

**Wessex Water Foundation
Partners Programme – Phase 7 (2025 to 2030)
Application Guidance**

1) About the Partners Programme

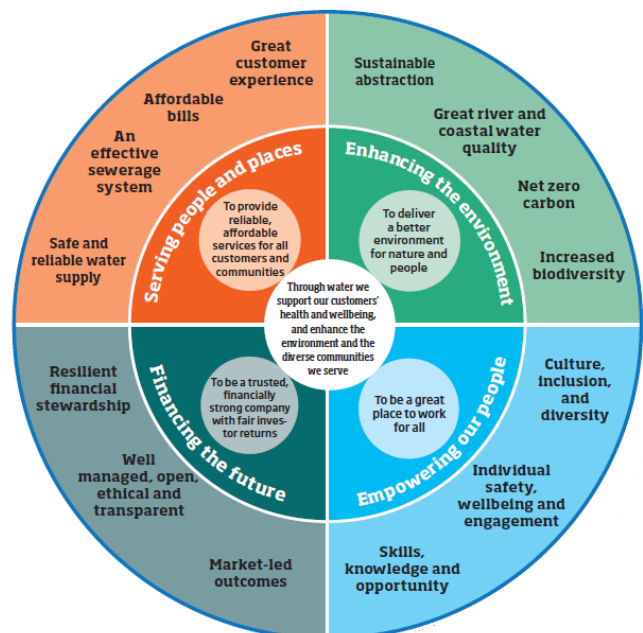
Our Partners Programme provides funding to projects carried out by environmental organisations which will conserve and enhance biodiversity and the aquatic environment across our region.

For Phase 7 of the Partners Programme, the Wessex Water Foundation will be offering four grants of £25,000 per annum for five years between 2025 and 2030, for projects working in partnership to deliver improvements for biodiversity, water quality and catchments across the [Wessex Water region](#).

2) How you can help

Our [Strategic Direction Statement](#) explains how we plan to address key challenges concerning climate change, affordability, biodiversity, and service excellence. It sets out our vision and ambitions through to 2050 and has been developed in partnership with customers, businesses, employees, and stakeholders. At its heart are eight outcomes (right) that have been co-created with our stakeholders and customers – including outcomes on biodiversity improvement, great river and coastal water quality and sustainable abstraction.

We are seeking innovative new or existing projects which we can work in partnership with to deliver key outcomes:



- Contribute to Wessex Water's [Strategic Direction Statement](#) target for biodiversity – to double our contribution to the regions biodiversity.
- Meet Wessex Water [Biodiversity Action Plan](#) outcomes:
 - Funding a minimum of four projects through our Partners Programme with a renewed focus on species diversity, habitats (particularly priority/protected species or habitats) or Local Nature Recovery Strategy implementation.
 - Where possible, link with other Biodiversity Action Plan outcomes (e.g. linkage with our own habitat management or action taken for Biodiversity Net Gain/internal net gain, use of nature-based solutions or habitat improvements in catchments).
- Support delivery of Environment Act requirements – for example, the duties on public authorities such as Wessex Water to conserve & enhance biodiversity and have regard/contribute to Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).
- Contribute to achieving Environment Act targets, including:
 - Halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 & increase abundance by 10% by 2042.

- Restore or create more than 500,000ha of wildlife rich habitat by 2042 (140,000ha outside protected sites by 2028).
- Improve Red List Index for England for species extinction by 2042.
- Increase tree canopy and woodland cover from 14.5% to 16.5% of total land area by 2050 (increase by 34,000ha by 2028).
- Contribute to achieving Water Framework Directive targets and/or contribute to the Catchment Based Approach (to support meeting the overall target to restore 75% of waterbodies to good ecological status).
- Support engagement with customers and the community to raise awareness and influence behaviour change around water, biodiversity and the environment in alignment with our company outcomes.
- Applications should describe how the project will contribute towards existing plans or programmes at a local or national level, such as:
 - Catchment Plans/Actions Plans (produced by the Catchment Partnerships)
 - Local Nature Recovery Strategies (where available)
 - Local Nature Partnership plans, 25 Year Environment Plan/Environment Improvement Plan or other local biodiversity plans or strategies (for example, Nature Recovery Networks etc.).

