

# **The National Framework**

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## Version 3.0 – 23 August 2021

The National Framework forms part of the in-year variation to the grant agreement between Defra and the Protected Landscapes organisations.

### **Section 1: Narrative and strategic context**

Our Protected Landscapes (PLs)<sup>1</sup> are special and unique and need to be managed, enhanced and protected while also supporting the farmers<sup>2</sup> and communities who work within them and the wider local economy.

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will provide additional investment in these places to allow farmers to work in partnership with Protected Landscapes to deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment for people and for the place.

Protected Landscapes can make an important contribution to:

- **Climate** – delivering net zero with nature and nature-based solutions to help communities adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change;
- **Nature** – playing a leading role in the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network and achieving the PMs commitment to protect 30% of land by 2030;
- **People** – providing a natural health service that will improve the nation’s public health and wellbeing through increased access to nature across all parts of society, as part of our green recovery;
- **Place** – creating centres of excellence and green innovation that are flourishing places to live and work, each with a strong identity and cultural heritage, and high recognition as attractive visitor destinations.

**As part of the Agricultural Transition Plan, the government has committed to help farmers and land managers deliver against these four areas, in a holistic way** - in order to meet the requirements of individual Protected Landscapes, helping strengthen their special importance and meet their statutory requirements.

**The programme will be delivered by farmers, working in partnership with Protected Landscapes** – Protected Landscapes and farmers living and working in these areas know the opportunities and challenges facing their landscapes and communities the best. This is an opportunity for Protected Landscapes, farmers and others within these areas to work better together, leading work at an individual landscape level, building on existing relationships.

**The programme will focus on the key challenges facing farmers and communities in Protected Landscapes** - helping improve, and prevent damage to, the landscape; effectively managing high levels of visitors - there are twelve Protected Landscapes that

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<sup>1</sup> PLs consist of 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They cover 25% of England, and they remain relatively undeveloped. Most of the land in PLs is owned and managed by farmers.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Farmers’ - refers to both farmers and other land managers.

each have >5 million people living within 50km of their boundaries; and helping farmers and businesses capitalise on the many social and financial benefits that visitors can provide.

**The programme will be project based and take a bottom up approach** - this means that funding will support individual projects proposed by farmers, and approved by Local Assessment Panels, which will support Protected Landscapes' local priorities. Projects will take a holistic approach to deliver change.

The vast majority of funding will go on direct delivery of programme activities through implementation of farm level projects, wider infrastructure/investment to improve access, and accompanying technical advice/support. We will be using existing internal mechanisms (from across Defra, RPA and the Protected Landscapes) to provide the necessary oversight /assurance for the spend under the Farming in Protected Landscape Programme.

**This is a time limited programme (2021-2024) to provide additional investment in our most special places** - it will work alongside – not in competition with - existing schemes and add value where it is most needed; if activities can already be delivered through existing schemes they should be. Over the longer term, we would envision the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery scheme playing a specific part across these landscapes, with farmers who lead on FiPL projects taking part in one of these schemes to ensure they will be delivering our ambitions.

We will look to ensure that as far as possible, those who receive funding for a project under FiPL are not unfairly disadvantaged from applying for other E.L.M. schemes such as Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery or Landscape Recovery Schemes. Potential interactions and eligibility between FiPL and E.L.M. schemes will be set out as and when Defra provides further information about E.L.M. schemes.

For further information on the programme in relation to other Farming or Nature Funds, please refer to Annexes L and M. Annex B provides a general Q&A for protected landscape bodies.

## **Section 2: Projects**

### **2.1. Themes, Outcomes and Indicative projects**

This programme has been designed with local flexibility at the forefront. As the decision makers, Protected Landscapes will be able to make funding decisions that take into account the wider strategic priorities of their landscapes.

FiPL seeks to achieve several outcomes across the four programme themes: climate, nature, people and place. Applicants will be asked in their applications to demonstrate how their project meets these outcomes.

#### **Outcomes for the FiPL programme:**

##### Climate

- More carbon is stored and/or sequestered
- Flood risk has been reduced
- Better understanding among farmers, land managers and the public as to what different habitats and land uses can deliver for carbon storage and reduced carbon emissions
- The landscape is more resilient to climate change

## Nature

- There is a greater area of wildlife rich habitat
- There is greater connectivity between habitats
- Existing habitat is better managed for biodiversity
- There is an increase in biodiversity

## People

- There are more opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There are increased opportunities for more diverse audiences to explore, enjoy and understand the landscape
- There is greater public engagement in land management, for example through volunteering

## Place

- The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced
- Historic structures and features are conserved, enhanced or interpreted more effectively
- There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy

Where possible, projects should be funded which deliver on more than one of the four themes of the programme to maximise the impact of this programme. The intention is that this programme has the flexibility to take an integrated approach: delivering multi benefits; able to fund capital and revenue; practical projects, skills development, knowledge transfer and training; with farmers and the environment at the heart of it.

Projects brought forward under the third of the Place outcomes - *There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy* - must deliver this in balance with and directly linked to other programme outcomes across the four themes. High cost items may fail the value for money test unless they are delivering against multiple other outcomes.

Detailed below are two examples to demonstrate how projects can deliver the programme outcomes whilst delivering across the four themes.

**Example 1** – The farmer will reinstate a 233m channel to its original 490m length, incorporating shallow areas and pools, install a bridge to manage access and aid land management (in an area of the PL with significant visitors), and undertake habitat restoration of the chalk grasslands, one of the distinctive features of the PL. This will deliver public benefits by reducing flood risk, improving wildlife habitats and access opportunities, and storing carbon. Estimated cost £150,000.

**Example 2** – A farmer in a Protected Landscape will carry out an ecological survey and soil test for 10ha of semi-improved grassland to assess the suitability for restoration to species rich grassland. They go on to restore 5 ha of the semi-improved grassland and to restore a scheduled lime kiln which has collapsed, provide a new concession access route to the restored lime kiln, develop a pop-up camp site to increase business diversification and install signage to direct people to the village tea shop to support the local economy. Estimated cost £40,000.

Protected Landscapes will be required to make clear how FiPL will support their management priorities/plans prior to the first Local Assessment Panel and review of applications. All applications through the FiPL funding will need to support the management

plans/priorities of the Protected Landscape in which they are being delivered. In order to support this process Protected Landscapes are expected to outline their management priorities and the indicative projects they expect to see that this programme will deliver in their landscape. An example of what this document could look like is included in Annex A.

Once developed, this document outlining how FiPL delivers the management plans/priorities should be used as a reference points for Local Assessment Panels when assessing applications to understand whether applications are delivering for the management plans as expected.

Examples of the types of activities that could be supported through FiPL, delivering for the outcomes and themes of the programme are captured below (please note this is not an exhaustive list). Protected Landscapes should seek to build on these examples when considering the types of indicative projects that may be delivered in their landscapes.

