a Project Risk Assessment

For some of the risks identified, there may already be control measures in place. For others, additional action will be required. A follow up report may be necessary to plan the implementation of the remedial action needed to address and reduce the level of the risk.

However, it is important to have a sense of confidence in the project that you are going to undertake. The important message you will need to get across to any potential funder is that you are aware of the risks involved, and wherever possible, a system is in place to manage those risks.

Securing Permissions

The planning system plays an important role in modern society by helping to protect the environment in the best interests of the National Park. Planning regulations have to cover many different situations and are often quite detailed in scope.

Although the general principles for securing permission are consistent, in practice they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you have any queries about a particular case, the first course of action is to ask Northumberland National Park Authority for assistance.

With regards to securing permission, it is always best to check with professional planners in the first instance, as legislation is liable to change.

Securing permission is the responsibility of the applicant, not the funder. In most cases, the permissions should be secure before an approach for funding is made, otherwise the funding distributor is likely to only provide a decision 'in principle'.

There are a whole range of permissions that may or may not be relevant to the project that you wish to undertake. Northumberland National Park Authority can provide professional advice on planning permission issues to community groups and individuals. The present position, as stated by the Government, is that major works need planning permission from the Authority, but many minor works do not. Whereas the Authority can use planning controls to protect the character and amenity of the area, individuals have a reasonable degree of freedom to alter their own property.

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Depending on the scope and location of the project, additional consents may also be required, such as Building Regulations approval, and consents from bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, or English Heritage. For building works on existing sites, securing protected species permission may affect the initiation of your project.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
and
www.naturalengland.org.uk
and
www.english-heritage.org.uk

8.0 Submitting the Bid

Once a bid has been written there are usually a number of processes to go through prior to submission. The most important of these is to get the bid read through by a ‘critical friend’ to ensure that all the questions have been answered fully, and in accordance with the guidance. Time needs to be allowed for this review to take place and for any comments or revisions to be incorporated. See Section 10 for information on our members of staff who are able to perform this duty for you.

Bids that are poorly planned are often completed and submitted right on the deadline. Typically, they often contain mistakes and inaccuracies, leading to a weakened business case.

Top 10 Tips for Successful Bid Writing

- Read the guidance carefully and talk to the funding body
- Find out what others are doing
- Match the funders priorities
- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into your project
- Develop strong management arrangements
- Make sure it all adds up
- Get someone else to look at it, but not too late
- Make sure it is complete
- Presentation does matter
- Provide relevant supporting documents

Presenting the Bid

The bid may need to be signed by the appropriate person within the organisation prior to submission, which can cause delays if the appropriate person is not aware of the project or is unavailable at the time the signature is required. Good planning at the start of the bidding process should ensure that this doesn’t occur.

On top of any internal approval required before the bid can be submitted, the funder may require further approvals from partner organisations. They may also require letters of confirmation to be produced by other parties contributing funding to the project. Again, time for these needs should be incorporated into the overall bidding timetable.

Submitting the Bid

Although many funders will state that presentation is not important in their assessment of a bid, it is a key element in convincing them that the bid is part of a co-ordinated approach, from a professional organisation and that the bid fits within the organisation's overall framework.

Basic advice to follow would include:

- Allow time for submissions to be printed in a professional manner
- Front covers should be presented in a corporate style, in keeping with the linked documents
- Supporting documentation should be presented in a style in keeping with the bid document to reinforce the impression that the project is well considered
- Colour photos and maps should be used where appropriate, particularly in supporting documentation

> *We produce a range of guidance to accompany our funding programmes and application materials. These are designed to illustrate the type of projects we can support and help you to prepare the information we need from you to assess your application. We also aim to help you plan your project effectively and achieve good-quality outcomes, for heritage and people.*

Heritage Lottery Fund

Livestock farming has a vital role in maintaining the beautiful open landscapes of Northumberland National Park as well as keeping hill farming skills and traditions alive.

