

## Ffermio Bro: Farming in Designated Landscapes: General Rules Booklet

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## Overview

We are committed to supporting farmers to produce food in a sustainable way, whilst taking action to respond to the climate emergency and to help reverse the decline in biodiversity. Funding support for farmers, land managers and associated rural sectors is delivered through a flexible framework of support under the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Objectives set out in The Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 ('the Agriculture Act'):

- to produce food in a sustainable manner
- to mitigate and adapt to climate change
- to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide, and
- to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use

Further information on schemes being developed is available at [Rural grants and payments | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

These guidance notes explain the Ffermio Bro: Farming in Designated Landscapes (Ffermio Bro) scheme and the kind of projects which may be eligible for support. Please read it carefully. If you then consider your plans may be eligible for support under this scheme, please see 'Applying for a Ffermio Bro grant' at section I and the [How to Complete](#) booklet.

## Section A: Introduction

Our Designated Landscapes (National Parks and National Landscapes)<sup>1</sup> are special and unique and need to be managed, enhanced and protected while also supporting the farmers and communities who work within them.

Ffermio Bro has been developed to:

- Provide additional investment in our Designated Landscapes (DL) to allow farmers to work in partnership with management bodies to deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment, people and communities.
- Integrate incentives to positive farming practices with the purposes of Designated Landscapes, strengthening the links between the bodies that are charged with managing these landscapes and those that manage and farm the land. This is an opportunity for DL bodies, farmers and others to work better together, leading work at an individual landscape level and building on existing relationships.
- Demonstrate what Designated Landscape bodies can deliver through facilitating collaborative delivery. The programme will provide the opportunity for Designated Landscapes to collaborate and share learning, and through evaluation understand what interventions work best where and why. It will enable them to test emerging evidence-based approaches to targeted nature recovery at landscape scale.
- Support delivery of the commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30), and

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<sup>1</sup> Designated Landscapes comprise 3 National Parks and 5 National Landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). They cover 24% of Wales.

- Inform the collaborative layer of the Sustainable Farming Scheme.

The programme is delivered by farmers, working in partnership with Designated Landscape bodies. The bodies and farmers living and working in these areas know the opportunities and challenges facing their landscapes and communities the best.

The scheme forms a key part of the preparatory phase of the SFS, particularly the collaborative layer. Ffermio Bro is already supporting groups of farmers to work together to deliver landscape-scale activity and will continue to help inform the SFS collaborative layer as well as signpost land managers to the universal and optional SFS layers.

The scheme will involve environmental, nature recovery and climate mitigation collaborative projects on multiple farms, with these projects also providing opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscapes including their cultural heritage.

A wide range of projects will be eligible for funding provided they meet the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives, guidance provided and the priorities of a Designated Landscape body's management plan.

The Wales and UK Government have committed to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30), to support the [global 30by30 target](#) agreed at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP15) in 2022. The emphasis of Ffermio Bro will be to aid delivery of 30by30 by focussing on projects that improve ecosystem resilience. This will include actions that strengthen and enhance priority and semi natural habitats, improving the connectivity, scale, adaptability, or diversity of semi natural habitats, and strengthening the resilience of Wales' network of protected sites by working at a landscape scale to improve connectivity and condition.

The scheme can, as part of this work, also provide funding for implementing nature-based solutions, enhancing our carbon-rich soils such as peatlands, tree planting, woodland management and natural regeneration, implementing natural flood risk management, enhancing access and public engagement, and protecting landscape and historic features.

As a scheme aimed at supporting the agricultural industry, Ffermio Bro is required to work towards the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives as part of the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023.

The Scheme requires Designated Landscape bodies to make an application for funding to Welsh Government/Rural Payments Wales up to a total agreed with Designated Landscape bodies. Farmers should not apply directly to Welsh Government but will apply for funding to the local Designated Landscape body managing the scheme in their landscape area.

Bodies are required to make clear how the programme will support the scheme objectives, including collaboration, how the activity will integrate with their management plan and other strategies, and ecosystem resilience.

If successful, you must be able to complete and claim all Capital Works items for the relevant financial year by 31 March 2027 or 2028, depending on the year of the award the allocation relates to.

Any changes will be publicised via the [Welsh Government website](#), GWLAD online and, where necessary, we will contact you directly.

## Section B: Scheme phases and key activities

The application process for Ffermio Bro in 2026-28 is in two phases.