Climate	Nature	People	Place
<p>Enabling a farmer to deliver natural flood management projects based upon recommendations from Natural England's Advisers and/or Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFO).</p> <p>Background: The Agricultural Transition Plan announced that the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme will be expanded over the period up to 2024 to cover all catchments (not just priority ones) and to provide advice on flood risk management as well as water quality. Farmers in Protected Landscapes could engage speak to their CSFO who could advise farmers on their flood risk management and water quality. Farmers could then implement the advice they gain from CSFOs by applying for funding from this programme.</p>	<p>Granting funding to a farmer to allow them to make a series of species recovery interventions on their land including dew pond restoration, species rich grassland restoration and the creation of refugia or hibernacula.</p>	<p>Improving visitor management and engagement through, for example, new permissive access routes, improvements to existing routes to make them more accessible and interpretation to help visitors understand the environment and the farmland they are visiting.</p>	<p>Funding to restore a series of drystone walls across a landholding, preserving the landscape character.</p>
<p>Providing the appropriate equipment to a farmer to allow them to undertake</p>	<p>Enabling large scale intervention towards the long-term management of</p>	<p>Enabling the development of volunteer and education opportunities through</p>	<p>Supporting the survey and restoration or consolidation of archaeological features</p>

woodland management on their land.	invasive species (see statutory obligations 4.9.)	investment in appropriate infrastructure and equipment.  Supporting the installation of fully-accessible facilities on-farm to enable delivery of care farm or therapeutic activities.	or other heritage assets.
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## 2.2. Working collaboratively

### With farmers and other land managers

The programme should be delivered in partnership with farmers and other land managers in Protected Landscapes, that is the spirit of the FiPL programme. We know that the Protected Landscapes and farmers living and working in the landscape know the opportunities and challenges facing their landscapes and communities the best. This programme allows the opportunity for Protected Landscapes and farmers to work better together, leading work at an individual landscape level whilst building on existing relationships.

This programme is providing funding for advice and guidance staff (further detail in Section 3.3). These posts will allow Protected Landscape representatives to be out on the ground working with farmers to develop projects that work for the farmer and align with local priorities and Protected Landscapes' management plans.

The Protected Landscape advice and guidance staff should have a holistic understanding of the projects being delivered across the landscape and facilitate join up between farmers where helpful. Fostering these relationships now between Protected Landscapes and farmers can help to ensure that our Protected Landscapes deliver bigger and better outcomes for people and nature both now and in the future.

### With Protected Landscapes Teams

At a national level, the programme will show what Protected Landscapes can deliver collectively, facilitating greater coordination and join up across the National Parks and AONBs, putting into practice recommendations from the [Glover Review of Landscapes](#). The programme will provide the opportunity for Protected Landscapes to collaborate and share learning and through the evaluation understand what interventions work best where and why.

Where appropriate, we encourage Protected Landscapes to join up to deliver Local Assessment Panels (more detail on in Section 4.6). We will be establishing a FiPL Network, enabling continual improvement. All Protected Landscapes will be expected to participate in this network to enable all forty-four delivery partners to share best practice, identify and solve challenges together, and input to Defra about the successes and challenges of the programme. More detail of this network will be provided shortly.

### Between farmers, land managers and others – Collaborative farmer groups

Protected Landscape teams should look to support projects that enable and encourage collaboration between farmers and other land managers. This could be through supporting collaborative farmer groups to support farmers in coming together to develop collaborative

projects which deliver outcomes at a larger scale. Collaborations could also be encouraged between farmers and land managers engaged in access provision and visitor management, amongst others.

In order to apply to the programme, collaborative farmer groups can:

- apply through a lead applicant, who takes on the task of distributing resources to the group, managing the application process and reporting on the progress of the project.
- apply through a third party that is not part of the collaborative farmer group but acting on the behalf of the collaborative farmer group (e.g. an environmental charity). The third party will distribute the resources to the group, manage the application process and report on the progress of the project.
- apply through the PL body who may have experience of working with the whole group or some its members (this would be subject to a panel decision like all other applications). The PL can make individual payments to farmers in the collaborative farmer group or pay for necessary works and activities directly. The Protected Landscape body will distribute the resources to the group, manage the application process and report on the progress of the project.

In each case it will be the responsibility of the Protected Landscapes to ensure there is a partnership agreement between the participants and the lead applicant / applicant body. The application template will ask the applicant (be it the group member, 3<sup>rd</sup> party or Protected Landscape) to provide evidence of the partnership agreement(s) with the participating farmers. Protected Landscapes are encouraged to support farmers to ensure the partnership agreements are in place.

### **Section 3: Delivery**

When reviewing the delivery section of the National Framework, you might find it useful to refer to the process flows for the programme.

Annex N is a process flow for the overall programme. Annex O contains two process flows, one demonstrating the FiPL process for an applicant, the other demonstrating the process for a Protected Landscape.

#### **3.1. Subsidy control**

From 1 January 2021, all UK public authorities are subject to international subsidy control measures, replacing the previous state aid rules under the EU. Any new grant funding or central governmental programmes introduced from this date with a direct payment to an end recipient to deliver environmental objectives need to be reported under the following:

- World Trade Organisation: Agreement on Agriculture (Domestic Support) Regulations, 2020
- UK-EU Trade and Commercial Agreement (TCA): Chapter 3: Subsidy Control
- Northern Ireland Protocol, Article 10

While measures in scope within the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme may intend to deliver desirable environmental objectives, they may also have a commercial context for the recipient and with it the potential to distort competition as an aside. The above reporting is to identify where an economic advantage or opportunity could feasibly occur for the recipient. Further details can be found in annex R.

Approved projects should be recorded under one of the following:

Category Name	Short Description
General Services	Programmes which provide services or benefits to agriculture or the rural community (no direct payments to farmers)
Decoupled income support	Decoupled income support criteria (direct payment to farmers)
Structural adjustment assistance provided through investment aids	Structural adjustment assistance provided through investment aids
Environmental programmes	Payments under environmental programmes
Other subsidy	Non-agricultural projects which promote economic activity or possible economic advantage.
N/A	Projects which would not be eligible for subsidy reporting.

### 3.2. Payment rates and Intervention rates

The payment and intervention rates for this programme will be determined by the type of activity that is being funded. Payment rates for activities funded through this programme need to be proportionate to existing Defra funding schemes already available to farmers to ensure consistency for customers.

Protected Landscape staff will be expected to determine whether the activities that are being undertaken could be funded through the payment rates found in Annex P, the Countryside Stewardship (CS) Payment rates, access and intervention rates. Projects funded through FiPL may well encompass some activities that have a payment rate (in Annex P) that needs to be used and some activities that do not and this is to be expected. Costs should be broken down to an item level in applications.

There are two approaches that need to be considered when determining what to pay for an item.

#### 1) Activities that have a CS payment and intervention rate

Where an activity has a CS equivalent, Protected Landscapes will be expected to pay the same payment rates and the same intervention rate for funding the activity through FiPL funding as the activity would have been paid through CS. This is to ensure consistency across Defra programmes.

Please use Annex P to determine the activities that CS currently offers a payment rate and intervention rate for. Please be aware that these rates might change (further information below).

#### 2) Activities without a CS payment and intervention rate

Where an activity does not have a CS equivalent, Protected Landscapes will need to request quotes for the items as a capitalised item. The Local Assessment Panels will be well placed to judge the value for money of the quotes.

The application form will ask for three quotes from the applicant for the item; offers of funding will be based on lowest quotes other than in exceptional circumstances. Should the applicant wish to take up one of the higher quotes, they may do so but will have to cover the additional costs. If, exceptionally, you are accepting less than three quotes, then the Protected Landscape should record the evidence base for this decision and reference similar projects to determine costs are appropriate.

