

## Mendip Hills AONB Sustainable Development Fund GUIDANCE NOTES – Completing the grant application form

### **First of all - before you make a start on the form:**

**Read the criteria for the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) and consider whether your project will:**

- further the purpose of: *conserving and enhancing the natural beauty.*
- tackle environmental, economic, social and cultural issues.
- have the support and involvement of communities within the AONB.
- bring people together in partnerships to tackle problems.
- demonstrate innovation and best practice.
- involve young people.

**Your project will be assessed against these criteria, and in your application you will need to tell us exactly how your proposals match them.**

Projects do not have to fully satisfy all of them in order to be awarded grant aid, but it is helpful if you can show how you have assessed your project against these criteria. You need to have planned your project carefully. Have you consulted with other local groups and organisations? Have you involved all potential partners? Are you sure that no other group is doing the same thing already? Who will actually do all the work involved in carrying out your project? Have you drawn up a budget and obtained written quotes/estimates?

**You must complete the Grant Application Form and answer all the questions. Additional supporting information can be provided if you wish.**

### **Section A – Applicant details**

**1** Please give the name of the organisation, company or individual who will be directly responsible for the project and financially accountable for how the SDF grant is to be spent.

**2-3** The person named should be the main point of contact in relation to this application. It needs to be someone who has been closely involved in developing the project. If they have no official job title, then please state briefly their role in the organisation.

**4** Please give the applicant's registered postal address or, if more appropriate, the contact's home address, and the main telephone numbers. If you have no e-mail or web site, insert 'N/A'

**5** If you are a community organisation or group, please give the registered charity or company name if relevant. You do not need to be a registered charity or company, but **you will need a basic constitution**, if only to ensure that everyone is in agreement about the aims and objectives of the group, and that they have in place arrangements for organising meetings and dealing with finances. If you need help with drawing up a constitution, let us know. Your organisation (or one of your partner organisations) will need to have a bank account in its name, so that you can receive grant payments.

### **Section B - Project details**

**1** Please give the name of your project, which should be brief and define clearly what sort of work you will be doing.

- 2 This relates to the town or village that is nearest to your project's regular activities. If in doubt, please ask.
- 3 The estimated start date is when you expect to have all the finance and any necessary permissions in place to enable the project to proceed (see guidance for Question C 4). The completion date is when you anticipate the project will finish and you have met the projects stated objectives (Question B 5). We can advise you further if required.
- 4 This is perhaps the most important question, as we need you to describe in a nutshell what your project is all about and for what sort of expenditure you require our grant.
- 5 This is your chance to explain (briefly) the project's objectives and how your organisation will meet them, both in the short and longer term.
- 6 Having read the AONB purposes and sustainable development criteria, please state how your project will meet them, and what benefits will be achieved.
- 7 We need to understand how your project will continue beyond the period of grant, what happens to the people you have helped or the place you have worked on? You should show evidence of how the project outcomes will be financed and managed in the future eg. a business plan or evidence of local volunteer commitment to maintain a building or habitat. We will give you further advice on this if needed. It is vital that your project proposal is based on clear evidence of local demand and/or need. This may be in the form of informal but recorded discussions in the community, or a survey of businesses you are aiming to assist. If you have produced or commissioned a feasibility study into the project's viability, then please include a copy. Remember that we may give grant aid for such research if a project idea is particularly innovative and addresses the SDF Fund's key objectives.
- 8 Your project may have arisen from an earlier one in your area, or it may be of the same type; or relate to an existing activity.
- 9 Projects must help deliver the current AONB Management Plan. Quote the key objective or action reference that your project will help deliver or contribute to.
- 10 It is vital that your project proposal is based on clear evidence of local demand and/or need. This may be in the form of informal but recorded discussions in the community, or a survey of businesses you are aiming to assist. If you have produced or commissioned a feasibility study into the project's viability, then please include a copy. Remember that we may give grant aid for such research if a project idea is particularly innovative and addresses the SDF Fund's key objectives.
- 11 If you are offered a SDF grant, you will need to produce progress reports so that we can be sure that you are spending the money as promised. So you will need to establish from the outset, how you will measure and record the progress of your work. This should be helpful in your project planning, as things can go 'off track' if not carefully thought through. We can advise you further if required.
- 12 Projects involving more than one organisation sometimes have a better chance of practical and financial success. Your local authority may be offering grant aid or technical advice, or a local business may be donating room space or equipment (also see question C3). Please try to limit this to those directly involved in the project's implementation.

