
Seascape Restoration Grants

Guidance for Applicants

February 2024

1. Purpose of the Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme

The Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme (ELSP) is working to demonstrate and deliver a vision for Europe's landscapes and seascapes where:

- Populations of wild animals and plants flourish;
- There is space for the natural functioning of ecological processes;
- The cultural, social and economic values of nature to people are supported and respected;
- Nature and people are resilient to ecological shocks and stresses such as climate change.

Across Europe, centuries of use have resulted in landscapes and seascapes that are ecologically degraded, fragmented, disconnected, missing key species and that are vulnerable to climate change.

Ecological restoration can stimulate sustainable economic and social change in ways that are sensitive to the connections between nature and a region's culture, livelihoods, language and historical human use.

As a contribution to the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), of which the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) is a supporting partner, the ELSP provides funding for the implementation of large-scale restoration initiatives that restore and harness ecosystem processes, bring nature back to degraded landscapes and seascapes and revitalise local economies. Projects are sources of inspiration, models of good practice, and foci for lesson-learning.

2. Criteria

Applications are invited for seascape restoration projects that:

1. Restore nature and ecosystem processes at seascape scale to address global, regional or national biodiversity conservation priorities (for species and habitats).
2. Establish large-scale systems of continuous or ecologically connected habitat where natural processes are given increased freedom to generate natural patterns and distributions of species (reducing the need for conservation management in the long-term) and which enhance ecosystem and species resilience to the impacts of climate change.

3. Demonstrate a good understanding of the mechanism through which they will help overcome one or more barriers to ecosystem recovery (be they ecological, social, economic or political), enabling restoration processes to become self-sustaining.
4. Are developed and delivered through a process that involves engagement or partnership with natural resource users, which can show they have support from key actors (state, private, NGOs) within the project area, and which can demonstrate positive community impact.
5. Are from project teams that are committed to collaboration, have a strong and stable partnership, are already active in the project area, have members that have skills and experience required for landscape and seascape restoration, and have a commitment, capacity and strategy for long-term stewardship of the seascape.
6. Use approaches and address issues that are of relevance to seascape and landscape restoration elsewhere, and therefore have prospects for wider replication.
7. Offer value for money and have identified opportunities to use a grant from the ELSP to leverage additional funding.

Two types of grant are available under this call:

Large grants: The amount per project will be between US\$1.5 (minimum) and US\$5 million (maximum), over 5 years. The Oversight and Selection Panel (OSP) will use criteria 1-7 to assess and recommend projects for funding, and 5-7 large grants are expected to be awarded.

Medium-sized grants: To achieve ambitious landscape- and seascape-scale restoration, organisations (and partnerships) require significant levels of capacity and expertise.

Under this call for proposals, the ELSP will offer up to 3 medium-sized grants, each of between US\$750,000 (minimum) and US\$1.5 million (maximum) over 3 years.

As well as seascape restoration objectives, these grants are available to build, through project implementation, the skills, experience and networks of national organisations for seascape-scale projects. To that end, costs of capacity building and institutional strengthening, as an integral part of these projects, will be allowable. Priority will be given to countries where national NGO capacity for, and experience of, marine restoration is currently limited, and where funds can prove catalytic to strengthen institutions and partnerships.

Applications for medium-sized grants are invited for seascapes projects that meet criteria 1-7 above, and:

- A. Are projects led by a national organisation (regional and international NGOs can be beneficiaries or project partners, involved in building capacity, providing support, training, mentoring, etc.).
- B. Include activities, outputs and outcomes which build the capacity and competencies of the lead organisation and its partners.

The OSP will use criteria 1-7 and A-B to assess and recommend medium-sized projects for funding.

3. Organisation eligibility

- Applications are invited from partnerships, where organisations contribute according to their individual and complementary experience, expertise and resources.
- Collaborations may include international and national NGOs, national and local government agencies, research organisations, utilities companies, community organisations, local landowners, social enterprises, the private sector and others.

Government agencies, for-profit companies and individual private landowners should not be major beneficiaries of ELSP funding.