Where appropriate, quotes can be obtained from a number of different sources, for example from a contractor, from catalogue items, from other identical projects, or by using a professional independent valuation. For obtaining comparative quotes we will gather examples through sharing between projects and PLs and explore developing minimum specifications or valuations where the item is the same or where a standard but comparative capitalised value can be used across the PLs. For self-delivery the applicant may use day rates and costings published in Nix Farm Handbook, the Agricultural Costings Book or the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers. Actual costs must always be through three comparative quotes as outlined above.

Protected Landscapes will also be required to set an intervention rate for these items. Intervention rate rules apply per item rather than per project – multiple activity projects may have multiple intervention rates, depending on those activities. In all cases, applicants should seek the minimum necessary to allow the project to proceed.

Rate	Description	Example
<b>Up to 40%</b>	Up to 40% can be paid to applicants for an activity where it is clear that grant support enables commercial gain for the applicant.	An example might include funding to support the establishment of pop-up campsites to diversify the business.
<b>Up to 80%</b>	Up to 80% can be paid to applicants for an activity where there may be some commercial gain for the applicant, but where the driving force is for the delivery of public goods.	Examples might include funding a farmer to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) install hand washing facilities to allow them to host education visits, which in hosting the visits they receive a payment from the educational provider for.</li> <li>2) provide new infrastructure to enable disability suitable routes across their land to allow for educational visits. In making these changes though the farmer's site, which includes a farm shop and a campsite, has greater accessibility.</li> </ol>
<b>80% - 100%</b>	An intervention rate between 80-100% should be paid to applicants where it is clear that in funding an activity there is no commercial gain to the applicant. Rates can be offered at 100% where it is clearly evidenced that funding the activity will deliver value for money.	An example might include funding to improve public engagement infrastructure such as a picnic site at a beauty spot or projects to improve public access such as new permissive access routes.

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Permissive access can be funded using options HN1, HN2, HN3, HN4, HN5 HN6 or HN7. Payment rates and management requirements for access options are on the access tab of Annex P.

Capital projects to support infrastructure on permissive access or to improve permanent access, where there is no CS equivalent standard payment rate, should use actual cost via quotes as above.

**It is important to note that a project may consist of a range of actual cost or bespoke items and CS equivalent options, specific to the project being proposed and outcomes being targeted.** Funding for projects on an actual cost basis may also be underpinned or in combination with other CS equivalent options on the same land, where the option requirements do not conflict. By combining option(s) on the same area, where they do not conflict, multiple objectives can be met.

For example, funding for a permissive access on an area of grassland could be through applying the access base payment HN1 at £350/ year to the agreement, and then on the actual parcel using option HN2 at £41/ha, together with the equivalent grassland management option GS2 at £95/ha, and with standard capital items fencing FG1 at £4/m, together with additional quoted items access infrastructure such as a bridle gate, footbridge and/ or interpretation panel at 100% cost.

These examples are illustrative only. Please use Annex P and see <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants> for details of CS equivalent option requirements, where they can and can't be used, and current payment rates.

Taking these approaches will ensure that FiPL does not compete with other Defra funding programmes. We do not want farmers to leave one funding stream because they think they can get a 'better deal' elsewhere.

#### Updates to rates

Defra will notify Protected Landscapes of any updates to the payment rates captured in Annex P to ensure that FiPL costings align. Protected Landscapes should though remain mindful of the fact that rates may change and visit gov.uk for the latest information. The payment rates given in grants to applicants will not update whilst the project is ongoing, the payment rate given when the agreement is made will be the payment rate throughout the project.

#### Reserve allocation

The Local Assessment Panel may allow a reserve allocation to be made, where it feels that additional resource may, in exceptional circumstances, be required to ensure delivery of the outcomes. Any funds drawn from this allocation would need to be approved by a senior officer from the Protected Landscape team and reported to the next panel meeting.

#### Purpose of the programme in relation to private sector interests

Some projects that support the goals of the programme in relation to climate, nature, people, and place will inevitably have a commercial dimension, and this factor is reflected accordingly in the intervention rates set out above.

This programme is designed to fund additional activities that deliver our programme goals in ways that are most effective for local areas. It will not provide subsidy for normal private sector interests. All applications will be rigorously reviewed to ensure there is no overlap with other programme funding or grant schemes.

### **3.3. Recruitment: Administration, Advice and Guidance, and potential for PLs to join up posts**

Each Protected Landscape team is allotted an overall amount of funding for each year. They are also informed of the maximum they can spend from this amount on (i) Administration, and (ii) Advice and Guidance, in the form of employing FiPL officers to support work on the ground. If you do not receive this information, please contact: [FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk)

**Administration spend** can be used on: costs associated with running a Local Assessment Panel; receiving, logging, acknowledging grant applications; notifications of panel outcomes; issuing agreements; procurement admin, processing payments and local scheme promotion; staff (and related on-costs) & staff management; finance, HR & IT support; travel and subsistence requirements and comms. Where there is any underspend on administration, you would be able to use it on programme spend.

**Advice and Guidance spend** can be used on FiPL officers, to support work on the ground, which (unlike Administration spend) is classed *as part of the programme spend*. It would include:

- engagement with farmers/land managers and overall delivery, as well as with Defra;
- working with farmers to promote high quality applications to the programme;
- supporting applicants in developing projects for submission (and where necessary help guide subsequent delivery), including facilitating collaborative farmer group /group applications;
- supporting the work of the FiPL Local Assessment Panels, including the provision of summary reports and recommendations on how applications will ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of support offered under the programme, including the management of multi-year agreements;
- supporting monitoring of progress towards the completion of funded projects; supporting project and programme level evaluation, including reporting to Defra and your Protected Landscape team;
- ensuring that action undertaken through the programme is consistent with the goals and purpose(s) of the Protected Landscape;
- and, undertaking related duties as required.

Suggested role descriptions can be found in Annex D.

Protected Landscapes will need to report their spend on both administration and advice and guidance to Defra, as part of their monthly reporting in the Monitoring Form (Annex H).

We recognise that the advice and guidance staff and administration support are new posts to provide important additional capacity to deliver FiPL. Until these posts are trained and in place, we appreciate that most Protected Landscapes will have limited capacity to deliver the programme. Nevertheless, our expectation is that all Protected Landscapes will begin to promote the programme locally to ensure that farmers are aware of the opportunities and prioritise as best they can support for project development.

If Protected Landscape teams wish to partner up with another Protected Landscape(s) to run their Local Assessment Panel (more detail in Section 4.3), they may wish to discuss

reducing their admin and advice/guidance costs (where possible) and reallocating more spend towards project delivery. If Protected Landscapes feel this would be beneficial, they should first discuss with the relevant Protected Landscapes(s), and then email Defra ([FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk)), setting out their proposed plan for join-up and the associated reallocation of budget to delivery. Defra will respond to confirm they are content with the approach.

### 3.4. Capital and Revenue spending

As per HMT Consolidated Budgeting Guidance and Future Farming and Countryside Programme (FFCP, the parent programme of Farming in Protected Landscapes) Financial Assurance:

- (1) Protected Landscapes will have flexibility on spend, as the funding can be used to pay for resource and capital items;
- (2) all spend would score as RDEL.

Revenue spend is where funding is provided to support management actions which deliver FiPL objectives.

