

# Our Environment Our Future Guidance for Project Applicants

## 1. Introduction

It is anticipated that the Our Environment Our Future portfolio will comprise between 25 and 35 projects, each receiving funding of around £750,000 to £1 million and lasting up to five years. The portfolio will comprise projects that are developed from existing proven good practice and scale-up or replicate a previous approach. We will be running an open application process with established criteria to help with shortlisting. The criteria are set out in section 3.

## 2. Framework

### 2.1 Overview

Our Environment Our Future aims to make a significant change in the quality of the UK's urban and rural environment. It will increase the ability of young people to improve places that are important to them, and to influence the attitudes and decisions that shape their neighbourhoods and communities. It will help young people to catalyse change, by investing in the development and empowerment of young people as well as the direct improvement of the environment. It will demonstrate the range of approaches that can be taken and evaluate and communicate the outcomes achieved. This will enable the action set in motion to sustain itself, to inspire, motivate and encourage others to follow suit, and to influence the thinking and policy of communities, government and businesses.

Our Environment Our Future will comprise a portfolio of projects developed from existing proven good practice. Projects will scale-up or replicate already successful approaches. The coherent portfolio, which together will achieve all of the framework's vision and outcomes, will feature a range of projects and approaches that complement each other.

The portfolio will enable young people (aged from 11 to 24) to:

- **shape and deliver their own practical projects** – to help nature's recovery<sup>1</sup> and to improve the natural and built environment in places that are important to them;
- **develop as environmental leaders** – to increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of the natural world to society and their ability to have influence within their communities; and
- **gain real-world skills and experience** – to help them to make a positive contribution to their communities and to gain employment – including in the green economy.

It will do this by:

- **providing opportunities** for personal action and experience;
- **providing structured support** to enable young people to make informed decisions, develop and deliver effective projects and engage in decisions affecting their communities;

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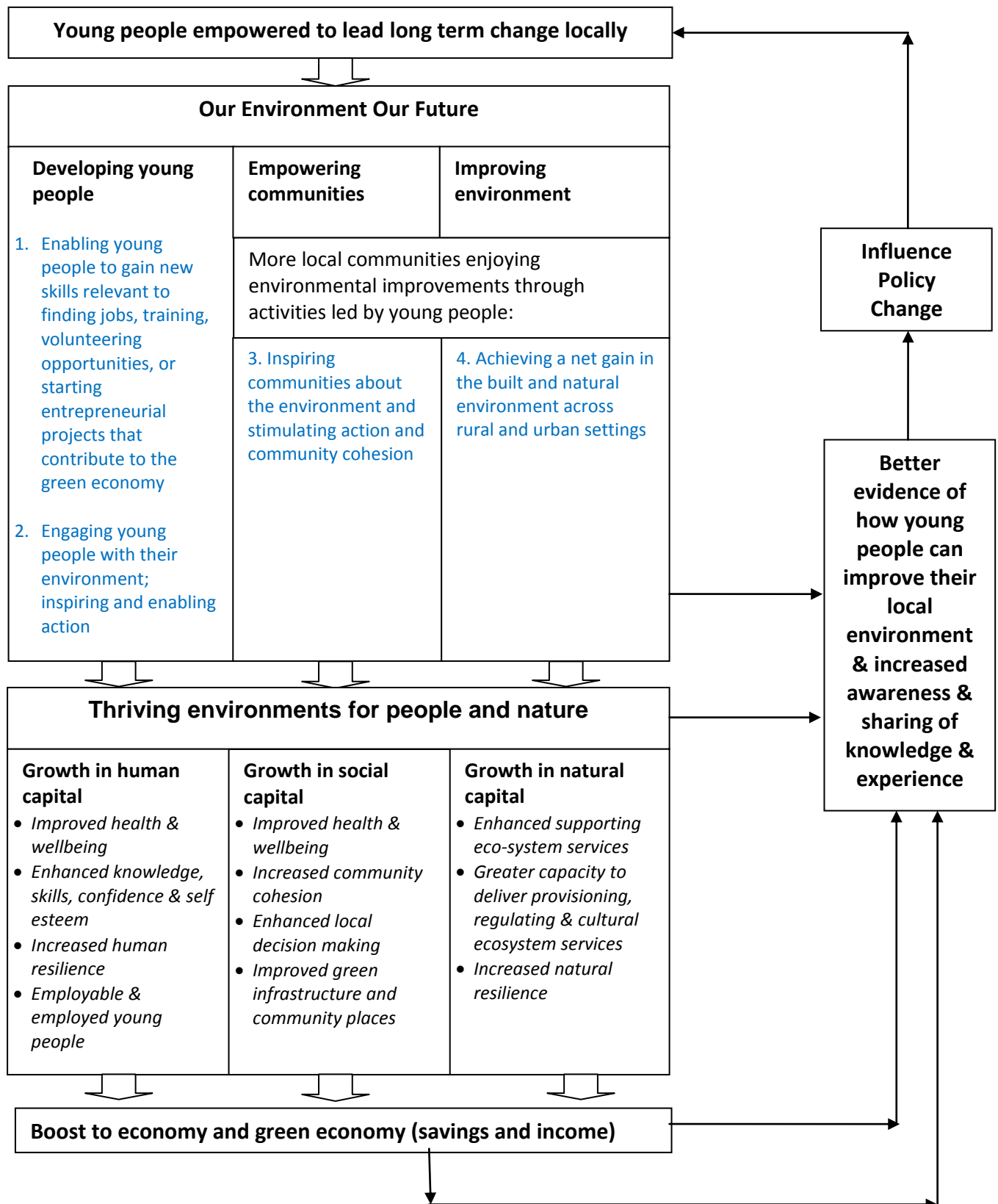
<sup>1</sup> This includes action to mitigate and adapt to climate change