9.0 Accepting an Offer

Before accepting an offer of funding, the arrangements for managing the project should all be in place and the appropriate people involved in its management and delivery should be fully aware of what they are taking on. Using the correct project development processes up to this point would ensure that these issues have already been addressed.

Once the grant offer letter, also known as the funding allocation letter, has been received it will need to be signed and returned to the funding body before the project can begin, and no expenditure should be committed prior to this, unless it has been authorised by the funder. Ideally, someone with appropriate financial authority within an organisation should sign the offer letters received.

Financial Management

Organisations receiving funding should ensure that they are subject to the same processes as the organisation's normal expenditure, ensuring consistent, robust financial management. Depending upon the financial systems in place within individual organisations there are likely to be a number of issues which project managers will need to address before funding can actually be committed, including preparing budget forecasts and securing internal approval for cash flow, when grants are to be claimed in arrears.

Systems must be put in place to monitor budgets throughout the year and prevent large amounts of money being under-spent, or spent in the final period of the financial year, to avoid an under-spend. Any funding secured should be treated in this way; slippage is the main cause of funding being lost or repaid.

A specific cost centre or budget code should be established for each project, within the organisation's budget management structure, to enable project activity and expenditure to be easily identifiable when required for interim claims or monitoring exercises.

Grant Conditions

Although any funding secured will be accompanied by terms and conditions which will specify how the funding should be used, these should not replace existing organisational policies and procedures. Procurement is often an area when funding guidance will specify a particular process by which contracts should be awarded or equipment purchased, but these should be viewed as being in addition to, and not instead of, standard organisational procurement practice.

Monitoring

Once a project has commenced, there will be strict monitoring procedures to be followed, which will require the involvement of everyone working on the project. The processes to be followed will be stipulated in the grant offer letter and are likely to revolve around the achievement of outputs or outcomes. These requirements can only be satisfied if a robust system is put in place to track activity and expenditure through demonstrable results, and this should also be developed prior to commencing any expenditure.

Responsibilities

Once funding has been secured, there are a number of ongoing responsibilities which organisations need to be aware of, whether they are a co-ordinator of a particular fund, or just delivering a service which has been funded through external sources.

Any money that comes from an external source will have 'strings-attached'. Funding is often viewed by budget holders as an increase in a core budget and is spent without regards to the aims or rules of the fund. It is important when using funding that everyone involved in the spending of the money, and delivering the project is aware of their responsibilities, and that the money is part of a 'deal', which the organisation must fulfil their part of.

When securing funding over a period of time, there are usually a series of targets or outputs that must be achieved. This is effectively what the funding body has purchased from the organisation with their grant. Ensuring that these targets are reached and the outputs are delivered to the satisfaction of the funder is often the most complex part of funding. The appropriate monitoring procedures need to be put in place to track progress from the beginning, otherwise funding can be lost and the organisation's reputation damaged.

The funders providing external resources will have a regular reporting schedule, which needs to be adhered to. Providing them with the correct information when required should always be the responsibility of the named individual. Where appropriate, it is also important that reports are publicly circulated to allow partners and the public to monitor the progress of the project.

Multiple Counting

As most funded projects require the recording of outputs, and some projects will involve more than one funding source, it is important to be clear about which grant is achieving which results. In general, the output paid for by one funding distributor should not be attributed to any other funding providers. If this does occur, this method of malpractice is known as multiple counting. If the results of the outputs are aggregated from a project that has multiple counted, a distorted picture will emerge. Not only will this impact on the accuracy of local statistics, but in extreme circumstances, the funder may also view this as a breach of their terms and conditions, and request that their grant is repaid.

At best, multiple counting could be interpreted as bad accounting. At worst, it could be considered as fraudulent activity. Think of it this way: if two-people shake hands, that is one handshake, not two. This same principle applies to funding – do not over count your outputs!

You should be aware that some funders will use a formula-based approach to determine what their 'share' of the project's outputs are, depending upon the proportion of the total funding they have put in. Alternatively, you may be asked to calculate this figure yourself. Always be clear, open, and honest with your project reporting.