Capital spend is where funding is provided to purchase or invest in a physical asset (capital item) to achieve a stated outcome, for example increased business prosperity or improvements to the environment. Capital items can include things like buildings, machinery and equipment and landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, fencing and ponds.

As part of the FiPL monitoring process, individual Protected Landscape bodies will provide regular updates to Defra on how spend has been split between revenue and capital. More detail on monitoring and evaluation can be found in Section 5.

### 3.5. Finance reporting schedule and expectations

#### Expectations

As per National Audit Office and Future Farming and Countryside Programme (FFCP) governance, spend needs to be accounted for in the year it is spent.

However, this is a three-year programme, and you can make longer-term agreements for longer-term projects.

The table provided here gives examples of how expenditure around individual and multi-year projects would be recognised in Defra's accounts.

Grant detail agreed with Protected Landscapes		Expenditure from each year's allocation (£)			
		21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Grant recipient A	£150k grant to be claimed for work delivered over 3 years	75,000	30,000	45,000	150,000
Grant recipient B	£100k grant to be claimed for work in year 1	100,000	-	-	100,000
Grant recipient B	£75k grant to be claimed for work delivered in years 2 and 3	-	40,000	35,000	75,000

Defra will track individual Protected Landscape teams' spending as part of the monthly reporting and maintain a conversation with Protected Landscape teams about how confident they are in spending their full allocation.

Defra will proactively take steps to mitigate risks around underspend, such as through potential reprofiling of the programme budget, or reallocation between Protected Landscape teams. The Defra policy team will maintain an open conversation with Protected Landscape teams on this matter – it is in the interests of all parties that the whole programme budget is spent on meaningful projects in Protected Landscapes.

FiPL's parent programme, FFCP, has strict rules around spending, requiring any underspend at the end of the financial year to be returned.

### **Financial Reporting – to be read in conjunction with Monitoring and Evaluation section**

On a monthly basis, Protected Landscape teams need to provide Defra with (i) an updated spreadsheet that covers monitoring and evaluation, showing spend and progress on individual projects, and (ii) overall details of FiPL spend (projects, as well as spend on administration and advice and guidance). These details would include a breakdown between Capital and Revenue.

Monthly reports should be sent to Defra ([fipl@defra.gov.uk](mailto:fipl@defra.gov.uk)) in the first 5 working days of the month for reporting the previous month i.e. for the August 2021 return, send in the first week of September 2021.

Protected Landscape teams also need to provide Defra with project information on a quarterly and annual basis – please see Annex I (Quarterly Project Report Form) and Annex J (Annual Lessons Identified Template).

Full detail on monitoring can be found in Section 5 below (Monitoring and Evaluation).

### **3.6. Onward grant agreement expectations**

Protected Landscapes will be expected to have onward agreements in place with all project partners. National Parks and AONBs will need to issue a formal grant letter and enter into agreements for the grants with farmers/land managers. The formal agreement will set out what is to be done, by when, monitoring requirements, aftercare conditions and payment schedule.

For tenanted land, Protected Landscape teams will need landowner's signature and for common land the signatures of all owners and commoners or an agreed nominated representative. If a claim were found to be incorrect, agreements would allow Protected Landscapes to reclaim the money back from the applicant (if monies had been spent), and if no monies had been spent the contract would be cancelled.

A template onward grant agreement template for use with project partners can be found in Annex K.

### **3.7. Legislative powers**

In order to align the FiPL programme with the annual grant funding agreements under which this programme is being delivered, this programme will be delivered under the same powers.

For AONBs, [Section 98 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act 2006](#) will be applied for delivering this funding. Section 98 of NERC enables the Secretary of

State to provide financial assistance in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred in any matter related to or connected with a Defra function, subject to any conditions specified.

For National Parks, [Section 72 of the Environment Act 1995](#) will be applied. Section 72 enables the Secretary of State to make grants to a National Park authority for such purposes, of such amounts and on such terms and conditions as he thinks fit. For the Broads Authority, [Section 15 of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988](#) as amended by the NERC Act 2006 will be applied.

These powers will be applied in pursuit of the statutory purposes of National Parks, Conservations Boards, AONBs and Broads Authority which are as follows:

National Parks:

- To conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
- Promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park.
- (only the Broads Authority) Protecting the interests of navigation.
- A statutory duty to “seek to foster the economic and community wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of purposes.”

AONBs:

- To conserve and enhance natural beauty.

### **3.8. Maintenance**

Capital infrastructure assets (e.g. fences and gates), should be maintained for 5 years from the date of completion.

Machinery assets (for example a brush harvester for grassland restoration) should be maintained for 5 years from the date of purchase.

The requirement to maintain natural, cultural and access activities (for example, management of grassland, restoration of a limekiln) delivered as part of programme will end no later than 1 April 2024.

### **3.9 Inheritance Tax Exemption**

Protected Landscape teams need to be clear about whether land within the application or project is also designated under the conditional tax exemption incentive (Inheritance tax exemption ITE). Protected Landscape teams will need to check all applications to established whether any land in an application is heritage property (ITE land).

Protected Landscape teams should assess whether the activity is likely to overlap with the general conditions of undertakings given in the Inheritance Tax Exemptions. A manual check will need to be made by Protected Landscape teams to do this. Protected Landscape teams should make this check using the maps shown on [HMRC ITE interactive map](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/gds/heritage/lbsearch.htm). (Linked here - <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/gds/heritage/lbsearch.htm>).

The following link can also support Protected Landscape teams to make assessments for activities which are eligible in CS.

A webinar will shortly be delivered by Natural England on this topic for training purposes and Protected Landscapes will be contacted separately about this. The team at Natural England are not resourced to respond to enquiries about individual FiPL applications. Please try to refrain from sending enquiries about FiPL applications on heritage land (conditionally exempt from inheritance tax/Maintenance Fund) to Natural England.

### 3.10 Claim and document retention policy

At a programme level, Defra will be holding the monthly Monitoring Forms and other programme and financial reporting documentation for 7 years, in line with the department's recommendations.

We would suggest that where possible Protected Landscapes follow the CS manual's standard approach to document retention which is captured below:

***After the agreement has ended:*** *The Terms and Conditions explain you must keep all invoices, receipts, accounts and any other relevant documentation relating to the expenditure of the grant for at least 7 years from the end of the agreement.*

We would therefore suggest that Protected Landscapes seek to align with this approach and have a 7-year retention policy.

## **Section 4: Applications**

### **4.1. Eligibility definition**

#### Applicants

Applications will be accepted from farmers and land managers who have management control of all the land subject to the application and all the activities needed, or the written consent of all other parties who have management control of the land and activities for the entire period of the project.

Applications will also be accepted from organisations and individuals delivering projects which are in support of the programme outcomes and the relevant Protected Landscape Management Plan/Priorities, as long as they are applying in collaboration with a farmer or land manager.