- **providing materials and tools** for young people to use in order to develop themselves and deliver their projects;
- **developing mentoring arrangements** to give young people personal support and to enable them to provide support to others;
- **enabling knowledge-sharing** and a sense of community between project participants across the UK – through conferences, events, online networks and exchange visits.

As a result of the portfolio:

- People of all ages, cultures and backgrounds will be inspired to come together and contribute to a wide range of activities with positive and long lasting impacts.
- Successful local community enterprises will be established, promoting positive environmental practices and providing skills development and employment for young people.
- Policies and plans will be developed, debated and approved by communities, ensuring that their local environment is protected and enhanced into the future.
- Local places will be transformed to provide vital havens for wildlife and enhanced amenities for local people as well as vital services that help protect communities from climate change (e.g. flood defence, carbon storage, reducing inner city temperatures).

## 2.2 Portfolio Outcomes and Themes



## **2.3 Themes**

Projects within the portfolio will contribute to one or more of the following themes:

### **1. Enabling young people to gain new skills relevant to finding jobs, training, volunteering opportunities, or starting entrepreneurial projects that contribute to the green economy**

- Providing support for apprenticeships, mentoring schemes, practical project placements and skills development;
- Providing volunteering opportunities in areas that contribute to environmental improvements;
- Supporting environmental social enterprise models and initiatives that promote positive environmental practices and provide opportunities for young people and contribute to sustainable communities.

### **2. Engaging young people with their environment; inspiring and enabling action**

- Widening interest through educational activities around the environment and why it matters, by promoting awareness and changing attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing opportunities for young people to discover, explore and make a positive contribution to their environment;
- Providing focussed support for groups of young people where there is proven evidence of significant obstacles or barriers to them engaging with, and making a positive contribution to, their local community and environment.

### **3. Inspiring communities about the environment and stimulating action and community cohesion**

- Supporting youth-led community engagement activities that raise awareness of the environment and the linkages between environment and health, wellbeing and prosperity;
- Providing youth-led opportunities for communities to take action for the environment, and reap the benefits from this action;
- Providing focussed support for young people within communities where there is proven evidence of significant obstacles or barriers to engaging their communities with, and making a positive contribution to, their local environment.

### **4. Achieving a net gain in the built and natural environment across rural and urban settings**

- Supporting young people to deliver a net gain for the natural environment in rural and urban settings, where this will contribute directly to community resilience, prosperity or health and wellbeing;
- Supporting young people to deliver sustainable environmental improvements to community spaces, creating thriving hubs of activity that promote positive environmental practices and community cohesion.
- Supporting young people to shape and influence local and national plans and policies, to deliver a more sustainable and resilient built and natural environment for the future.

### 3. Eligibility

A coherent portfolio of projects, which together achieve all of the framework's vision and outcomes, will be presented to the Big Lottery Fund for its final decision. Therefore, some projects will not be taken forward, even if they are eligible and of high quality. This is because it is important to ensure that we deliver the overall portfolio vision through a range of projects and approaches that complement each other. It is also essential to have a good spread in terms of approach, geography, age (within the 11-24 range) and demographics.

#### 3.1 Lead Organisations

The following types of organisation are eligible to apply:

- Registered charities
- Non-profit-making organisations (by non-profit-making we mean there must be clauses in governing documents to ensure that any profit is not distributed to owners or shareholders. This may include a worker-owned cooperative, social enterprise or community interest company)

The following types of organisation might be considered suitable as project partners (provided that they do not receive direct benefit from the project or associated activity) but are not eligible to apply as the lead partner on a project:

- Schools and education establishments (even if they are registered charities)
- Local Authorities
- Parish Councils
- Businesses
- Individuals

All organisations must be registered in the UK.