Audit

The monitoring and financial management procedures prescribed by a funder within a grant offer letter, will allow a certain amount of discretion and flexibility for delivery organisations in how they design and apply their own local systems. In most cases however, the project will ultimately need to be audited by the organisation's external auditors or by someone appointed by the funder. This audit will need to confirm that the organisation's procedures have been followed throughout and that the processes used are appropriate for the scale of activity occurring as a result of the project.

Evaluation

Once a project has been completed there may be a requirement to carry out, or commission, an evaluation. Although some of the focus will be on whether the project met all of its output targets and spent the required amount of funding, it will primarily look at the overall impact of the project. In the interests of impartiality and to avoid any potential conflict of interest which may come about through an organisation evaluating its own projects, it is standard practice to have projects evaluated by an external body.

One cost-effective way of doing this is to invite a partner organisation to evaluate a project, with a reciprocal arrangement in place, to give an independent view of their projects when required. Although not appropriate in every case, this is often an inexpensive way of carrying out a project evaluation, and one which can avoid the expensive background research and familiarisation by specialist consultants.

In order to help you appreciate what is involved in delivering a successful application Sport England have developed an eight step approach providing detailed information of what is required from a project, from conception through to post award. It must be emphasised that each project is different and this approach provides a general process overview.

Sport England

Financial Checklist

Establishing internal controls:

- Approval for the project should be received from the funding organisation before any funding is committed, unless it has been authorised by the funder
- A budget holder / project manager should be clearly identified
- One cost centre should be established for each project, within the organisation's budget management structure
- A financial coding structure should be set up to match the budget headings in the contract with the funding organisation

Establishing internal controls continued:

- An annual budget of all expected expenditure and receipt of grant should be produced
- All project procurement should be carried out in line with the organisation's financial regulations
- The key elements of the funding scheme should be identified to ensure that they are clearly understood by all those responsible for incurring expenditure, including:
  - Definitions of eligible expenditure
  - Any different rates at which expenditure will be reimbursed
  - The limit / cap on funding
  - The financial information to collect in evidence of claims
  - The non-financial evidence, i.e. proof of outputs that must be collected
  - The timetable for submission of claims, and the possible penalties for delayed submissions
  - Other terms and conditions of the grant, e.g. publicity requirements
  - Established systems for identifying any changes to the terms of the grant

Outgoing monitoring:

- Regular budget management reports will be produced as per normal revenue and capital expenditure, and should be completed by the relevant budget manager
- All estimates of grant income due should be based on forecasts of activity rather than maximum entitlement
- Maintain a claims register and review regularly against a timetable to ensure it is up-to-date
- Monitor outputs of the project against the predicted levels
- Report any changes to the project as necessary

Matched funding:

- Monitor matched funding expenditure in line with expected amounts
- Report any significant changes to the awarding body. If for any reason the match funding amounts change, then it is likely that the grants awarded will need to be changed in line with this
- Match funding letters of confirmation should be maintained on the project files for audit purposes

Templates

Amongst a whole range of services available, our trained staff will be able to help you by:

- Identifying the most appropriate source of funding
- Acting a critical friend as you develop your funding bids
- Checking for any permissions that may be required in order to undertake your venture
- Checking for strategic linkages
- Raising the profile of your undertaking
- Assisting with the delivery and monitoring of the project

Forms

The project enquiry form and the accompanying project risk assessment form can be completed and returned to Northumberland National Park Authority.