- Each team should identify a lead partner who will take responsibility for project delivery, coordination, communication and contracting with the ELSP.

Lead partners for large grants must:

- Be not-for-profit organisations, for example, national, regional and international NGOs and/or social enterprises.
- Have previously managed grants of no less than 60% the amount being requested from the ELSP¹.
- Be well-established and currently or very recently active in the project seascape.
- Have prior experience of the type and size of project proposed.

- Lead partners for medium-sized grants must:

- Be nationally registered not-for-profit organisations, for example, NGOs and/or social enterprises.
- Have had an average annual income over the last two years of between US\$125,000 and US\$500,000.
- Be currently or very recently active in the project seascape.

- Applicants invited to submit a full proposal in Stage 2 will be required to:

- Provide evidence that they are financially stable (by submitting audit reports from the last 2 years).
- Provide evidence of support for the project from the relevant government agencies or regional bodies with jurisdiction in the project area.

4. Eligible countries and areas

Applications are accepted for projects within European regional seas indicated on the map below, inclusive of all coastal states of the Mediterranean Sea². ELSP will primarily fund seascape restoration projects within the territorial sea of a coastal state or adjacent coastal states (i.e. projects within 12 nautical miles of the baseline)³. Transboundary multi-country projects are allowable. The ELSP is keen to see applications from countries where their seas are not currently receiving significant restoration or conservation attention.

Beyond territorial seas (i.e. between 12 nautical miles and the Exclusive Economic Zone boundary) we will consider projects located within marginal seas and major enclosed seas of Europe⁴ that have significant match funding contributions ($\geq 50\%$) and present unique and advanced opportunities to restore key habitat features within a seascape. The co-finance requirement for projects between 12 to a maximum of 200 nautical miles is due to the significant additional costs and challenges of implementing successful marine restoration actions. Any such projects should have already established both the operational capacity and any relevant permissions to undertake restoration activities in the proposed project area. Note the ELSP will not consider projects in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

¹ For example, if US\$3,000,000 is being requested from the ELSP, the lead partner must be able to demonstrate previous successful management of grants of at least US\$1,800,000.

² Note that applications from countries currently subjected to UK or EU sanctions will be considered only on an exceptional basis.

³ For non-parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) equivalent distances would be applied.

⁴ The Norwegian Sea, the Barents Sea, the Irish Sea, the Celtic Sea, the North Sea, the English Channel, the Bay of Biscay, and the Gulf of Cádiz. Also, the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.



Source: European Environment Agency ⁵

This call is for seascape restoration projects. Recognising the interconnectedness of marine and terrestrial systems (socially and ecologically), applications will be accepted that include land-based restoration activities, providing those are essential to the active and/or passive restoration of ecologically connected marine habitats and natural processes in marine environments. Applications are therefore expected to have varying proportions of effort and activity on land versus in-water depending on the specific geography and drivers of degradation in the seascape.

Please note that an application to the 2024 call for a Seascape Restoration Grant cannot be re-submitted to future calls for a Landscape Restoration Grant⁶. Any such re-submissions will be rejected.

⁵ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/regional-seas-surrounding-europe-1>

⁶ A new call for Landscape Restoration Grants will launch in 2025.

5. Application process and timetable

Applying is a three-stage process:

Stage 1 – Expressions of Interest (Eols). Eols from eligible organisations will be reviewed by an independent Oversight and Selection Panel made up of distinguished individuals with a range of experience and expertise relevant to European seas. Selected applicants will be invited to submit a Project Proposal (Stage 2). Up to 20 applications are expected to be invited to proceed to the Project Proposal stage.

Stage 2 – Project proposal. Project proposals will be more detailed descriptions that explain how the initiative will address the criteria of the ELSP. Proposals will be evaluated by the OSP and, based on their recommendations, between 8 and 10 applicants will be given in-principle approval. Final approval will be given pending applicants adequately addressing any points raised by the OSP, and further satisfactory development of key planning documents in Stage 3.

