



## **Cotswolds Conservation Board**

### **National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI)**

#### **Call for Projects in the vicinity of pylon lines ZF3 (Upper Coberley to Cirencester) and 4TE1 (Upper Coberley to Eastington)**

This national £24 million grant scheme offers awards of up to £200,000 for projects to enhance landscapes containing or impacted by National Grid's existing electricity transmission infrastructure.

Only the Cotswolds Conservation Board (the Board) can apply to the National Grid for this funding in the Cotswolds and we are inviting partners to put forward projects.

The deadline for submitting expressions of interest to the Board is the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019 for projects commencing in May 2020.

The Board has selected pylon lines ZF3 and 4TE1 for this call for projects.

### **Proposing a Project**

The supporting Information below details information to help you develop ideas for projects, it contains:

- The selection criteria.
- The sort of projects they are interested in funding.
- A map showing the approximate area impacted on by the power lines along with the landscape character types from the AONB Landscape Character Assessment.
- Web links to: The LEI web page, Cotswolds AONB Management Plan, Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment and the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

This is a discretionary grant with a two stage application process starting with a simple expression of interest (attached). If the expression of interest is successful, the ensuing full application will need to be detailed and complete. We have been informed that unlike many grant schemes the element of competition is relatively low so the prospect of strong eligible projects being funded is good.

Please note that the Board is not able to contribute to the minimum 25% match funding, though as well as cash, you can count in-kind and volunteer effort as match.

The Board will look to combine similar projects together under a single expression of interest to National Grid.

If you have a project idea please complete the expression of interest form and e-mail it to Simon Smith, Project Development Officer any time before the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

We would encourage you to discuss an initial project idea with Simon.

E-mail                [Simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk](mailto:Simon.smith@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk)

## Next Steps

The Board will review the expressions of interest received against the selection criteria and the AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines to decide which projects to take to National Grid. You will be notified of the Board's decision in respect to your expression of interest by the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

## Indicative Timetable

Board issues call for projects	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2019
Deadline Expressions of Interest (EOI) to the Board	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Board submits EOIs to National Grid and notifies partners of its decisions	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Approved EOIs invited to submit full applications	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
Deadline for full applications to the Board	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Panel meeting	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
Ofgem approval completed & funds distributed	May 2020

## Supporting Information

Also see the initiative's website <http://lei.nationalgrid.com/>

### ***What is the Landscape Enhancement Initiative for?***

The overall objective of the scheme is to reduce the landscape and visual impact of National Grid's existing electricity infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected designated landscapes. Where the visual impacts of the electricity transmission line cannot be directly screened or otherwise mitigated it may be possible to shift emphasis away from the transmission line by enhancing the landscape in other ways.

### ***Primary selection criteria***

Successful schemes will have a focus on implementing the most effective and value for money solutions to reduce the landscape and visual impacts of National Grid's existing electricity infrastructure.

- How effective is the project likely to be in reducing the impact of existing electricity transmission infrastructure on publically accessible viewpoints and the general visual resource experienced by local communities and/or by visitors to the area?
- How effective is the project likely to be in enhancing the landscape in the affected area (not related to specific groups of people or viewpoints) in ways that may reduce or compensate for the impact of relevant electricity transmission infrastructure?
- Is the project in keeping with the character of the landscape? Does it help to foster regional and local landscape diversity and distinctiveness (informed by Natural England's national Character Area profiles, and any local landscape character assessments that may be available)?
- Does the project support objectives set out in the AONB or National Park management plan for the area? <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/planning/cotswolds-aonb-management-plan/>

### ***Further Selection Criteria (in addition to the primary criteria listed above)***

<http://lei.nationalgrid.com/selection-criteria/>

#### Environmental criteria

- What other environmental benefits will the project bring through e.g. protecting or enhancing biodiversity and/or protecting or enhancing historic features?
- Has the project been designed to avoid adverse effects on environmental features such as wildlife sites and historic features?  
(Applicants are expected to demonstrate that they have consulted the appropriate environmental and historic environment records and, where necessary, relevant advisors.)
- Does the project give rise to other inadvertent environmental impacts, for example through pollution or ground disturbance while works are carried out?
- Does the project require planning permission, protected species licencing, or other consent?
- This can be checked with your local AONB Partnerships or National Park Authority representative.