Both forms are available to download electronically from our website www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Hazard

- Identify each hazard involved in the activity in a separate box. Remember that a hazard is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. noise, dust, working at height, weather conditions, moving parts, flying debris)

Risks

- Identify the type of risk (e.g. to people, financial, legal, reputation etc)

Rating

- This is the evaluation of the potential for the harm to be realised. To determine the risk rating, look at the likelihood and the severity of the outcome if the hazard is realised. See matrix in Section 7.2

Existing Control Measures

- Give the control measures that the organisation has in place in practice (e.g. details relating to dust extraction, machine guarding, training, maintenance, testing and personal protective equipment)

Additional Action

- Identify in full what additional control measures need to be put in place. It is likely that a follow up report will be required to plan the implementation of items detailed in this section

Priority

- Make a final decision about the urgency of the additional action required by indicating Level 1, 2 or 3

  Level 1: immediate action

  Level 2: action within three months

  Level 3: action within 12 months

The project risk assessment is to only be used as a tool to minimise the risks involved in your undertaking. Neither Northumberland National Park Authority, nor the partners, the agents or employees thereof, accept liability for any costs, losses or damages incurred as a direct result of this project taking place.

Project Enquiry Form

Northumberland National Park

Your Name

Telephone

E-mail

Contact Address

Project Location

Enquiry Description. The tick-boxes are a tool to help make sure you have covered these areas in your description.

Objectives ☐ Outcomes ☐ Deliverables ☐ Scope ☐ Approach ☐ Work Schedule ☐ Risk Assessment ☐ Exit Strategy ☐

Please see Section 2.0

Please attach any further sheets.

Approximate Costs

Project Risk Assessment Form

Northumberland National Park

Your Name			Date		
Project					
Hazard	Risks	Rating	Existing Control Measures	Additional Action	Priority
Adverse weather conditions may delay construction of the footpath	Financial, if the project is delayed, the costs will increase, and deadlines will be missed	M	Have planned for adverse weather, and protective equipment will be available	Will notify the funder that there is a risk that is out of our control	1

Please attach any further sheets.

A

Indicative Area Operations Staff

NORTHERN AREA

Iain Hedley
Community Enterprise Officer (North)
T: 01669 622061
E: iain.hedley@nnpa.org.uk

Tracy Hall
Community Enterprise Support Officer (North)
T: 01669 622062
E: tracy.hall@nnpa.org.uk

Mary Gough
Farming and Rural Enterprise Officer (North)
T: 01669 622070
E: mary.gough@nnpa.org.uk

Allan Murray
Farming and Rural Enterprise Support Officer (North)
T: 01669 622066
E: allan.murray@nnpa.org.uk

CHEVIOTS & GLENDALE UPPER COQUETDALE

THE NEW LEADER APPROACH

Tom Burston
Local Action Group Co-ordinator
T: 01669 622063
E: tom.burston@nuleader.eu

NORTHUMBERLAND UPLANDS

SOUTHERN AREA

Colin Earnshaw
Community Enterprise Officer (South)
T: 01434 611523
E: colin.earnshaw@nnpa.org.uk

Ruth Dickinson
Community Enterprise Support Officer (South)
T: 01434 344507
E: ruth.dickinson@nnpa.org.uk

Tim Bell
Farming and Rural Enterprise Officer (South)
T: 01434 611534
E: tim.bell@nnpa.org.uk

Sally Hutt
Farming and Rural Enterprise Support Officer (South)
T: 01434 611546
E: sally.hutt@nnpa.org.uk

HADRIAN'S WALL & SOUTH TYNEDALE NORTH TYNE & REDESDALE

The successful completion of any externally funded project is often a particularly memorable experience. As rural organisations across Northumberland develop their skills at securing external support, the processes will become familiar, and rate of success will undoubtedly increase.

Northumberland National Park Authority sincerely hopes that you have found this Funding Guide useful.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Richard Austin
Funding Officer

T: 01434 611510
E: richard.austin@nnpa.org.uk

FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Please contact our Funding Officer for Northumberland National Park Authority if you would like to provide some feedback on this Funding Guide. Thank you.

Northumberland National Park

NATIONAL PARKS
Britain's breathing spaces

Eastburn Headquarters, South Park, Hexham,
Northumberland, NE46 1BS

www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk

Designed by Julia Dobson Design and Illustration, 2008