- Stage 1: 23 February – 13 March 2026. The Designated Landscape (DL) management body leading local delivery must submit an application during this period via RPW Online, outlining how they will meet the overall scheme objectives. This will be appraised and, if successful, the body will be offered funding up to the agreed allocation for that body.
- Stage 2: 1 April 2026 onwards
  - Bodies will invite applications and assess these, then make an award to the farmer.
  - Bodies will need to provide the **Customer Reference Number and postcode only** of the farms on which they have awarded funding via RPW Online. RPW will include these on a revised grant offer (DLs will not need to action anything).
  - RPW will not need to provide any approval for the DL bodies to commence work. However, there is a responsibility for the DL bodies to ensure there is no double funding. **The DL bodies will need to determine this in discussion with the farmer**, and the farmer should provide a written guarantee/disclaimer in their grant application or acceptance form. If the DL cannot ascertain if double funding has taken place, RPW may be able to carry out checks on an exceptional basis.
  - Formal variations in the work delivered will not need to be notified to RPW by the DL body.
  - DLs can provide CRNs to RPW at any point during the financial year to which the project relates. DL bodies are advised to submit these in batches, for example after a Local Assessment Panel meets and makes a series of funding awards. Guidance on providing this data will be provided to bodies.
- Stage 3:
  - Bodies must claim funding via RPW Online by the end of the financial year to which the award relates. You may only claim for funding where projects have been completed satisfactorily.
  - You must complete a quarterly delivery profile as part of your grant award, and update this as required during the year. Claims must be accompanied by supporting documentation:
    - For salaried staff, you will need to provide a spreadsheet of people, the hourly rate and hours worked in the claim period. The Bodies must retain evidence of defrayment, as well as the evidence and background calculation to support the calculation of the hourly rate.
    - For other revenue costs such as facilitation, training and assessments, you will need to provide a record of costs incurred, and retain procurement records.
  - For each CRN, RPW will provide a map of all the land registered to that CRN within the claim form for the DL to map where applicable, the actions for which the funding has been provided.

There are several key activities that need to take place to ensure the scheme is managed effectively both nationally and locally, and that scheme objectives are met.

Before Stage 1, DL bodies must:

- Make internal arrangements to manage the scheme, including planning for any recruitment through a fair and open process.

- Develop a detailed Ecological Prioritisation Statement (EPS) setting out how you will effectively target the scheme in your landscape to maximise your contribution to the 30x30 commitment
- Discuss the scheme objectives with local stakeholders.

Between Stage 1 and Stage 2, DL bodies must:

- Appoint or employ Ffermio Bro scheme adviser(s) and scheme administrators to support local delivery.
- Promote the scheme and support farmers to collaborate.
- Advise on eligible actions and help farmers develop collaborative projects.
- With the support of a Local Application Panel (LAP), determine which projects should be supported through the scheme.

After Stage 2, DL bodies will:

- Advise farmers of their allocations and provide an offer of funding including the authority for RPW to provide farm maps for the body to complete through RPW Online.
- Support farmers to deliver the agreed projects.
- Monitor delivery and ensure compliance with grant conditions and scheme criteria.
- Collect information on the projects supported and provide these to Welsh Government, including RPW, the Programme Manager, and others as agreed.

Details on how to apply can be found at: [Ffermio Bro - Farming in Designated Landscapes \(stage 1\): using RPW Online to apply | GOV.WALES](#)

### **Alignment with the SFS Universal and Optional Layers**

Ffermio Bro forms a part of the preparatory phase of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). Ffermio Bro is already supporting groups of farmers to work together to deliver landscape-scale activity and will continue to help inform the SFS collaborative layer as well as signpost land managers to the universal and optional SFS layers.

The Sustainable Farming Scheme started on 1 January 2026 and includes Universal, Optional and Collaborative Layers. These three layers will sit above the SFS Regulatory Baseline and a Universal Code. The Universal Layer comprises of 12 Universal Actions; farmers in the scheme will be required to meet all 12 UAs, if they are relevant to their individual farm, to receive the Universal Payment. Farmers may choose to go further and build upon these UAs by undertaking Optional Actions (OAs) to deliver more targeted action. There may also be opportunities to work in a coordinated way with other farmers and undertake Collaborative Actions (CAs), for example to help deliver outcomes at a landscape scale, which are not possible to deliver on a single farm.

Ffermio Bro has particular relevance to the Collaborative Layer but can also be an important tool to increase farmer engagement with the Optional and Universal Layers:

- **Optional** – there may be opportunities, through facilitation by Ffermio Bro advisers, to deliver some Optional Actions that farmers are considering across a wider scale than otherwise would have been considered. This could include:
  - Creation of permanent and temporary habitats
  - Implementation of Designated Site Schedule of Works
  - For Enhanced Woodland Management and Woodland Creation please refer to the separate notes in this guidance.

- **Universal** – in some cases, engagement with supportive Ffermio Bro advisers can prompt farmers to consider accessing the SFS Universal layer where otherwise they would not have done so.

### **Key points:**

- In all cases, standard Ffermio Bro payment rates will be aligned with payment rates for other schemes.
- Any works undertaken as part of a Collaborative Action must be complementary and not duplicate works being undertaken as part of existing Universal or Optional Actions.
- Further guidance, training and advice will be provided to Designated Landscape bodies as the SFS is introduced, to ensure the most appropriate and effective targeting and delivery.
- Farmers accessing Ffermio Bro funding will only be able to receive capital payments; there will be no ongoing management funding or compensation for income foregone.
- Advisors and Local Assessment Panels should consider whether alternative funding pathways via the optional layer are more suitable for a particular project or part thereof, and direct farmers appropriately.
- A suite of support and advice is available from Farming Connect, including training, mentoring, and specialist advice. Further guidance on how best to access this advice to enhance delivery of Ffermio Bro projects will be provided to Designated Landscape bodies.

### **Assessment**

Designated Landscape bodies will run a window or windows for farmers and land managers in their areas to apply for grant funding through project applications. The application process will be competitive, with applicants assessed regularly throughout the window. Projects that score highly against a set of criteria consistent across all DLs will be offered an agreement.