#### ***Relevant experience***

Lead organisations must be able to demonstrate:

- Ability to deliver large-scale projects
- The skills, experience and resources relevant to the proposed project
- A good understanding of the need of the target beneficiaries and/or environmental area
- Ability to measure and demonstrate impact
- A track record in partnership working and collaboration with other organisations
- A commitment to working as part of a portfolio
- Appropriate governance and management procedures

#### ***Project partners***

We would expect the majority of projects to be delivered in partnership. This is because it is more likely that a partnership of organisations will be in a position to contribute to the themes of the portfolio and have a wide enough reach across the environment and young people strands of the programme.

However, this may not always be the case and we encourage projects that are run by single organisations to apply if they meet the criteria.

Partnerships must be able to demonstrate their relevance to the target beneficiaries and location of the project.

### 3.2 Projects

It is anticipated that the Our Environment Our Future portfolio will comprise between 25 and 35 projects. In order to form a coherent portfolio, when taken together the projects must achieve all of the framework's vision and outcomes. We will also be looking to ensure a good spread in terms of approach, geography, age (within the 11-24 range) and demographics.

The portfolio will enable young people (aged from 11 to 24) to:

- **shape and deliver their own practical projects** – to help nature's recovery and to improve the natural and built environment in places that are important to them;
- **develop as environmental leaders** – to increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of the natural world to society and their ability to have influence within their communities; and
- **gain real-world skills and experience** – to help them to make a positive contribution to their communities and to gain employment – including in the green economy.

All projects must:

- Be developed from existing proven good practice and scale-up or replicate a previous approach
- Contribute directly to one or more themes set out in the Our Environment Our Future Framework
- Be informed and steered by young people
- Demonstrate relevant community engagement
- Be able to demonstrate positive impact on young people, local communities and the environment
- Contribute to informing local and national policy through their evaluation findings
- Have a duration of up to five years (starting on or soon after 1 April 2015)
- Be delivered in the UK

The following activities will not be funded:

- Staff time to develop and write applications
- Retrospective costs: costs incurred and/or expenditure committed before any grant is offered
- Activities which primarily promote religious or political beliefs
- Core costs for the organisation (although project-related full cost recovery can be included)
- Continuation of an existing project in the same location and at the same scale
- Shortfalls on existing projects
- Feasibility studies

## 4. Timescales

**10 November 2014**

**Call for expressions of interest for Our Environment Our Future portfolio projects**



**18 & 28 November and 8 December 2014**

**Webinars for potential project applicants**

The presentations in these webinars will be identical, although the questions raised may be different so you may want to participate in one or more. You can sign up to participate by emailing [oeof@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:oeof@wildlifetrusts.org)



**17 December 2014**

**Deadline for Expressions of Interest**

Expressions of Interest should be submitted via email to [oeof@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:oeof@wildlifetrusts.org) by 5.00pm



**January 2015**

**Seminar for shortlisted projects**

Attendance at this seminar will be mandatory



**End of March 2015**

**Funding awarded**

To projects that have been selected as part of the final Our Environment Our Future portfolio

## 5. Expression of Interest Form: Guidance Notes

### 5.1 General points to note

This form is designed to capture the key information needed to assess whether your project is eligible for Our Environment Our Future and where it could potentially fit as part of the portfolio. Please fill in your form by typing in the boxes. Questions with 'checkboxes' can be checked by double clicking on the box and then selecting 'Checked' under 'Default value'.

Please do not send any additional documents, other than those relating to question 3.3.

### 5.2 Notes relating to specific sections of the form

#### Question 3.6

Please ensure that your objectives are SMART:

- *Specific*
- *Measurable*
- *Achievable*
- *Relevant*
- *Time-related*

#### Question 3.7

- All counties must be within the UK – i.e. within England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- If your project is not location-specific please state this here.

#### Question 8

- At this point a summary budget is required. If your expression of interest is successful you will be asked for a more detailed budget later.
- There is no requirement for match funding, although other income sources or in kind contributions will demonstrate support.
- Projects can be funded up to £1 million but will be assessed with regard to value for money.

#### Question 10.3

- If you do not select any areas for advice, an adviser will be assigned to you based on an assessment of your expression of interest. Additional areas for advice may also be identified during assessment even if you have selected some yourself.
- As the timeframe is short, you may not have the opportunity for in-depth advice in all the areas you select.
- The Our Environment Our Future consortium has a range of expertise and experience in many specialist areas and is adept at diagnosing needs and matching these with support. Therefore please let us know if there are *any* barriers you feel you currently face.

## 6. Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding the application process please get in touch by emailing [oeof@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:oeof@wildlifetrusts.org) or calling RSWT on 01636 677711.