Water Environment Grant Scheme
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Part 1 – Overview of the scheme

The proposed Water Environment Grant (WEG) will be a new scheme under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to fund improvements to the water environment. This funding is from the EU.

Planned purpose is to deliver water environment improvements that benefit the rural community and economy.

What counts as rural benefit?
• Projects in rural areas
• Those which are in urban areas but can demonstrate benefit to a rural area
Part 1 – Overview of the scheme

The **primary outcomes** that drive this proposed scheme are:

- Improving Protected Areas and protected sites
- Prevent WFD deterioration
- Achieving WFD objectives

But… multi-benefit catchment scale projects with ‘complementary’ funding are encouraged! Can projects be joined together at a catchment scale?

**Culm grassland habitat creation project**
- Torridge & Taw Catchments – East Devon
- Devon Wildlife Trust, Devon County Council & EA.

**Flood risk reduction**

**Creating wetland habitat**
Part 1 - It’s a great opportunity

The Rural Development Programme England (RDPE) provides an opportunity to use an alternative funding source to continue to deliver water environment improvement projects.

This scheme;
- Is a multi-million pound fund
- Can fund 100% of a project, and does not require match funding (but complementary funding is encouraged)
- Cannot be used to match fund projects which are already receiving EU funding (e.g. Countryside Stewardship, ESIF)
- Will operate on payments in arrears (in line with all EU funding streams)
- Will have auditing processes (in line with all EU funding streams)
- Will be administered by Natural England and the Environment Agency on behalf of Defra.
## Part 1 - Eligibility

### Eligible applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; Foresters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities and not for profit organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector Bodies (e.g. Local Authorities, National Park Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private companies, for example water companies, may also apply if they can demonstrate the WEG investment will not be of benefit to their profit margins and offers good value for public money</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ineligible applicants are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-departmental public bodies (e.g. EA, NE, FC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown bodies (e.g. British Council)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 1 – Application Prioritisation

Projects will be prioritised if they meet the primary objectives of this fund;  
• Deliver improvements at protected areas and protected sites (must be in a relevant action plan)  
• Prevent or address a WFD deterioration or improve a WFD waterbody status

And if they deliver the wider objectives of this fund;  
• Are part of a wider catchment strategy  
• Provide wider benefits to society  
• Are well developed and ready to start with risks adequately mitigated  
• Have support from the local community and wider organisations  
• Support other investment in the area  
• Benefit a NE focus area
Part 1 - Examples of eligible projects:

- Farm advice
- Rural SUDs
- Peatland restoration
- Creating back channels
- Floodplain reconnection
- Creating new wetland habitat

Must address:
1. WFD objectives
2. Relevant action from protected area plan
Part 1 – Examples of eligible projects

- Sediment management/ Natural flood management
- Modified channel restoration
- Creating fish passage (technical pass)
- Protecting groundwater
- Restoring a failing SSSI
- Invasive species management

Must address:
1. WFD objectives
2. Relevant action from protected area plan
Part 1 – Support for applications

Discuss with the Environment Agency catchment coordinator and/or with Natural England who will be able to support you through the decision making and application process.

Make use of other support / advice such as those which may be available through Catchment Partnerships.
Part 1 – Support for Applications – CaBA Catchment Partnerships

Decide which projects will form the basis of a Water Environment Grant application.

Promote the WEG scheme with partnership and networks.

Discuss project with the Environment Agency catchment coordinator and/or with Natural England who will be able to support you through the decision making and application process.
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Part 2 - Making an application
Part 3 - Payments and inspections
## Part 2 – Making an application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Pre application discussion</strong></td>
<td>EA / NE</td>
<td>Now…..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purpose is to help guide partners so they understand requirements of the scheme and avoid making ineligible applications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Applicant “beneficiary”</td>
<td>Late March – May ‘18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completed by beneficiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• EA Catchment Coordinator &amp; NE will be able to provide some support for partners making the applications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Technical Eligibility checks</strong></td>
<td>EA / NE</td>
<td>June ‘18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Will reject projects that do not meet all the criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Prioritisation</strong></td>
<td>EA / NE</td>
<td>July - Aug ‘18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purpose is to prioritise projects for funding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A minimum score required to become eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Issue Grant letter</strong></td>
<td>Technical Services (NE)</td>
<td>Aug ‘18</td>
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Part 2 - The Application Form

The application form needs to include as much detail as possible and include appropriate supporting evidence about the project, including:

• Outputs to be delivered and outcomes expected
• Permits and permissions required
• Outline schedule of works
• Payment milestones
• Project management costs
Part 2 – Making an application

• A successful project is one which meets the eligibility criteria and scores highly against the prioritisation criteria.

• If all information is provided with an application a grant offer will be made to the ‘beneficiary’. Once signed and returned work can begin.

• Any additional information required as part of the grant offer must be supplied as per the conditions on the agreement.
Part 1 - Overview of the new scheme
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## Part 3 – Payments and Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Start works / project initiation</strong></td>
<td>beneficiary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Detailed project design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Permits and permissions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Submit progress report</strong></td>
<td>beneficiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Agreed as part of grant condition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Care and maintenance visits</strong></td>
<td>EA / NE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss variations if necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Submit payment claim</strong></td>
<td>beneficiary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide evidence of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Payments made</strong></td>
<td>RPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum of 4 payments per year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>‘In situ’ visit</td>
<td>EA / NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To confirm payment claim is legitimate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Audit checks</strong></td>
<td>RPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Throughout process</td>
<td></td>
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Part 3 – Payments and Inspections

- Payment will be issued by the Rural Payment Agency (RPA) as a grant
- Payments in line with the payments schedule in the grant agreement
- Payment is ONLY for works completed (in arrears)
- The scheme financial year will be April 2018 – March 2019
- The proposed scheme would fund multi-year projects that start in 2018/19 and run to March 2020.
- Changes to the grant agreement would require a formal variation
Part 3 – Further information / next steps

• Talk to your local NE and EA teams.
• Workshops / support days planned after scheme launch.
Exercise suggestions

1. Group discussions of priorities for fund (use MTP)
2. Attendees bring project ideas – run priorities exercise using prioritisation criteria
3. Project ideas generation?
4. Merge & chunk exercise (create a catchment scale project from chunks OR chunk up a catchment scale project).
5. Proposals which are related to work being done under another RDPE grant scheme (eg Countryside Stewardship)