A summary of bodies/organisations who are directly eligible is set out below:

<b>Body/Organisation</b>	<b>Eligibility</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
Government departments, executive agencies and NDPBs (for example, Ministry of Defence, Forestry Commission), with exception of the bodies listed below in this table	Ineligible	None
Natural England	Eligible	For work on the National Nature Reserves which

		goes beyond other legal obligations
Other public bodies (including National Park Authorities, The Broads Authority, Conservation Boards and AONB Partnerships through their accountable bodies)	Eligible	Provided the work goes beyond the duty of regard and other legal obligations
County, Unitary, District, Parish Council and former college farms	Eligible	None
Tenants of eligible public bodies	Eligible	Ineligible where the work is already a requirement of the tenancy agreement. The public body must countersign the application if the tenant does not have security of tenure for the full term of the agreement.
Tenants of ineligible public bodies	Eligible	Ineligible where the work is already a requirement of the tenancy agreement. Tenants must have security of tenure for the full term of the agreement, as the public body cannot countersign the application.
Other organisations and individuals	Eligible	Where the proposed activity or works is in support of programme aims

Any exceptional cases, where proposals do not feature a collaboration with a farmer or land manager, would need to be cleared with Defra.

### Geography

- This programme does not support works on domestic property.
- This programme supports activity on any land within the Protected Landscape. It may also support activity on other land where that activity can demonstrate benefit to the Protected Landscape, or the Protected Landscape organisation's objectives or partnership initiatives.

### Tenancy

If an applicant is including land in an application that they occupy under a tenancy, including under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986, Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 (a Farm Business Tenancy) or equivalent, they must have:

- management control of this land for the duration of any commitments
- control of all the activities needed to deliver the project,
- the consent of the landlord as part of the application before they apply.

### Landlords

If the applicant is a landlord and can show that they have management control over land which has been let to a tenant, and the activities, they can include that land in an application. By definition, Protected Landscape organisations and other bodies who own land are eligible to include that land in an application.

### Common land, shared grazing and other collaborative projects

If the application is made by the landowner who owns the whole common and has sole use and rights to the land, the common can be entered as the landowner's holding.

Protected Landscapes organisations and other bodies may be able to facilitate collaborative projects as a lead or responsible partner. Regardless of who applies, if the application is made by someone who does not have sole use of all the land and where there will be two or more beneficiaries to the agreement:

- an internal agreement must be established, signed by all the parties to the application, specifying the obligations placed on each person and the payments they may expect to receive
- a copy of this internal agreement will need to be submitted before the agreement can commence and may, during the agreement period, need to be supplemented by formal evidence that the internal agreement operates effectively e.g. minutes of recent meetings.
- in all cases where there are 5 or more parties benefiting from or contributing to the delivery of the agreement on common land, a more formal commons association must be established with officers to manage the association.

Please note that it is the intention of Protected Landscapes to support and encourage collaboration by providing example collaborative agreements.

Miscellaneous queries about eligibility should be addressed to Defra at [FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk).

## **4.2. Regulatory permissions**

Protected Landscapes should work with applicants to ensure that all necessary permissions have been secured prior to works beginning. Permissions may include, but are not limited to; SSSI consent, agri-environment scheme approval, planning permission, water abstraction licence, FC impact assessment for tree establishment/woodland creation.

The application template makes clear that applicants should speak to their PL FiPL officer about permissions prior to submitting an application.

## **4.3. Farm Holdings across two PL boundaries**

There may be cases where an applicant's holding falls within the boundary of two Protected Landscapes. Where this is the case the following process should apply:

- The interested farmer (the applicant) should speak to a FiPL officer (in either Protected Landscape they farm in) before making an application.
- The FiPL officer in the Protected Landscape first approached will be responsible for discussing the proposal/interest with their opposite farm engagement lead in the other Protected Landscape that the farmer farms in.
- The FiPL officers should agree which Protected Landscape would be best placed to receive the application considering funding available and local priorities.
- One of the FiPL officers should then communicate to the farmer (applicant) which Protected Landscape the farmer should apply to and why.

#### **4.4. Funding land management advice, collaborative farmer group support and development**

The Farming in Protected Landscapes funding is about delivering projects that achieve outcomes contributing to one or more of the four programme themes.

Funding can be used for specialist advice where it forms part of an agreement that will deliver outcomes these themes. This includes for collaborative farmer groups support and development. It would be appropriate for FiPL officers (advice and guidance staff) to spend time working with a collaborative farmer group or bringing one together to deliver programme-funded projects across the group strategically.

Some training for farmers can be delivered with the funding so long as there is a clear link to the training leading to outcome delivery. Therefore, we recommend that no more than 15% of your spending on projects should be spent on advice and training. Please discuss with Defra if you expect to significantly exceed this figure.

#### **4.5. Application process (including guidance and template as annexes)**

Each Protected Landscape has been allocated a funding allocation from Defra, and is responsible for selecting the projects in their respective landscapes, as guided by the National Framework.

Protected Landscape teams are encouraged to support projects that are ready to deliver whilst balancing an interest in projects that could run across multiple years, given some longer-term projects may have a stronger impact.

Protected Landscape teams are required to run an application process to ensure fairness for potential applicants. The application process has been designed to be light touch for applicants to reflect the amount of funding that is available and in order to encourage programme uptake from a wide range of applicants, including those who are not typically involved in a wide range of Government funding programmes.

Initially, for the first year of funding Protected Landscapes are responsible for running a six-month application window. For the first year of the programme, the window for applications will be from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This is a national window for applications and all Protected Landscapes must abide by this timing. Applications will be managed and assessed throughout this window by Local Assessment Panels (further detail below). Applicants are required to apply to the programme by completing an application template. It asks applicants for an overview of the project and detail on location, budget, timing, expected outcomes and evaluation. The application template has been developed to be used across all participating Protected Landscapes to ensure consistency and fairness to

applicants. Please find the application form at Annex G that should be used for all applications to the FiPL programme.

Applications should be submitted through the relevant Protected Landscape body websites (farmers should apply to the PL body for the area in which they farm). All Protected Landscape teams are therefore required to upload the application form and application guidance to their websites.

Guidance for applicants should accompany the application form on the Protected Landscape's website. Defra has developed guidance for applicants to complete an application and all PLs must upload this guidance to accompany the application template. The guidance makes clear what the programme is, who is eligible, how to apply, what sort of projects will be supported etc. The guidance also outlines for applicants what the FiPL funding is aiming to achieve and what will be marked credibly in applications. Please find the guidance to upload in Annex F.

This guidance must be uploaded by all PLs without edit to their websites. It must be made clear to applicants that this is the formal guidance for applicants. This can be called Defra guidance. This is to ensure that there is consistent messaging to applicants across all PLs to ensure a level playing field. The guidance given to potential applicants in the application form is reflective of the guidance given in the National Framework to Protected Landscapes. Should Protected Landscapes wish to supplement the Defra guidance with local guidance in a different place they may. The website must though continue to have the unedited Defra guidance uploaded in full and made clear to applicants that this is the guidance for applicants.

Protected Landscapes should provide contact information for their FiPL contacts to accompany the application guidance and form on their websites. Protected Landscapes should encourage applicants to work with the relevant officer to seek advice on developing projects prior to application.

The application form makes clear that applicants will be required to discuss the costings of their project prior to application with their relevant FiPL contact.

This process will ensure that the costs of projects are accurately recorded ahead of Local Assessment Panels and allows for the management of any complexity for applicants regarding payment rates and intervention rates. It is a requirement for Protected Landscapes' FiPL officer (s) to work with the applicants to assess costings for projects.

#### **4.6. Making funding decisions**

Protected Landscape bodies are required to convene Local Assessment Panels to assess applications. The Local Assessment Panel should consider applications to the programme and decide which projects should be approved, deferred or rejected. Expectations for the Local Assessment Panels can be found at Annex C. The panels can be convened in person or virtually at the discretion of the lead Protected Landscape team.