Collaborative projects involving multiple farms will need to be presented to panels as such, while still detailing individual farm applications.

Where a project is below £15,000 (even if involving multiple farm applications), assessment can be made by the Designated Landscape body itself. Where above this threshold, the project must be assessed by a Local Assessment Panel (LAP), held regularly throughout the application window.

Where the total value of an individual or collaborative project (across all participating holdings) exceeds £15,000, the Local Assessment Panel is responsible for deciding on the application. Where the total value (across all holdings) is below £15,000 then the Designated Landscape itself may make the determination. Note that all two-year applications (where works will occur in both 2026/27 and 2027/28) must be decided by the Local Assessment Panel, regardless of value.

LAPs can be convened in person or virtually at the discretion of the lead team. Where a project is going to the panel, the Programme Officer representing each Designated Landscape will make an initial judgement on applications prior to consideration by the LAP.

LAPs will also receive a record of all funding decisions made under the £15,000 threshold.

Panels should include representatives from the relevant Designated Landscape body, the farming community and conservation bodies. Natural Resources Wales representatives should also be invited to attend.

LAPs will meet regularly to assess applications: it will be a matter for local determination by the host body as to how often. Bodies can work together where appropriate in developing joint LAPs where shared resource may introduce efficiency, better suit capacity issues and provide opportunities for shared learning and shared expertise. If a panel is already in operation for awarding grants (e.g. a Sustainable Development Fund panel) consideration could be given to combining panels into a single grants panel, providing it has the required experience and skills.

Full guidance on appointing and running Local Assessment Panels is provided by the Programme Manager. This includes assessment criteria and Terms of Reference. Designated Landscape bodies must comply with guidance provided unless in exceptional circumstances.

## **Project Delivery**

Capital grant funding will be allocated for on-farm delivery in each of the Designated Landscapes according to an agreed formula. However, some DL bodies may decide to formally collaborate by allowing another DL body to manage delivery on their behalf. Payment will be made only to the lead body in those cases. Once bodies have determined which DL body will lead each local programme, and Welsh Government is informed of those arrangements, maximum allocations to each body will be finalised.

Revenue grant funding will also be allocated to enable recruitment within lead DL bodies of Ffermio Bro scheme advisers. Guidance will be provided to bodies on recruitment, including template job descriptions.

Revenue grant funding will also be provided to bodies to carry out or contract facilitation, specialist training, and assessments, where these are unavailable from other sources such as Farming Connect.

Other revenue costs are not eligible under the application made through RPW online, although bodies may seek other sources of funding in some cases.

The Programme Manager will continue to seek opportunities for additional training and guidance for Ffermio Bro advisers and DL staff supporting the scheme.

A Ffermio Bro funded project cannot receive funding for activities or works which are already being grant funded through other schemes or programmes delivered for or on behalf of the Welsh Government or any other funding providers.

The scheme may include activities which are eligible under other existing Welsh Government schemes, provided they are not already being funded by the existing schemes or programmes - with the exception of activities listed in the Ineligible Activities section of this guidance.

Any applications or claims made for activities which would be eligible under existing Welsh Government schemes will be subject to the eligibility, funding rates and terms and conditions of those schemes.

Projects will be reviewed at regular intervals throughout the duration of the delivery phase to ensure they are delivering on schedule, within budget, are delivering the expected actions and outputs, and are offering good value for money. If projects are identified as not delivering effectively, then project grant funding will be at risk. Projects will also be reviewed to assess any impact on project activities from potential regulatory or scheme changes.

Payments are normally made in arrears (i.e. after the grant recipient has incurred the expenditure).

## **Section C: Scheme Eligibility**

### **Lead Body/Applicant Eligibility**

To apply for funding through RPW online, you must be a Designated Landscape management body in Wales or have management responsibility for a Designated Landscape in Wales. This could either be a National Park Authority or a Local Authority-hosted National Landscape team. Farmers should not apply directly for this scheme to Ffermio Bro.

If you are collaborating with another Designated Landscape management body to manage Ffermio Bro in more than one Designated Landscape, this must be agreed in advance with the Welsh Government policy team and the Programme Manager. You cannot proceed if this is not the case.

Bodies must convene a Local Assessment Panel (LAP).

### **Farmer/Land Manager Eligibility**

The following sections detail eligibility for applicants to the Designated Landscape management body.

The eligibility requirements for Ffermio Bro are the same as for the SFS – Universal Layer:

Applicants will need to demonstrate the following criteria:

They must:

- have at least 3 hectares of eligible agricultural land in Wales (including common land apportionment) registered with RPW, or
- be able to demonstrate you undertake over 550 standard labour hours on agricultural or ancillary activities in the scheme year and have a minimum of 0.10 hectares of eligible agricultural land. The eligible land must be within individual parcels of at least 0.1ha in size.

They must:

- have management control of the land for at least 10 months of the calendar year, which must include 15 May 2026, and.
- undertake agricultural or ancillary activities during the scheme year. Agricultural or ancillary activities are defined in the Agriculture (Wales) Act.

Agricultural activities includes;

- Keeping and breeding livestock. Using land for horticulture, farming arable crops and dairy farming.
- Using land as grazing land and as farm woodland or for agroforestry. Includes controlled environment agriculture, growing plants for sale or for sale of part of the plant such as producing seeds.
- Maintaining land in a state that makes it suitable for the activities above.

