FINAL

SDNPA Recovery Funding: Guidance for Applicants

Summary

A COVID-19 Recovery Fund of £350,000 has been created by the South Downs National Park Authority to provide additional support to organisations as they move into the recovery phase of the pandemic. We know that the ongoing situation is having a profound effect on South Downs communities, local businesses, farmers, landowners, museums and visitor destinations and we are aware that these impacts are likely to continue for some time.

Working closely with Local Authorities, LEPs and other partners in Hampshire and Sussex, this fund helps us to play our role in supporting the recovery. However, we also hope that it will provide opportunities for the South Downs economy and landscape to become more sustainable and resilient post-pandemic, for example by supporting net zero carbon, local supply chains, helping nature flourish and enabling more people to benefit from experiencing the National Park.

What are the criteria?

The first principle is that priority will be given to COVID related projects that help organisations to recover viability and thereby help deliver the longer term outcomes in the National Park’s Partnership Management Plan 2020-2025, <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/>

Within this, the funding has been split into five priority themes which are already used within the SDNPA to manage its work programme. These are:

1. landscape and biodiversity,
2. cultural heritage,
3. sustainable access,
4. connecting people and communities,
5. economy and tourism,

Additional criteria will be used to help decide which projects take priority. For example: we will prioritise organisations with under 49 employees or those partners who are not eligible to receive other emergency funding. Projects should not leave significant continuing revenue commitments and a clear exit strategy should be specified.

For example, you might apply for funds if this will:

Enable your organisation to adapt its premises/grounds in order to reopen with social distancing or respond to changing visitor usage/demands

Increase your resilience through improvements in energy efficiency which reduce your running costs;

Help you to deliver local environmental benefits;

Help people access your facilities by walking or cycling;

Reach out to under-represented groups so they can benefit from the National Park;

Help you deliver your goods / services through new channels.

Deliver benefits to local communities or vulnerable people hit by Covid-19.

Enable you to use digital platforms to market to customers/beneficiaries.

The fund is designed for short term projects or capital expenditure not for supporting ongoing revenue or staff costs. It cannot be used for redundancy costs, other personnel costs not covered by the UK Government job retention scheme, recoverable VAT, or anything not in line with current government advice in relation to Covid-19.

How much can I apply for and by when?

The Recovery Fund is most suitable for projects between £500 and £10,000. However, if you have a proposal which exceeds this value, do still contact us as you might be able to submit it to our ongoing mainstream programme of funding for partners, use our support as matched funding or access additional funding from the South Downs Trust.

The final deadline for consideration of applications is November 27th 2020. However, since any funding agreed must be allocated by December 31st 2020, and any project funded must be complete by March 31st 2021, you are urged to get in touch with us as soon as possible. Even if you have a proposal which would run beyond the March date, do still contact us for advice.

What is the decision process?

Our aim is to make the fund easy to apply for and decision making rapid, though of course if there is high demand not everyone will be successful. The recovery fund will be disbursed through the Authority’s existing project allocation mechanism - Theme Programme Boards. These officer groupings bring together staff with expertise on each of the five topics above, and have delegated responsibility from NPA Members to allocate funds to projects. Each board has received an additional £70,000, and has regular virtual meetings, so will be able to consider projects on a rolling basis.

How to apply

If you would like to find out about how to access the fund you should use the dedicated email address, recovery@southdowns.gov.uk in the first instance. If your idea meets the initial criteria, an SDNPA officer from the relevant Theme Programme Board will then be allocated to work with you in completing a straightforward expression of interest pro-forma. This case officer will keep you informed about dates of relevant meetings, help you with any additional information needed, and let you know as soon as any decision has been made.

What sort of reporting will be required?

The Recovery Fund is intended to be flexible, light touch and easy to access. However, as a public body the SDNPA must be fully accountable for its expenditure. You must report against agreed criteria for the project, and demonstrate the impact of the investment to your business/organisation and / or the communities you work with. If you are successful you will therefore be asked to sign a simple MOU and to agree to provide us with certain information once your project has finished. Not only will this help us account for our expenditure, we will also use it to produce case studies to celebrate your achievements. We will also report it to the Members of the South Downs National Park Authority, who have overall responsibility for the budget and how it is spent.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

For any further information about the SDNPA please go to www.southdowns.gov.uk