

FINANCING REWILDING

REWILDING NETWORK PRACTICE NOTE

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**THE REWILDING
NETWORK**

Supported by Rewilding Britain 

SUMMARY

- Rewilding projects across Britain are accessing a diverse range of financial schemes to fund their projects.
- Public funding schemes are devolved, and many of the schemes are currently undergoing development. England's ELM scheme provides some options for rewilders.
- Carbon markets support opportunities for 'charismatic carbon', where credits on rewilding projects are sold for a premium.

This practice note is not intended as a substitute for professional advice. Seek professional financial advice before entering into a funding scheme.

FINANCING YOUR PROJECT

How your rewilding project will be financed is a question that needs consideration before committing to a different land management approach. Rewilding must make economic sense, and for many rewilders it is more economical than prior activities. This guide provides a summary of potential options for finance. Rewilding projects usually access a combination of them to suit their land and their needs.

PUBLIC FUNDING

Public funding schemes are devolved, and many of the schemes are currently undergoing development. We've provided an overview of how some schemes are supporting rewilding, however these are subject to change. We're working hard to influence these schemes as they develop.

ENGLAND - ENVIRONMENTAL LAND MANAGEMENT SCHEME

The Environmental Land Management scheme is now being rolled out in England. It comprises three tiers: Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Countryside Stewardship, and Landscape Recovery. Countryside Stewardship and Landscape Recovery are the two main schemes rewilding projects are accessing.

For Countryside Stewardship, many projects are accessing WD6 options with a native breed supplement for herbivores. You can also access funds for capital works, including fencing, a livestock handling unit and pond creation. Some projects have confirmed they are receiving around £100k of funding for this. Countryside Stewardship prices are regularly updated, but you can access £544 for wood pasture creation. Countryside Stewardship agreements cover 10 years. The England Woodland Creation Grant is also included within Countryside Stewardship and can support rewilding projects where new woodland is being created, either through tree planting or natural regeneration.

Many rewilding projects are also part of Landscape Recovery schemes with bespoke payments and agreements. These allow landowners to be part of a landscape-scale scheme for enhanced opportunities and benefits.

If you are working within a protected landscape, you can also access FiPL payments for many aspects of rewilding.

SCOTLAND - BASIC PAYMENT SCHEME

Currently, rural payments in Scotland continue to be covered by the Basic Payment Scheme. To be eligible for basic payment, you must 'actively farm your land'. From 2025, in return for basic payments, you're expected to carry out plans and audits that are relevant to your business.

The new Scotland Agricultural Support Scheme is currently in development. It will be split into four tiers: Base, Enhanced, Elective and Complementary.

Woodland creation grants are also available in Scotland - you must own or lease the land to be eligible for these grants. All applications will be assessed against the UK Forestry Standard. The grant will provide you with an initial planting payment and subsequent establishment for five years. You can also apply for capital grants such as fencing and tree protection.

WALES - SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

The Sustainable Farming Scheme is still being developed and will commence in 2026. This is made up of three tiers: Universal, Optional and Collaborative. The Universal Layer consists of a suite of Universal Actions which all farms participating in the scheme must deliver, with allowance for actions that are not relevant.

Whole Farm Payment rates are expected to be £70 per hectare for the first 70 hectares of eligible land, and then £2 per hectare for all remaining eligible land. Woodland maintenance payments are expected to be £62 per hectare, but payments are still to be confirmed.

Woodland creation grants are also available in Wales. The Woodland Creation Scheme provides funding for tree planting and the installation of fencing and gates. It also offers annual maintenance payments over 12 years.

For projects located within National Parks or National Landscapes in Wales (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) you can access the Ffermio Bro scheme to access money for nature restoration.

PRIVATE FUNDING

Alongside public funding, private finance options are accessible to rewilding projects.

NATURE-BASED ENTERPRISES

A huge number and variety of nature-based enterprises have already become established on rewilding projects. Business opportunities such as tourism, visitor offers, products (meat, gin, and other food and drink), education and wellbeing programmes are already running at projects across Britain. Data from the Rewilding Network shows that rewilding can support more jobs from these businesses, as well as providing opportunities to educate people on the importance of rewilding and nature.

CARBON PAYMENTS

Carbon is one of the main mechanisms of private funding for rewilding projects. The potential for rewilding projects to sequester and store carbon is increasingly being realised. However, there are still evidence gaps and an imperfect voluntary market. For terrestrial projects, the two main mechanisms continue to be the woodland carbon code and peatland carbon code.

Some rewilding projects are also selling 'charismatic carbon'; carbon credits that are sold at a premium because they're associated with a rewilding project where other benefits (such as nature recovery) will occur.

WILDER CARBON

Nattergal has secured investment Boothby Wildland through a partnership with Arup and Wilder Carbon to the value of £100 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent.

<https://www.wildercarbon.com/>

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

Nutrient neutrality schemes are emerging in England, and focus on reducing the amount of agricultural land under intense farming, thereby reducing nitrogen inputs. It also offers funding

for public amenities such as a new public access route, village green or community orchard in addition to, or instead of, habitat for wildlife. It can be used to purchase land for rewilding as well as fund capital works at the start of a rewilding project.

Water companies sometimes offer nutrient-specific schemes, or wider water quality schemes that can provide finance for wetland creation or restoring hydrology.

BIODIVERSITY

There are several emerging biodiversity credit schemes in the UK.

In England, Biodiversity Net Gain can provide an opportunity to access some funding. Landowners have the opportunity to receive payments for providing biodiversity enhancements that contribute to a developer's net gain requirements. These payments are negotiated on the open market, and there are no set rates at the moment. There are also no set payment terms, so you could negotiate a lump sum or regular payments. In return, landowners will need to enter into an agreement to undertake any capital works that enhance habitats on their site and to maintain these enhanced habitats for a minimum period of 30 years. This option can be restrictive for rewilding projects as it is still focused on set outcomes for habitats. Options such as the nature restoration fund are also being developed.

In Scotland, the Ecosystem Restoration Code is currently being developed to provide opportunities for biodiversity credits on rewilding projects. Biodiversity Net Gain schemes are not currently established in Scotland and Wales, however some organisations are voluntarily setting up their own approaches.



Find out more

Download our [Legislation and Regulations Guide for rewilders](#)



MORE SUPPORT

Rewilding Britain offers two grant opportunities to Rewilding Network projects.

REWILDING INNOVATION FUND

We hold two rounds of our Rewilding Innovation Fund per year: one in the first part of the year (January - March) and one in the summer (July - September). The fund provides grants of up to £15,000 for non-capital works to multiple projects. It can cover core costs, bringing in expertise, or setting up a new programme. We have funded feasibility studies, community engagement, trialling technology and setting up local networks through the fund.

We're looking for projects which progress rewilding, as well as providing learnings for others. Terrestrial projects must be a minimum of 40ha in size.

REWILDING CHALLENGE FUND

The Rewilding Challenge Fund has the tagline 'Think Big, Act Wild'. It's all about scaling up rewilding and providing models of large-scale rewilding in Britain. We have one round per year, and award £100,000 to one project. Eligible projects must be at least 1,000ha/10 km² in size (the majority of which is contiguous and proposed for rewilding).

The fund has two main aims:

- Support and enable one large-scale project to create a shared vision for a landscape, seascape or an approach that integrates both;
- Ensure the invaluable knowledge and experience gained by the recipient of the award is shared with rewilders across Britain through the Rewilding Network.