## Social and economic criteria

- Does the project contribute to improving public access and enjoyment of the area?
- Does the project demonstrate a partnership approach and/or community involvement in its development, design and/or implementation?
- Does the project contribute to sustainable social and economic development in the area, for example through use of local suppliers of products, services and materials?
- Does the project contribute to education and development in the area including vocational and practical training that has the potential to improve the local skills base?

## Practical project criteria

- Does the project have a clear and realistic set of objectives which will allow outcomes to be monitored and evaluated?
- Are the arrangements for providing match funding appropriate and deliverable? (Note: we will only fund up to 75 percent of project costs, for details of how to raise the other 25 percent click here for our [Guidance on Match Funding](#))
- Are the proposed arrangements for delivering the project appropriate and robust and likely to lead to successful outcomes?
- Are there realistic proposals for three year maintenance and for ongoing management to ensure that benefits are fully realised?
- Are measures in place to ensure appropriate levels of monitoring and evaluation of outcomes?
- Does the project include measures to publicise it (alongside other VIP projects, if appropriate), and to ensure that wider learning for other areas can take place?

Projects are not expected to meet every one of the above criteria, but your chances of being funded are likely to be higher if more of the criteria are met.

## ***Project Area and Landscape Character Assessment.***

The Cotswolds Conservation Board has undertaken a Landscape Character assessment for the AONB identifying characteristic landscape character types. It can be downloaded here; <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character-assessment/>

The Board has prepared a map showing the route of the power lines and the area within 3 Km of it along with the Cotswold's landscape character types (Appendix A). This will tell you what landscape character types you will need to consider.

Additionally Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for each landscape character type have been developed. **It is essential that you quote the relevant landscape strategies and guidelines for the landscape type or types that your project proposal will effect.** You will need to demonstrate that you have considered your proposal in the light of these strategies and guidelines.

The strategies and guidelines for each landscape character type can be downloaded here; <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-strategy-guidelines/>

The guidance states that there is no fixed limit on the distance of eligible projects but as a guide, most visual impact occurs within 3km. Projects may include work outside the boundary of the AONB provided it can be clearly demonstrated that the benefits are mainly inside the area, as a result of improvements to landscape quality and/or people's visual amenity.

Linking your application to the AONB Management Plan will also strengthen it. The plan can be downloaded here; <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/planning/cotswolds-aonb-management-plan/>

### ***What can be funded?***

There is no strict limit on the type of project, the key being a strong fit with the selection criteria. To give an idea of the sort of things that can be funded the following projects have been identified as eligible.

Localised tree planting and/or woodland creation with the aim to:

- Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV;
- Re-focus or channel views affected by 400 kV;
- Where appropriate increase tree cover to filter views and/ or enhance general visual amenity of areas affected by 400 kV OHL;
- Enhance the quality, condition and/ or special qualities of the landscape.

Management, re-planting and/or planting of new hedgerows with the aim to:

- Enhance the quality/ condition of the landscape;
- Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV OHL;
- Restore characteristic landscape features where appropriate, e.g. reinstatement of historic field boundaries.

Changes to trails, footpaths, cycleways and riding routes that might include

- Localised diversions which may move people away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and/ or re-focus people's views away from the OHL;
- New trails which may offer alternative routes for walkers, cyclists or horse riders with the aim to re-focus views away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and/ or allow people to appreciate the landscape with fewer views of the OHL.

Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit biodiversity

- Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also biodiversity. Such enhancements may include habitat creation; in particular where such habitats are considered to contribute towards the special qualities of the AONB.

Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit cultural heritage

- Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also the setting of cultural heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments which may be affected by 400 kV OHL infrastructure.



## Appendix A