3) What can Wessex Water offer?

- Long term funding over 5 years, to create sustainable partnerships or programmes achieving larger scale outcomes.
- Engagement, support and knowledge from us to help develop and implement your project or programme.

We are looking to fund:

- 4 Major Projects – each project funded to a maximum of £25,000 per annum for five years.
- Funding will be made available from April each year, working on financial years. For successful partners, the 1st year grant is expected to be awarded in Spring 2025.
- Funding will be granted annually for the 5 years of Phase 7 (final payment April 2029), dependant on satisfactory progress of each project gauged by annual reporting and metrics.

Our intention is for the awards to be spread as equally as possible across the Wessex Water region (although this will depend on the projects submitted). It would be preferable for all projects to last for the 5-year duration of Phase 7 (note that we are not able to guarantee funding beyond the five-year period).

Projects may already have funding allocated from other sources, but require additional (or match) funding, or be seeking total funding through the Partners Programme.

Applicants will be advised of successful funding in spring 2025.

4) Who is eligible to apply?

We welcome applications from existing or new projects led by non-governmental organisations, rivers trusts, catchment partnerships, wildlife trusts, other environmental / conservation or river NGOs and academic institutions.

5) Who is not eligible to apply

Applications from private companies, individuals or Government organisations would not normally be accepted.

6) What will Wessex Water expect?

- A focus on achieving the outcomes of your project to benefit our catchments, communities and environment.
- Completion of annual reports, accounts and natural capital metrics (listed below) so that we can demonstrate how together we are enhancing the natural capital of our region.
- Engagement with relevant teams in our business, our stakeholders, customers and the general public to achieve our goals, communicate key messages and demonstrate how we are working to improve our shared environment.
- Regular Project Steering Group meetings with key project stakeholders;
- Engagement with existing or new local and regional partnerships, for example, Local Nature Partnerships, Local Nature Recovery Strategy groups or Catchment Partnerships.
- Share findings from your work at annual seminars and in Wessex Water publications, visual/social media and discussions;
- Demonstrate implementation of the project “on the ground” during a small number of field visits during the life of the project (this will depend on individual project circumstances).
- An end of project report in 2030
- Payment of grants will be dependent on satisfactory progress being demonstrated.

7) How to apply

- **Please complete the application form available on request from bap@wessexwater.co.uk and submit it by Friday 3rd January 2025.**
- **Applications must be submitted using the form provided to bap@wessexwater.co.uk**
- A single organisation can submit a maximum of two applications for which they will be the project lead. If required, please submit details of up to 2 projects using a separate form for each and
- Please provide supporting information about the project (no more than 10 sides of A4 but can include text, tables, maps etc)
- Please provide details of any collaborations and how you will ensure natural capital metrics will be collected.
- Please ensure that a copy of the following documents is included with each application:
 - Copy of applicant organisation’s constitution/governing document/set of rules.
 - Copy of most recent annual financial accounts or financial records that show the applicant organisation's balance of funds, income and expenditure.
 - Copy of safeguarding policy that is up-to-date and relevant to the applicant organisation's work.

The Application Process

- We may ask that projects are presented to a selection panel during Winter/Spring 2024 (dates may be subject to change).
- We may ask for further information during the application or administration process as part of our due diligence practices. Please note that The Quartet Community Foundation will be carrying out due diligence on applications on behalf of the Wessex Water Foundation.
- Award letters will be sent to successful applicants during Spring 2025.

Further details are available on the Application Form.

If you have any questions or queries about the Partners Programme or the application process, please contact us via BAP@wessexwater.co.uk.

