



Scottish Natural Heritage grant programme Information sheet

Special places

Grants for managing special places

The Scottish countryside is well known for its natural, wildlife and scenic qualities. However, there are some places which have been officially recognised as being especially important for these qualities. We want these special places to be managed to protect and improve their special qualities so that people can enjoy them more both now and in the future. This scheme will:

- improve the care and management of a site's special qualities;
- improve public understanding of wildlife, landscape and earth heritage interests;
- develop new and innovative management techniques; and
- encourage local people to get more involved in managing sites.

Background

We have a legal duty to protect sites designated under European and national legislation, such as Natura sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). But there will be times when existing management, while maintaining the special nature conservation features, can be improved, or where understanding of these features and access to them can be improved by specific short-term projects and actions.

Most support for National Nature Reserves (NNRs) comes through existing partnership funding arrangements with certain organisations known as 'Approved Bodies'. Support for other management measures will be available through this scheme.

We are currently looking to improve the way National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are managed. With Highland and Dumfries and Galloway councils, we have recently prepared and put into practice NSA management strategies, and are looking to extend this approach to other NSAs in Scotland.

We have prepared guidance on a range of local designations, such as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), that can also play a role in caring for our natural heritage. If we have enough funding, we will consider supporting specific management action to help improve and protect the special qualities of these places, to help understanding and to manage access.

Who should apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisations ● Local authorities ● Groups ● Communities ● People who have an interest in and manage special places
What we will pay for	<p>The main things we will pay for are listed below. We will also pay for other proposals which help to improve the way special places are managed. Please contact us if you need more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving the management of special places for their landscapes and wildlife. ● Demonstrating new management techniques for the natural heritage and for people. ● Improving public understanding and appreciation of the wildlife, landscape, earth heritage and importance of special places. ● Improving facilities and providing information for visitors to special places. ● Helping communities and schools to get involved in setting up, managing and interpreting special places. ● Preparing NSA management strategies and putting them into practice. ● Plans and projects for improving the care and enjoyment of the natural heritage features of sites on the published Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
Our priorities	<p>We particularly welcome projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● progress actions identified within agreed site or reserve management plans, strategies or statements; and ● are within Natura sites, SSSIs, NNRs, LNRs and NSAs.
How much we will pay	<p>We will pay up to half of the total eligible cost of the project, although some community groups may be eligible for more support. Eligible cost includes any 'in-kind' contributions, such as land, labour or materials donated to the project.</p> <p>We want to encourage greater investment in NSAs. We may be able to offer up to 75% for preparing NSA management strategies, employing NSA project officers and for carrying out NSA projects identified within an agreed management strategy. Please contact us to talk about your plans at any early stage.</p>
What we will not pay for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The normal ongoing management of Natura sites or SSSIs. ● The existing management of National Nature Reserves. ● Most types of research, survey and monitoring, unless directly related to managing a special place and we have already jointly agreed with you that this is an effective way of getting high-priority information. ● The day-to-day work that public organisations must carry out under the new Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 or the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. ● Employees who are already involved with managing sites (other than support for NSA officers on a time-limited basis). ● Preparing applications to or activities funded through other schemes (our Natural Care Programme, Rural Stewardship Scheme, Land Management Contracts, Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme) where the person applying is eligible for these schemes, even if an application has been unsuccessful.

What other information your application should include

To support your application, you should send us:

- a reference to the site or reserve management plan or statement, NSA Management Strategy, or designed landscape management plan;
- evidence that your plans have been discussed with local communities, with other agencies and with any other affected land managers; and
- details of how the project will be maintained once it has been completed, and how this will be funded.

Where to get more help

Our website has details of the main types of protected areas in Scotland. It also outlines our policies on these areas. Please contact us if you want to know more.

Other possible sources of funding

You will find detailed information in the leaflet 'Other sources of funding' in the application pack. Some people who may consider applying to this scheme may be eligible for support from other sources which we will not match. You should check eligibility before applying. Please contact us if you are not sure.

- Our Natural Care programme.
- Land Management Contracts.
- Rural Stewardship Scheme.
- Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme.