Ancillary activities includes;

- Taking action, on land used for agriculture to create and manage habitat, or for other purposes related to nature conservation, to mitigate and adapt to climate change, or to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems.
- Selling, marketing, preparing, packaging, processing or distributing products deriving from agriculture.

Applicants will need to satisfy the following criteria when applying to the Designated Landscape body for the scheme:

- All projects must meet the following primary Sustainable Land Management objective: ***Maintain and enhance resilience of ecosystems and benefits they provide.***
- All projects must support delivery of your Ecological Prioritisation Statement (EPS) as well as your Designated Landscape Management Plan. In exceptional circumstances, DLs may consider projects that do not comply with this requirement; they must obtain prior agreement from the Programme Manager.
- Projects will be strengthened by delivering at least one of the other 3 Sustainable Land Management outcomes, namely:
  - Mitigating and adapting to climate change
  - Sustainable Production of Food and other Goods
  - Conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access to and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use
- Designated Landscape teams must prioritise projects that enable and support existing and new farmer groups or farm clusters to develop collaborative projects which deliver ecosystem and other outcomes at a landscape scale. More information on collaboration can be found below.

## Collaboration

The scheme will be delivered in partnership with farmers and other land managers within a Designated Landscape. Designated Landscape bodies and the farmers who live and work within them have the best understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing their landscapes and communities. This programme allows the opportunity for Designated Landscapes and farmers to work better together, leading work at an individual landscape level whilst building on existing relationships.

In 2025-26, it was not mandatory for all scheme applicants to be part of a wider collaborative landscape project, particularly where the proposed project could demonstrate it is contributing to ecosystem resilience at scale. With a shorter delivery timeframe, there was a mixture of both individual farm delivery and informal and more formal collaboration. In 2026-28, Designated Landscape teams will prioritise projects that enable and support groups of farmers to deliver ecosystem and other outcomes at a landscape scale.

There is now an expectation that **all or most spend** will be targeted at projects delivering wider landscape scale change through multiple farms. A guideline minimum figure of 80% (for work in National Parks) and 70% (for work in National Landscapes) of total capital expenditure in 2026-27 should be allocated to collaborative projects involving multiple farms. In 2027-28 this minimum level will rise to 90% (for work in National Parks) and 80% (for work in National Landscapes). This will be monitored by the Programme Manager and WG. We understand that, in some instances including geographic constraints, collaborations are more challenging to develop. We will continue to work with Landscape bodies to support them to meet this criteria. This requirement will not be reported to or monitored by RPW.

Collaboration can take several forms:

- Multiple contiguous or adjacent farms (defined as holdings where boundaries are not more than 1km from those of the next participating holding) working together to improve biodiversity (as well as other outcomes such as access and carbon sequestration) at a landscape-scale, for example a river catchment collaboration improving water and soil quality
- Multiple farms, not necessarily contiguous, delivering together on a single theme such as improving habitats for flagship, endangered species like curlew or chough;
- Multiple graziers on registered commons working together to improve grazing practices and other activities where these will improve habitats. Designated Landscape bodies should ensure that any applications for activity on common land is supported by the written consent of the landowner for any actions which differ from the registered rights over the area of common land in question.

All types of collaboration must be guided by both the Designated Landscape body's Management Plan and their spatial and thematic nature priorities.

While some farmers are already working together, Ffermio Bro projects must have an element of co-ordination by the Designated Landscape body to ensure they are meeting the scheme objectives. For most, however, the onus and responsibility will be on Designated Landscape bodies to nurture, support and deliver collaboration in their areas. In recognition of this, bodies can access additional revenue funding in 2026-28 to support facilitation of farmer groups. This can include grazing associations.

While there is no rigid one size fits all model for what collaboration should look like, effective collaboration should include a mix of **shared vision, coordinated actions, and supportive structures**. We would expect to see the following features of collaborations becoming the predominant model during 2026-28, and we will evaluate the success of the scheme overall and individual lead bodies in adapting to this model.

### 1. Shared Goals and Vision

- Farmers agree on **common biodiversity objectives**, such as restoring hedgerows, creating wildlife corridors, or improving soil health.
- These goals are aligned with **local priorities** (e.g., Management Plans, species recovery plans, water quality targets).

### 2. Coordinated Planning

- Collaboration happens across **farm boundaries**, focusing on habitat connectivity rather than isolated actions.
- Farmers play a role in shaping the collaboration, informing how it functions to achieve its underlying objectives
- Use of **landscape mapping tools** (GIS, habitat maps) to identify priority areas for interventions.
- Joint planning sessions with farmers, Designated Landscape teams and other **local stakeholders** to ensure actions complement each other.

### 3. Co-ordinated delivery

- Examples include:

- **Hedgerow networks** linking farms.
- **Buffer strips** along watercourses to reduce runoff.
- **Improvements across the Rights of Way network** to improve user experience and engagement, where combined with biodiversity improvements

#### 4. Knowledge Sharing

- Peer-to-peer learning through **farmer clusters or groups**.
- Sharing **best practices**, monitoring results, and adapting strategies collectively.
- Use of **trusted facilitators** to keep communication flowing.