## **Section C – Financial details**

**1. As there is limited SDF funding available we can only fund a small number of projects each year. We therefore need to ensure that we are funding businesses or organisations that cannot afford to undertake the work without grant assistance. On occasion we may also request a copy of your most recent financial statement.**

2. Please list the different types of costs you expect to encounter, which could be staff salaries (revenue), events or workshops, physical works (capital), or a leaflet /

web site design. The costs should be rounded up to the nearest £10 and be your best estimate or, ideally, based on written quotations. We will be able to give you sample costs for various types of activity. Most of your expenditure will probably be in cash, but if someone has offered their time, property or equipment free of charge or 'at cost' then you should indicate that here. There are nationally recognised equivalent cash values for different types of help. For example donated labour can be costed in at £50 a day. Contact the SDF officer for more details. It is important to list out all donations given 'in-kind' - whether these are materials or labour. The value of these donations can be counted as your match funding.

**The example below may help you.**

This group wants to buy and plant 200 oak trees. The supplier is donating 100 trees (worth £50), so the amount the group will actually have to pay out is £50. The group will provide 10 people to work for 2 days and a local company will prepare the ground at a subsidised cost.

200 oak trees @ 50p each	=Cost £50	=In-kind £50	Total = £100
10 X people X 2 days work to plant trees	= Cost £0	=In-kind £1,000	Total = £1,000
Ground preparation	= Cost £100	=In-kind £200	Total = £300
		<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£1,400</b>

SDF Grant applied for **£250** % of total cost **19%** ( $250 \div 1,400 \times 100$ )

**3.** State how much SDF grant you are seeking and what percentage of the total project costs this represents. Our maximum grant rate is normally 50% or 75% for voluntary groups, but we may consider a higher rate if an applicant can prove genuine need.

**4** We would encourage you to seek financial support from local, regional or national organisations which may share the project's purpose and aims, even if they are not a practical partner. We can give guidance on possible 'match funders' for the sort of work you are planning. Please list these organisations by their full officially recognised name and do not use acronyms or abbreviations (e.g. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, not BTCV). State the amount of funding you are seeking from each one. Where possible refer to the amounts in Question C 2; this can be cash or in-kind. Please also indicate if this has been agreed or when you expect to hear the final decision from them.

**5** It is important that if your project requires any sort of legal permission, e.g. planning permission or land owner's consent, you let us know and when you expect to have that agreed or finalised.

**6** As each AONB/NP has an SDF it is important that we share information and know which other SDFs you are applying to or have received funding from.

**Section D - Applicant declaration**

Please complete the lines as indicated. The named individual should be the individual applicant (if private individual applicant), Director, Chief Executive, financial manager, office holder or designated co-ordinator of the organisation, and not the contact named in Section A, unless he or she is also in one of the positions named above.

Should your project not be completed after SDF Grant has been paid the amount of Grant must be refunded in part or in full at the discretion of the AONB. Projects must comply with State Aid regulations. For details contact Help Line 0207 2155000 or [www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/stateaid](http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/stateaid).

For the final question, please tell us how you became aware of the SDF. This may have been through local media, personal recommendation, our web site or other means. This information will help us to evaluate which forms of communication are most effective in promoting the fund and to identify additional opportunities.

## **Finally**

If you have any queries about any aspect of the application form or the Sustainable Development Fund, or if you need help and support to develop your project - **don't hesitate to contact us! 01761 462338 or email as below**

**Email your completed application to:**

[mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:mendiphills@somerset.gov.uk)

**Your completed application form should be a maximum of 6 A4 pages using a minimum font size 10**