Potential Partners Programme Natural Capital Metrics

Metric	Metric Guidance
<p>Biodiversity Units of habitats improved or created</p>	<p>Please provide the Biodiversity Unit value for habitats improved or created by the project.</p> <p>Biodiversity Unit Value should be calculated using the National Biodiversity Metric (Statutory biodiversity metric tools and guides - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) and should include habitats directly improved or created through the work of the project. Accompanying information should state the applicable period by which the Units will be created.</p>
<p>Area of habitat improved (by UKHAB type) - hectares</p>	<p>Please provide the area of habitat improved for each UKHAB habitat type</p> <p>Definition of improvement – this could include physical changes to a habitat which have or are reasonably expected to improve an existing habitat by increase in species diversity or abundance, density or connectivity with nearby habitats (but would not include overall areas reconnected), reduce negative factors (such as scrub or invasive species), lead to visual improvements or long term changes to facilitate improved management (e.g. fencing or grazing).</p>
<p>Area of habitat created (by UKHAB type) – hectares</p>	<p>Please provide the area of habitat created for each UKHAB habitat type.</p> <p>This can include changes or restoration of existing habitat – e.g. arable reversion or changes from coniferous to deciduous woodland.</p>
<p>Length of river/watercourse improved (km)</p>	<p>Please provide the total length of river/watercourse improved in kilometres. If relevant, this can include length of river reconnected (e.g. by removal of barriers).</p> <p>Definition of improvement – this could include physical changes to a river which have or are reasonably expected to improve habitat by increasing species diversity or abundance (including fish), connectivity with other improved/restored reaches or reduce negative factors (such as cattle poaching) or long term changes to facilitate improved management (e.g. fencing or grazing).</p>
<p>Length of river/watercourse created (km)</p>	<p>Please provide the total length of river/watercourse created in kilometres.</p> <p>Creation refers to lengths of new channels, or total length of sections re-meandered outside existing channels.</p>
<p>Length of other habitat created or connected (by UKHAB type) - ha/km</p>	<p>Please provide the total length of habitat created or reconnected as a result of the project. This would include lengths of hedgerow or field bank created (including those linking habitats, for example,</p>

Metric	Metric Guidance
	hedgerows established between two woodlands) or the total length of river benefitting from barrier removal.
<p>Number of trees planted</p>	<p>Please provide the total number of new trees planted during the project. Hedgerow plants, allowing saplings/established young trees to grow or ornamental trees should not be included.</p>
<p>Number of people engaged during project</p>	<p>Please provide number of people engaged during the project by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct engagement (e.g. volunteer work on project, direct training) • Indirect engagement (attendees at events, shows, workshops or talks)
<p>Length of habitat feature created/improved (km)</p>	<p>Please provide length in kilometres of linear habitat features created and/or improved. This could include hedgerows, arable margins, beetle banks etc. Please define the habitat by UKHab type where possible.</p>
<p>Water Quality:</p> <p>Area of land with actions to reduce nutrients, chemicals, biological or other contaminants reaching watercourses (ha)</p>	<p>Please provide the total area in hectares of land on which the project has made demonstrable physical (e.g. buffer strips created alongside watercourses) or land management changes (e.g. nutrient management plans) which reduce chemicals (e.g. pesticides), nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus), biological (e.g. faecal coliforms affecting bathing waters) or other contaminants reaching watercourses.</p>
<p>Water Quantity:</p> <p>Volume of flood storage created (m3)</p> <p>Area of Natural Flood Management features created (ha)</p> <p>Area of land subject to improved control of erosion (ha)</p>	<p>Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total volume of flood storage created by the project in m³ (e.g. new retention ponds or drainage systems) • The overall area of NFM features created (in hectares). NFM area can include the overall channel and adjacent land area on which water will be held back by features such as leaky woody dams. • The total area in hectares of land on which the project has improved control of erosion and prevented sediments entering watercourses (this could include cover crops, sediment traps, planting of vulnerable areas with permanent grassland or hedgerows). This can include both the area of improvement and the overall field(s) benefitting.

Metric	Metric Guidance
Area of INNS eradicated/controlled or under sustained management (ha)	Please provide the total area in hectares of land (or river channel) on which the project has either directly eradicated or controlled Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) or has resulted in agreed management which will control INNS (for example, formal agreement with landowner).