#### 5. Monitoring and Feedback

- Joint biodiversity monitoring (e.g., bird counts, pollinator surveys).
- Transparent reporting so everyone sees the **impact of collective effort**.
- Adaptive management—changing approaches based on results

Landscapes will be asked to confirm whether the above elements are being met for each collaboration as part of programme monitoring, and the extent to which this model has been applied to individual projects will be considered as part of the scheme evaluation. Landscapes can obtain guidance on whether a planned collaboration meets the requirements of the scheme from the Programme Manager or Welsh Government.

A formal agreement is not necessary to participate in the scheme, but the Designated Landscape body may determine that one is required in some cases. It will be for the DL body, not Welsh Government / RPW, to determine, and manage the risk, if this is sufficient, watertight and offers certainty for the body and all intended beneficiaries.

Each farmer where part of a collaboration will need to apply for their element of the project to the relevant Designated Landscape body.

Each individual farmer must be registered with RPW and have been issued with a Customer Reference Number (CRN). [Details for registering with RPW can be found here.](#)

### Land eligibility

All land must be in Wales.

All land types will be eligible for proposed action, including common land and shared grazing.

Land which is under an existing Agri-environment scheme, or any other agreement/grant award or is intended to be in the future, is eligible, however, any activities or management proposed must be over and above the requirements in those existing agreements/grant awards.

All land proposed for the scheme must be under the management control of collaborating partners. Collaborating partners must have full management control and security of tenure of the land within your application for the full period of the proposals. If they do not have full control of the land, they must get the written consent off all other parties who have management control of the land and include evidence of approval with their application (or have a countersignature to the application from the landowner(s) / landlord or relevant body) to the Designated Landscape body.

Where the project may include land occupied by one or more tenant farmers, evidence should be provided that shows those tenant farmers have been willingly included in the collaboration and decision-making process without non-consensual changes to their tenancy rights or agreements.

## **Designated Landscape boundaries**

All works must be located within the legal boundaries of the Designated Landscape or, if outside, within 1km of the boundary. Where an activity falls outside the boundary of Landscape, it must be part of a collaborative project with the majority of activity delivered inside the boundary. There may be compelling ecological reasons for activity delivered further outside, for example a river catchment project or large contiguous upland commons. In these circumstances, you should discuss these with the Programme Manager in advance of making an award.

## **Ecological Targeting**

The Senedd declared a nature emergency in 2021, and we have also committed to the global 30 by 30 goal. Our Biodiversity Deep Dive has set out ambitious recommendations for us to meet the 30 by 30 target, and we will strengthen this through new statutory targets and a new biodiversity framework. National Parks and National Landscapes are intrinsic in helping reverse the decline in biodiversity. Working with landowners and other partners to improve the connectivity, condition, extent and diversity of habitats, at scale and at pace, is fundamental, and Ffermio Bro provides a pathway to doing so.

NRW's Management Plan guidance (refreshed in 2024) states: *To deliver 30 by 30, Designated Landscape authorities need to prepare and deliver action plans for nature through their management plans.*

Designated Landscape bodies should, if they have not already reached this stage, start to develop a spatial framework to inform a prioritised nature recovery plan, contextualising and detailing Ffermio Bro's role in this. This must become operational during 2026-27 though more time may be required for completion and updating.

We expect delivery of Ffermio Bro to draw on key underpinning principles:

- **Working with farmers** to understand the wealth of knowledge about their own land they can bring and their ideas on how to make improvements to help nature thrive
- **Clear use of spatial evidence** to inform what activities should be delivered where
- **Create networks of habitats** that are bigger, better, and more connected.
- Prioritise **corridors and stepping-stones** to enable species movement and climate adaptation.
- Enable delivery of **biodiversity alongside other ecosystem services** (carbon sequestration, water regulation, recreation).
- Use **spatial tools to identify areas with highest potential**
- Engage **farmers, landowners, communities, and NGOs** early in planning.
- Use **clear, accessible maps and decision-making** to guide investment progress.

Statutory biodiversity targets and indicators for Designated Landscape bodies (National Park Authorities or Local Authorities) are set to be introduced to help deliver 30 by 30. Your action plan for nature will be a critical way to demonstrate progress against these targets.

To access funding from Ffermio Bro, Designated Landscape bodies will be **required to prepare an Ecological Prioritisation Statement (EPS) - a set of strategic nature recovery priorities for 2026/28** (which may be geographic, thematic or both) which will be used to inform your delivery of Ffermio Bro locally. These should (where possible) directly link to your management plan, existing or emerging spatial action plans for nature recovery and the Nature Recovery Action Plans (NRAP) for your landscape/area.

Potential Strategic nature recovery priorities could include the following categories:

- **Spatial priorities**, e.g. will you be focussing on or prioritising specific geographic areas of your Designated Landscape
- **Specific targeted habitats** for restoration, enhancement, creation or development of connecting corridors within the Landscape. These may be broad or localised to specific areas of the Landscape. Examples include Peatland, Species Rich grassland, Native woodland, ffridd and wetland habitats. Landscapes should set out details on the types of habitat, relevant spatial areas and examples of activities.
- **Specific targeted river catchments** for water quality and NFM interventions. Landscapes should indicate their ecological priorities within that catchment, how the Landscape will collaborate with the relevant catchment partnership (if relevant) and the types of activity that they will seek to fund.
- **Specific priority species or taxa** for which management works will be targeted. These may include specific species, such as Water Vole, Beaver or Chough – or broad taxa, such as pollinating insects. Landscapes should indicate the types of activity that would be considered and any specific spatial targeting.
- **Specific activities that will be supported broadly across the Landscape** that have a particular ecosystem benefit. Examples include introduction of grazing to common/mountain land. Landscapes should set out the types of activity and any spatial constraints to associated activities.