Stage 3 – Co-development of project plans. During a funded co-development phase applicants will work with the ELSP management team to finalise project documents (monitoring plans, etc.).

At each stage of the process, project applicants (both successful and unsuccessful) will receive notification of the results by email to the project leader identified in the application. Due to the anticipated high number of applications, we will not be able to provide individual feedback at Stage 1.

The provisional timetable for applications is as follows:

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| • Announcement of Stage 1 results | 10 th July 2024 |
| • Deadline for Stage 2 project proposals | 31 st October 2024 |
| • Announcement of Stage 2 results | 16 th December 2024 |
| • Stage 3 co-design workshop, Cambridge UK | February 2025 |

Projects should anticipate a start date of no earlier than June 2025.

6. Submission of an Expression of Interest (Eol)

- Completed applications should be submitted by **22:59 GMT on Tuesday 30th April 2024**.
- Applications must be made using the [online form](#) on the ELSP website. Applicants should identify in the form whether they are applying for a large or medium-sized grant.
- Organisations can submit a maximum of three Eols. There is no limit to the number of applications in which an organisation is included as a partner.
- Applications not following the guidelines will be rejected.
- ELSP will host a webinar to answer questions on the Seascope Restoration Grants and application process at **11:00 GMT on Thursday 29th February 2024**. Register [here](#).
- Enquires can also be sent to the ELSP Seascapes Programme Manager, Berry Mulligan: b.mulligan@jbs.cam.ac.uk

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Projects awarded a grant from the ELSP must be able to demonstrate evidence of their impact by carrying out robust monitoring across the biodiversity, ecosystem service, social and economic dimensions of seascape restoration.
- In order to promote best practice, and to ensure that information and experiences across projects are comparable, the programme asks each project to develop a monitoring plan according to a standardised but flexible [monitoring framework](#). Further details will be provided to applicants at the relevant stage.
- All projects are expected to make adequate provision in their cost estimate for monitoring and evaluation throughout the life of the project.

8. Open Access Policy and Data Sharing

- The Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme operates an open access policy for any data and information acquired during a project that it supports. This means that all project outputs, including publications, should be made available online and free to users.
- Grant recipients will be required to agree to this open access policy as a condition of accepting their grant.

9. Partnership and ethics

All projects are expected to meet key principles of good and ethical project implementation practice. They should:

- Meet all legal and ethical obligations of both the UK and the countries involved in the project, including relevant access and benefit sharing legislation pertaining to the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.
- Include strong leadership and participation from any communities and natural resource users directly involved in or affected by the project, to ensure that the perspectives, interests and wellbeing of those directly affected are properly addressed.
- Recognise the potential value and relevance of local knowledge and utilise it, where appropriate, alongside international scientific approaches and methods.
- Respect the rights, privacy, and safety of people who are the subject of research and other project activities or other intended beneficiaries, whether direct or indirect.
- Use Prior Informed Consent (PIC) principles with partner communities.
- Protect the health and safety of all staff and volunteers working full and part time on their project.

10. Social safeguards

- Projects will be assessed not only on their biodiversity impacts and technical merit but also on their social consequences. All projects should be designed to prevent and mitigate any harm to people.

- The OSP will evaluate proposals to determine the potential for projects to cause adverse social and environmental impacts and the capacity of applicants to implement any required mitigation measures during the preparation and implementation of the project.
- Applications that receive in-principle approval will be required to complete a screening of potential social impacts.

11. Security considerations

- If there are concerns about the stability of the country or countries where your project will take place, either now or in the next 5 years, or if there is ongoing conflict within or near the project area, applicants should indicate which steps are proposed to mitigate the risk to project personnel, to project implementation, and to the sustainability of project outcomes. Further detail will be requested at Stage 2 related to any potential security concerns.
- The Selection Panel will refer to advice on safety and security provided by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

12. Changes

- The Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme reserves the right to make minor amendments or updates to the Guidance for Applicants during the grant term. The Endangered Landscapes & Seascapes Programme will endeavour to notify those affected as soon as possible of any such changes.