A FiPL officer from each Protected Landscape is required to make an initial judgement on applications prior to the Local Assessment Panels. This will mean that each application has an initial score prior to the Local Assessment Panel. The initial score will be made using the same scoring system as used by the Local Assessment Panel (more detail on scoring system below). All applications over £5,000 should progress to the Local Assessment Panel, regardless of the initial score.

#### **Appointing a panel**

Please find a full and comprehensive outline of the expectations for appointing and running Local Assessment Panels in Annex C. Protected Landscapes must abide by these expectations when appointing and managing their panels. Annex S includes contact information for those at the RPA, FC, EA, NE and HE for PLs to approach regarding their involvement in Local Assessment Panels.

### **Frequency of Local Assessment Panels**

Local Assessment Panels are required to meet at least every 8 weeks to assess applications. It will be a matter for local determination by the Protected Landscape as to whether they choose to convene Local Assessment Panels more frequently than every 8 weeks. This would be encouraged where appropriate to ensure that applications are not delayed and that works can begin as soon as applicants are prepared.

### **Scoring applications at the Local Assessment Panel**

Defra has developed a scoring system for Local Assessment Panels to use when assessing applications. All Protected Landscapes are required to use the scoring system provided in Annex E along with the scoring formula in Annex T. This is to ensure consistency with how applications are awarded across all Protected Landscapes.

The scoring system will remain the same for the whole of the application window to ensure that there is a fair process for farmers applying over the window. The scoring system includes a minimum requirement to ensure that all projects funded will make a meaningful contribution to the aims of the programme.

### **Fundable Projects under £5,000 – Officer level approval**

Projects with a total fund request of under £5,000, which meet the programme criteria, can be approved by the Chief Officer of the PL organisation, or another senior member in the organisation using the scoring system (Annex E). The Chief officer or other senior officer must not be involved in the application or advice provided. Such payments will follow the published Scheme of Delegation for the relevant Authority which sets the framework for decision-making and accountability between meetings of the full Authority. It contains detailed provisions on the powers and responsibilities delegated to committees and officers of the Authority. Approvals conducted in this way must be reported to the next meeting of the Local Assessment Panel for the awareness of all Panel members.

If an applicant submits more than two applications for projects under £5,000 over the course of the programme the third and any further applications must be scrutinised at the Local Assessment Panels whatever their value.

### **Shared Local Assessment Panels**

Defra encourages Protected Landscape bodies to work together where appropriate in developing joint assessment panels where shared resource may introduce efficiency, better suit capacity issues and provide opportunities for shared learning and shared expertise. This approach can enable participating Protected Landscape bodies to benefit from a greater collective knowledge and experience. Defra anticipate joint assessment panels may be most likely where there are several Protected Landscapes in close proximity, or where there are established working relationships.

When creating a panel covering multiple Protected Landscapes, those responsible for convening the Panel must be mindful of the need for panel members to provide sound

knowledge of the local area in each AONB and National Park represented and a good depth of local coverage. Where a shared panel exists, Protected Landscapes will need to ensure a lead representative for the management of the panel.

If Protected Landscapes wish to partner up with another Protected Landscape(s) to run their Local Assessment Panel, they may wish to discuss reducing their admin and liaison costs and reallocating more spend towards project delivery if possible. If Protected Landscapes feel this would be beneficial, they should first discuss with the relevant Protected Landscapes(s), and then email Defra at [FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk), setting out their proposed plan for join-up and the associated reallocation of budget to delivery. Defra will respond to confirm whether they are content with the approach.

#### **4.7. Payment Schedule for Projects**

Capital items (and single intervention items, e.g. provision of advice/survey) would be paid for in arrears.

Management payments would be 50% in advance and 50% in arrears.

#### **4.8. Grant amounts / numbers, including maximum and minimum amounts**

To ensure the programme funds a range of projects with a reasonable geographical distribution, the programme will set a suggested maximum grant size for projects. This is £250,000 for a single project. Local Assessment Panels should endeavour to ensure the benefits from FiPL have a good geographic and thematic spread.

Protected Landscapes should only go up to this limit for projects offering exceptional outputs and value for money. Whilst this is Defra's suggested maximum, individual Protected Landscapes will have local discretion to set their own lower maximum figure, recognising that each Protected Landscape is receiving a different amount of funding. There is space in the guidance accompanying the application template for each Protected Landscape to set out their local maximum and/or expected range.

Some partners could be part of multiple projects, but Protected Landscapes should ask partners to prioritise bids.

In relation to subsidy control reporting: Protected Landscape teams should note that if a single farmer receives more than £350k over three financial years, they would exceed "Special Drawing Rights" threshold as stated in the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and would need to be formally reported by the UK to the EU. Further detail around this matter, and wider subsidies requirements, will follow through subsidy training and guidance.

Individual Protected Landscape teams can decide whether to include a minimum grant threshold. We suggest the decision is based around which option would enable the most effective programme spend in the respective area, taking into account matters that will vary across the forty-four Landscapes, such as anticipated interest from applicants and resource assigned to administration. Individual Protected Landscape teams will provide relevant guidance around a minimum grant threshold to applicants as necessary – e.g., a sentence stating their position in their application guidance.

#### **4.9. Ineligible projects including statutory obligations**

Applicants will not be able to fund projects where there is an existing legal duty to undertake the work or where they relate to the conditions of planning application. FiPL funding can deliver works beyond the statutory minimum, e.g. in relation to the PRoW network.

The management of invasive non-native species (INNS) can be funded through the programme at an individual holding level and also through collaborations of across holdings, where it delivers value for money and goes beyond statutory obligations.

#### 4.10. Match funding

Applicants will be encouraged to bring in third party investment. Applications with match funding may increase their value for money scoring as part of the assessment process.

Applicants will be required to provide detail of their third-party funding on the application form.

Applicants will be eligible to receive third party funding for Farming in Protected Landscape projects as long as the source of the third party funding is not from the Exchequer. Please find below a couple of scenarios which outline whether a project can be match funded.

Scenario	Can it be match funded?	Why?
An applicant is only getting 80% of the payments for an activity from CS. Can FiPL top up the remaining 20%?	No	You cannot have two Exchequer funds funding the same activity.
An applicant will have a 40% intervention rate from FiPL to restore a barn for school visits. Can an outdoor activity centre pay the outstanding 60% of costs to the farmer?	Yes	The extra source of funding is external to Government. The farmer and PL would need to be clear that the activity centre was not using government funding on the 60% (e.g. Green Recovery Challenge fund)
An applicant has received funding from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) to pay for the restoration of a barn to host school visits. The GRCF only covers 80% of the costs of the barn restoration, can FiPL pay the remaining 20% of the costs for the restoration?	No	You cannot have two Exchequer funds funding the same activity (the barn restoration).
An applicant is getting FiPL funding to rewiggle a stream. A company wants to fund the planting of trees alongside the stream to manage the flow of water entering the steam. Can the water company pay for the trees?	Yes	The company is not paying for the same activity as FiPL. The re wiggling of a river and the planting of the trees are different activities.