Evidence should be provided that the body has or is developing a spatial, data and evidence-led approach to nature restoration, and summarise how Ffermio Bro will be informed by this. Where a lead body is delivering on behalf of a smaller landscape body, we expect both parties to be involved in the preparation of this statement. We would welcome support for those bodies without the ecological expertise required.

An approach to targeting spatial areas and/or farms and farm clusters underpinned by LCA characterisation, Priority Ecological Network (PEN) and other priority habitat mapping, and the emerging Resilient Ecological Network mapping (where this has been taken forward), and any new evidence you are aware of such as ground truthing of previous habitat mapping, is encouraged.

Whilst we would expect that the majority of projects are aligned to your spatial targeting, some projects may not do so in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptions could include projects with exceptionally High Nature Value outputs and outcomes, including those on single farms.

**Please note your EPS will need to have been completed and agreed by DLCA and the Programme Manager before you are able to make a formal application on RPW online.** Failure to demonstrate an appropriately robust strategy may lead to delay or an offer of funding not forthcoming.

## **Section D: General scheme requirements**

You must be satisfied that farmers meet the following scheme requirements as part of your checks:

- any works carried out on land managed and/or owned must go beyond legal obligations and requirements.
- projects must demonstrate they cannot proceed without support and that the project would not proceed without grant assistance.
- projects must demonstrate the costs are not excessive for the nature of the activity involved.
- projects must demonstrate legal compliance and financial viability.
- projects must demonstrate long term sustainability.
- projects must demonstrate that the amount of grant being asked for is the minimum gap funding necessary for the project to go ahead.
- project applications must outline planning permission has been sought or obtained, where required all other consents, licences and permissions have been granted.
- key staff must be recruited through fair and open competition.
- compliance with minimum standards and legislative requirements regarding the environment, hygiene, animal welfare and health and safety standards; where appropriate and/or necessary.
- projects must confirm that none of the items covered by the application are replacements under an insurance claim.
- projects must provide confirmation that no other public funding has been sought for proposed activities.
- any publicity given to the project must refer to the part played by Welsh Government in funding it.

## **Section E: Eligible activities**

### **Capital Funding**

Ffermio Bro can provide capital funding linked to on-farm activities. Activities can include:

- Low density targeted tree planting where improving habitat. This could include on steep banks, upland gullies and streams, field corners, and creating wood pasture.
- Woodland restoration.
- Natural regeneration.
- Restoring and creating hedgerows.
- Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) removal and eradication (where sporadic INNS present and eradication deliverable within the lifetime of the project)
- Natural flood risk management (NFRM) interventions, including Large Woody Material in streams and rivers.
- Enhancing and creating wetland through re-wetting measures and supporting ponds, lakes, reed beds and fens.

- Enhancing and creating riparian habitat.
- Improving river habitat and fish passage through replacing culverts, other in-channel barriers or fords with clear span bridges.
- Enhancing upland and unenclosed habitat & peatland (where appropriate, see below).
- Enhancing and creating lowland habitat.
- Targeted measures to create and enhance habitats for pollinators, such as wildflower meadows, scrapes, and planting of particular species to attract pollinators
- Restoring traditional hay meadows, and creating wild bird, wildlife and pollinator strips and plots.
- Conserving and managing Scheduled Monuments and Historic Features
- Improvements to the wider historic environment, including traditional boundary restoration, stone walls, earth banks and slate fences.
- Improving access to the countryside through upgrading/enhancing public paths, open access land and green spaces.
- Targeted measures to support the recovery of the wildlife species and habitats set out in the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 – Section 7 Lists of Habitats & Species of Principle Importance to Wales](#) such as creating and establishing nesting and feeding habitat; to support those species as part of the wider landscapes scale actions.
- Targeted measures to improve water quality such as stock control.

## **Revenue Funding**

Alongside the capital activities it can fund for on-farm delivery, Ffermio Bro can provide revenue funding to Designated Landscape bodies to co-ordinate the scheme locally. This funding can only be used for:

### **Core Delivery Costs**

- Employment costs for the employment of Ffermio Bro scheme advisers and administrators, including NI costs and pension contributions.

### **Facilitation, training and assessments**

- Facilitation costs – additional costs relating to activities that support the development of farm collaborations, such as venue hire and catering, costs of specialist facilitators.
- Training costs – costs relating to the provision of specialist training that will enhance the benefits and success of collaborative projects, such as workshops for farmers on a key activity within a project. For training costs to be eligible, they must be wholly or primarily aimed at farmers involved in delivery of Ffermio Bro projects. Relevant training may also be available through Farming Connect and this should be investigated as an option before funding from the Ffermio Bro budget. Only farmers registered with Farming Connect will be able to access this training. Farmers are expected to contribute to the cost of Farming Connect delivery and DL bodies may refund this cost from their training allocation if it deems it appropriate. For more information on how to register with Farming Connect and the training opportunities offered visit the skills & training page or contact the Farming Connect Service Centre on 03456 000 813.
- Assessment costs. Where assessments are considered an essential element of a capital project, these can be claimed as capital costs. Designated Landscape bodies may deem other assessments necessary to better deliver the scheme within their landscape, such as a specialist habitat or species survey, and these will be eligible as revenue costs. Assessment costs may also be supported through the Farming Connect Advisory Service and this should be investigated as an option before funding from the Ffermio Bro budget. Only farmers registered with Farming Connect will be able to access this advice.

Farmers are expected to contribute to the cost of accessing advice through the Farming Connect Advisory Service and DL bodies may refund this cost from their assessment allocation if it deems it appropriate. For more information on how to register with Farming Connect and the support available through the Advisory Service visit the Advice page or contact the Farming Connect Service Centre on 03456 000 813.

### **Organisational Capacity**

This covers Travel & Subsistence for scheme advisers, Local Assessment Panel costs, and equipment for advisers. These should not be claimed via RPW, and separate arrangements will be put in place.

Revenue funding cannot be provided to farmers to support the delivery of capital activities or maintenance payments.

### **Multi-year Funding**

Designated Landscape bodies will receive an offer of funding from Welsh Government for two years – 2026-27 and 2027-28. They may, in some cases, consider applications and make offers of funding to farmers for projects across these two years, i.e. in multiple financial years. Bodies must treat such projects as having distinct phases for funding purposes. Details on how to claim for projects spanning two financial years is included at section L – Payments.

Multi-year projects must be collaborative (involving a minimum of two farms). There are significant benefits to delivering multi-year projects; however, this should be balanced with the need for flexibility and opportunities to reach more farmers. A Designated Landscape should therefore commit no more than 50% of its 2027-28 capital allocation as part of a multi-year project approved in 2026-27.

Provision of multi-year awards should demonstrate a strong rationale for doing so and delivers more ecological outcomes than otherwise would be delivered by single-year awards. All multi-year awards should be carefully considered by Local Assessment Panels, who should assess the rationale, including the ecological outcomes, for providing such an award.

### **Woodland Creation**

We are keen to enable appropriate tree planting, in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard. There are several routes through which farmers can achieve this, and it is important that they, and any professional advisers supporting them, carefully consider the different options available based on their agreed woodland creation objectives. Considerations will include the desired outcomes of the planting, intended scale and financial implications. Whichever route is selected, it is important to seek advice on appropriate locations, existing species and future management.

Important changes were made to eligibility for the Welsh Government Woodland Creation offer (comprising both the Woodland Creation Grant and Small Grants – Woodland Creation in 2025 including:

For the Woodland Creation Grant:

- an application must contain a minimum area of 0.25ha of approved planting which can be comprised of blocks of trees with a minimum area of 0.01ha
- for any Agro-forestry planting options, the minimum area will be 0.5ha of approved planting

- Agroforestry options receive an annual maintenance payment of £70 per hectare for 12 years, without a premium, while other options have front-loaded maintenance payments that decrease over the 12 year period.

For the Small Grants – Woodland Creation (eligible on low sensitivity areas where there are no identified reasons to avoid tree planting – more information at Small Grants - Woodland Creation 2025 | DataMapWales):

- the minimum total area of new planting to be eligible is 0.1ha
- the maximum total area per application is 1.99ha of planting which can be comprised of blocks of trees with a minimum area of 0.01ha

The following changes will be made in 2026

- A payment review has taken place which will be implemented in 2026 woodland creation schemes and an additional incentive to encourage tree planting will be introduced for certain planting options.
- Support for capital payments for riparian planting, including funding for infrastructure like troughs and water pipes when water sources are fenced off from livestock.

Rules and payment rates may change, so it is important to refer to the Welsh Government website for the most up-to-date information.

In some cases, this may mean that the types of tree planting and restoration funded through Ffermio Bro in 2025-26 become more attractive to the landowner via the different Woodland Creation Grant offers.

The following advice sets out the woodland creation scenarios:

- Natural regeneration and very low-density planting – (below 50 trees per hectare) – Ffermio Bro only (this should be **inside** the Small Grants Woodland Creation layer only, to prevent inappropriate regeneration on sensitive habitats. If you wish to pursue this **outside** the layer, approval must be sought – you may be required to be assessed on a site-by-site basis. In the first instance contact the Programme Manager)
- For any planting **outside** the Small Grants Woodland Creation layer **or above** 2ha, Ffermio Bro is not appropriate, and participants should access the Woodland Creation Planning Scheme only.
- For mixed-activity projects – where low-density tree planting (where inside the Small Grants Woodland Creation layer) is combined with other interventions such as Natural Flood Management, hedge planting or restoration and access improvements – Ffermio Bro may be the most appropriate scheme to avoid multiple grant applications.
- For other scenarios Landowners should familiarise themselves with the details of the Small Grants Woodland Creation and Woodland Creation Grant Schemes to be able to make an informed decision about which funding will be most appropriate for their project.