#### **4.11. Assessing additionality, including guidance on other Defra funds**

Protected Landscape bodies are responsible for ensuring that applicants are not double funded for the projects for which they receive FiPL funding. This has been made clear in the grant funding agreements.

In order to support Protected Landscape bodies in making these checks, Annex L includes an outline of Defra farming funds/schemes and explains in more detail eligibility associated to those funds and FiPL. Similarly, Annex M includes detail on Government funded grants in the nature space and Annex Q the Forestry and Woodland grants that Protected Landscapes should be considerate of when making assessments of additionality.

Defra has worked closely with the RPA to ensure that they are content with processes Protected Landscapes have in place to assess additionality and to support the PLs in their assessments of double funding.

Training for Protected Landscapes' staff on assessing additionality will be provided.

A summary of the process which must be in place to avoid double funding is below:

##### **Check one - Ensuring applicants to FiPL are not double funded:**

PLs are required to check applicants to FiPL against existing CS/ES agreements. This will be done by:

1. Applicants will be asked to self-declare on their FiPL application form that they are not already receiving funding for the proposed project through another scheme. In order to support farmers to declare any additional funds they are receiving the guidance accompanying applications lists potential funding schemes that farmers typically may already be receiving funding from.
2. Protected Landscapes will be responsible for checking all applications against the MAGIC database to determine whether the land/feature is already within an agreement.
3. Where an existing agreement is found the Protected Landscapes will review the farmer's information (agreement documentation, maps etc) relating to that agreement to ensure there is no double-funding. Protected Landscapes will then provide details of FiPL applications to the RPA for interim data checks.
4. The RPA will provide interim data allowing Protected Landscapes to complete double funding checks. The Protected Landscapes will work with applicants to determine whether any change is needed to the project or to refuse the application if necessary.
5. Once a project has passed the Protected Landscapes assessments of double funding and has been approved at a Local Assessment Panel (or by a senior member of the Protected Landscape team for grants under £5,000) Protected Landscapes will forward the information from these projects to the RPA to allow the RPA to complete their checks.

##### ***The interim data check***

The RPA will provide an interim data check against existing agreements for CS and ES and other farming schemes as they come online. The RPA will not be making interim checks against the Growth, LEADER or Forestry Commission programmes.

The RPA will take 10 working days to provide a response on the interim check.

To conduct the interim check you only need to send the submission spreadsheet (Annex U) to - CentralGatekeeperTeam@rpa.gov.uk. Please address the subject line as: 'Farming in Protected Landscapes – Interim Check'.

### **Check two - Ensuring future applicants to CS/ES schemes are not double funded:**

The RPA will collate the data from the Protected Landscapes to make checks against FiPL when assessing new applications to schemes such as CS and ES - that will expand as other schemes come on line.

### **RPA assurances on Protected Landscape processes**

Once agreements for FiPL are live the RPA will also carry out a further check for FiPL against existing agreements (CS and ES) to identify any possible overlaps to ensure that the Protected Landscape processes are as robust as anticipated. Any additional overlaps identified will be passed back to Protected Landscapes within 20 working days for the Protected Landscapes to investigate.

Protected Landscapes are able to begin funding projects once they complete their initial checks (check 1) and prior to receiving this further data from the RPA (which will come within 20 days). This is to ensure that where needed project works can begin in order to avoid delaying progress of projects or hampering the projects delivering (e.g. if a project needs the summer weather to be completed).

The Protected Landscapes are experienced enough to have confidence in their own checking systems allowing them to proceed with projects (at some risk) without the final data check from the RPA. However, should the unlikely scenario occur, and a dual funding incident be exposed, the Protected Landscapes will be responsible for clawing back the funding from the project recipient. There would be no impact for the recipient on any existing agreements they have with the RPA. Future agreements would be checked in the same way as set out above.

### **Check three – Ensuring applicants to FiPL are not already receiving funding from the Growth or LEADER programmes for the activity**

The RPA will also collate the data from Protected Landscapes to make checks against the LEADER and Growth programme to identify any possible overlaps. Any additional overlaps identified will be passed back to Protected Landscapes within 20 working days for the Protected Landscapes to investigate.

As for Check two, Protected Landscapes are able to choose to begin funding projects once they complete their initial checks (check 1) and prior to receiving confirmation from the RPA (which will come within 20 days).

As above, should the unlikely scenario occur, and a dual funding incident be exposed, the Protected Landscapes will be responsible for clawing back the funding from the project recipient.

### **Forestry Commission submissions**

Protected Landscapes must also submit the data on the successful projects to the Forestry Commission (FC) to ensure that applicants to FC grants are not double funded. This programme is designed in a way which encourages applicants to consider the larger government grant programmes before choosing that FiPL is the right vehicle to deliver their objectives. We therefore do not expect for this programme to fund a significant number of projects in the woodland/forestry space and so the risk of dual funding should be low. The self-declaration in the application form should also mitigate this risk.

Protected Landscapes should submit the data on successful projects to the FC using the same spreadsheet they will for the RPA. However, there will not be a specified working day period that PLs should expect to hear back from the FC. If Protected Landscapes are concerned about dual funding in the forestry/woodland space, they should approach their FC representative for the Local Assessment Panel for more advice.

If the FC identify any concerns, they will notify Protected Landscapes of any issues for investigation and it will be the Protected Landscape’s responsibility for clawing back the funding from the project recipient if that were to be necessary.

#### **4.12. Submissions to Defra – including data to RPA for cross checks and data to Defra on types of projects to be supported**

The Local Assessment Panels will only be required to share details of projects they wish to support with Defra ahead of notifying successful applicants in exceptional circumstances, such as where the project value is more than the maximum cost threshold or it addresses a particularly controversial issue. Protected Landscape bodies should submit this information to the FiPL team at [FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk).

As detailed in 4.11, Protected Landscapes are responsible for reporting all agreements made to the RPA and the FC to allow them to make checks against FiPL. Protected Landscapes should submit this data after each Local Assessment Panel, only submitting the successful applications. The spreadsheet to use for submissions can be found in Annex U.

Please also refer to the earlier guidance for the submission for the interim check. The table below just contains information for the final submission post Local Assessment Panels.

<b>What to submit for the final checks?</b>	All relevant details of successful projects as outlined in the spreadsheet (Annex U)
<b>When to submit?</b>	After each Local Assessment Panel
<b>Who to submit it to?</b>	There are two teams in the RPA working on these checks – one team looking at the CS/ES checks, the other the Growth/Leader checks. You also need to send the data to the FC.  Please email the spreadsheet to:  CentralGatekeeperTeam@rpa.gov.uk  AND  <a href="mailto:RDPEClaimQueries@rpa.gov.uk">RDPEClaimQueries@rpa.gov.uk</a>

	<p>AND</p> <p><a href="mailto:ewcoenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk">ewcoenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Please ensure you address your email to all mailboxes. You can email all three contacts in the same email.</p>
<b>What should the subject line of the email be?</b>	'Farming in Protected Landscapes'
<b>Are there any other details to include in the covering email?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of Protected Landscape</li> <li>• Date of submission (date of email)</li> <li>• Contact name, number and email for responses or queries from the RPA</li> </ul>
<b>When will we hear back from the RPA?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 20 working days from the submissions of data</li> <li>• You should expect two responses to confirm the checks – one from each team</li> </ul>
<b>When will we hear back from the FC?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no defined period. If Protected Landscapes are concerned about dual funding in the forestry/woodland space they should approach their FC representative for the Local Assessment Panel for more advice</li> </ul>

#### 4.13. Complaints and Appeals

##### Appeals

Appeals on decisions made on applications should be made to the Protected Landscape body in which the applicant is based (regardless of whether the decision was made at a shared Local Assessment Panel).

Applicants can only query a funding decision if they think that the Local Assessment Panel has:

- made a mistake with the application
- made a processing error
- got the law wrong

Applicants must set out to their relevant Protected Landscape body the reason for their appeal under one (or more) of these 3 criteria. Information on how to appeal should be included in the written decision from the panel as a matter of course.

Applicants should be provided with the following advice for making an appeal:

- An appeal must be made within 10 working days of receiving your application decision
- The PL will aim to communicate with you about your appeal within 15 working days from when you submitted your appeal.

Appeals should be dealt with locally in the first instance by the relevant Protected Landscape body. Where necessary, Protected Landscapes bodies (and, for AONB Partnerships, their host authorities) can escalate the appeal to Defra for advice and further management of the appeal.

## Complaints

Complaints (separate to appeals on applications) should be directed to the Protected Landscape body relevant to the application or project. Protected Landscape bodies should all have complaints procedures in place and there will be some local variation.

Applicants should be provided with the following advice for making a complaint:

- The PL will aim to communicate with you about your complaint within 15 working days from when you submitted your complaint, although if the matter is complex this may need to be extended, within a reasonable period, after explaining to why.

Protected Landscape bodies should address the complaint in the first instance. Should an applicant think their complaint is not being dealt with adequately, the Protected Landscape body can refer the complaint to Defra for further investigation.

All Protected Landscapes will have formal complaint and compliment procedures in place and fall under the jurisdiction of the independent Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman which is the final stage for complaints about the local authorities (i.e. protected landscapes).

## **Section 5: Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **5.1. Expectations for PLs**

#### **Monitoring (*Connected to Financial Reporting, above*)**

We expect Protected Landscapes to adhere to the monitoring processes outlined below to allow Defra oversight of delivery.

Protected Landscapes will report to Defra using the Monitoring spreadsheet (Annex H), which will include details about of both financial and project data. This will allow Defra to compare progress across landscapes, capture best practice, recognise challenges, and monitor overall programme performance.

Protected Landscapes will complete the Monitoring spreadsheet with applications received over the course of the year and complete for tracking purposes. They will submit their latest version to Defra at [FiPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FiPL@defra.gov.uk) monthly, as mentioned in the above Financial Reporting section:

- *On a monthly basis, Protected Landscape teams will provide Defra with (i) an updated project spreadsheet that covers monitoring and evaluation, showing spend and progress on individual projects, and (ii) overall details of their FiPL spend (projects, as well as spend on administration and advice and guidance)*

Additionally:

- Protected Landscape teams will provide Defra with short quarterly reports about progress of FiPL in their respective Landscapes. The purpose of these reports is to develop a better picture of the funded work taking place in each Landscape. It would feature a case study of a project currently under way, and a “forward look” to projects in the pipeline. See Annex I for a template.

- Protected Landscape teams will provide Defra with short annual ‘Lessons Identified’ reports for their respective areas. The purpose of these reports is to improve the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, and future agri-environment schemes. We anticipate that they would be led by FiPL project officers, working together as a network to share practice and areas for improvement. See Annex J for a template.

## Evaluation

A programme evaluation is being developed with Defra’s Future Farming and Countryside programme evaluation and Environmental Analysis colleagues. The evaluation will be led by an external contractor who will work with Defra colleagues and Protected Landscape staff. Programme evaluation will capture learning and inform future policy development.

The evaluation will help to develop and test the programme’s theory of change. It will help Defra to gather and generate evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme, show what Protected Landscapes can deliver in partnership with farmers and land managers when provided resource and space to do so, and demonstrate project outcomes and wider impacts.

Evaluation from the first year will be used to inform delivery in the following two years of delivery. All Protected Landscapes and onward beneficiaries (farmers and land managers) will be expected to comply with the evaluation requirements as set out by the evaluation contractors and Defra. The application template asks each applicant to declare their commitment to monitoring and evaluation. If applicants are not willing to commit to the monitoring and evaluation requirements, their projects should not be accepted for funding.

The evaluation contractor will be selected via an external competitive tender through Defra’s approved commercial processes. It is expected that the evaluation contract will be in place autumn 2021 and will remain in place for the duration of the programme.

The evaluation will combine programme and project level evaluation. The evaluation will be led at a programme level, with local projects expected to collect data and monitor outcomes to feed into the programme level evaluation.

The evaluation will combine process evaluation to analyse whether interventions are being implemented as intended, whether the design is working, what is working more or less well and why; impact evaluation (where possible) to understand what changes have occurred, the scale of those changes and an assessment of the extent to which they can be attributed to the intervention; and value for money evaluation: a comparison of the benefits and costs of the intervention.

The core evaluation objectives are:

- **Objective 1:** To work collaboratively with national and local partners and stakeholders to undertake scoping and further development of the evaluation design following contract award
- **Objective 2:** To undertake process, impact and value-for-money evaluation of the Farming in Protected Landscape programme

- **Objective 3:** To improve understanding of the challenges and opportunities in delivering projects in Protected Landscapes in partnership with farmers and other land managers
- **Objective 4:** To provide a range of opportunities to share learning and good practice across landscapes
- **Objective 5:** To provide high quality evaluation reports and other outputs to communicate findings to policy and delivery partners and wider audiences

Given the evaluation contractor will not be in place until Q3 of FY 2021-22, Defra will likely be providing some initial templates/questionnaires to cover the initial stages of the programme. More detail on this will be provided to Protected Landscapes shortly.

## **5.2. Publicity**

At the end of each financial year, Protected Landscape teams should upload a list of all successful grants from that financial year on their website. This report should follow necessary GDPR regulations as provided in the onward agreements with the successful applicants.

Additionally, we encourage Protected Landscape teams to publicise success stories funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme through their usual channels (e.g., website, newsletter, social media) on a regular basis, as part of our collective work in demonstrating what Protected Landscape teams can achieve.

If you require any further advice or information, please contact [FIPL@defra.gov.uk](mailto:FIPL@defra.gov.uk)

## **Section 6: Contact Us**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the FiPL team at Defra. We can be contacted at [fipl@defra.gov.uk](mailto:fipl@defra.gov.uk).

## **Section 7: List of Annexes**

- A. Linking FiPL to Management Plans
- B. Frequently Asked Questions for Protected Landscape bodies
- C. Expectations for Local Assessment Panels
- D. Suggested Role Descriptions
- E. Scoring System
- F. Guidance for Applicants
- G. Application Template
- H. Monitoring Form
- I. Quarterly Project Report Form
- J. Annual Lessons Identified Form
- K. Onward Agreement Template
- L. Farming Funds Comparison Table
- M. Nature Funds Comparison Table
- N. Process Flow Chart – Overall Programme
- O. Process Flow Chart – Applicant and PL Journey
- P. Payment and Intervention Rates for CS Activities
- Q. Forestry and Woodland Grants
- R. Subsidy Control Guidance
- S. Contacts for ALBs Local Assessment Panels
- T. Scoring Formula
- U. Cross Checks Spreadsheet