Providing the above advice is followed, tree planting under the Ffermio Bro scheme can include:

- planting on steep banks

- planting upland gullies and streams
- planting field corners new planting of trees outside woodlands
- creating wood pasture
- supporting and enabling natural regeneration

Woodland restoration under the Ffermio Bro can include:

- invasive Non-Native Species control
- grazing control
- targeted scrub control
- other restoration activities based on expert ecological advice and guidance

### **Advice and Monitoring**

It is important that landowners are given clear choices between schemes, understanding the benefits and limitations of each. All advisers should communicate these options transparently.

NRW has an important role in providing pre-application advice for woodland creation, available to all landowners regardless of scheme. Ffermio Bro advisers, supported by professional experts within Designated Landscape bodies or partners, also have an important role to play.

Ffermio Bro advisers should be aware of both the NRW Woodland Creation Planners Guide and the woodland opportunities map. These are available at Woodland Opportunity Map 2025 | DataMapWales and Small Grants - Woodland Creation 2025 | DataMapWales. While the guide is not published online due to accessibility issues, it can be provided on request by emailing [GwirioCynllunCoetir@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:GwirioCynllunCoetir@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk). This email address can also be used if you wish to seek pre-application advice on a scheme.

Further guidance will be provided by the Programme Manager and Welsh Government. Welsh Government and NRW will provide advice and training on the Guide and woodland opportunities map (WOM).

The Welsh Government and NRW are also keen to monitor the role of Ffermio Bro advisers in referring landowners to the Woodland Creation Scheme. We will therefore ask you to provide information on referrals; NRW will also monitor referrals.

More information on the Woodland Creation Small Grants can be found at [Small Grants - Woodland Creation | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#) (<https://www.gov.wales/small-grants-woodland>).

More information on Woodland Creation Grants can be found at [Rural grants and payments | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

### **National Forest Landscape Scheme**

The National Forest for Wales has provided over £2.8 Million to support a number of ambitious and collaborative landscape projects for 2025-28 that will:

- realise the economic, community, biodiversity and recreational benefits of our woodlands;
- are collaborative between a number of landowners at a landscape scale; and

- meet all 6 National Forest for Wales outcomes

A window of the Challenge Fund through Local Nature Partnerships scheme (LNP), was opened from July to September 2025 for all 25 LNPs to apply for on behalf of groups within their partnership. The scheme builds upon a successful pilot carried out at the start of 2025.

13 projects from across Wales were approved for support from the Scheme and have until 31 March 2027 to deliver. Appropriate project sites will go on to apply for National Forest for Wales Status, helping us to continue grow and expand our network.

The approved projects will deliver a wide range of activity to achieve a range of National Forest outcomes and targets such as:

- planting of new trees and woodlands;
- creation of new and/or improved footpaths;
- increasing new volunteer opportunities;
- new recreational/tourism/educational opportunities; and
- participants in learning activities.

If future windows open to access the National Forest Landscape scheme, there may be appropriate opportunities for groups of farmers to apply, providing they meet all 6 National Forest outcomes. We will provide further information and contacts whom Designated Landscape bodies can discuss potential projects further with.

## Peatland

- For the purposes of Ffermio Bro funding, peatland activities can be broadly divided into two categories: Category 1: Large scale re-wetting and peatland restoration (**ineligible except for exclusions below**)
- Category 2: Small scale local peatland habitat restoration and enhancement, including rewetting on areas below 1ha, and ancillary activities that better manage, maintain and enhance peatland ecosystems (**eligible**)

Designated Landscape bodies should not fund projects falling into category 1 through Ffermio Bro. The specialist nature of these works, significant costs and contractor expertise required means that Designated Landscape bodies should direct potential projects of this type to the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP). NPAP provides a structure to coordinate, stimulate and deliver peatland restoration, and monitor and report on peatland restoration and condition for Wales. Queries should be directed to [npap@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:npap@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk).

Category 2 projects may be funded under Ffermio Bro where these align to a Designated Landscape Body's EPS. Bodies may fund smaller scale projects on peatland that seeks to restore or enhance the habitat and protect associated species. These must not involve rewetting activities on areas larger than 1ha.

The only exclusions to the above are:

- Designated Landscape bodies may consider funding **scoping projects and assessments** that facilitate future larger scale category 1 peatland restoration via NPAP where this is aligned to a Designated Landscape body's Ffermio Bro EPS. This could include peat depth and condition surveys. These scoping projects should be discussed

with the Programme Manager and the NPAP team in NRW. Activities that are ancillary to both historic or planned NPAP-funded Category 1 projects. Measures supported could include scrub, conifer and invasive non-native species clearance, measures to facilitate grazing control or its re-introduction or access provision through boardwalks, paths and gates. Rewetting activities, contour bunds or dams may not be funded for areas over 1ha.

Designated Landscape Bodies should contact the Programme Manager if in doubt as to whether a project is suitable for Ffermio Bro funding.

Participants are required to report all actions on peatland in line with NPAP reporting protocols to ensure outcomes may be monitored and reported at a national level, and should contact [npap@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:npap@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk) or Designated Landscape body peatland leads for more information.

### **Access**

A key purpose of Designated Landscape bodies is to increase opportunities for people's enjoyment of the landscape they manage. Access projects can engage residents and visitors with nature and nature recovery. Designated Landscape bodies are encouraged to fund projects that improve and enhance Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and aim to secure an improved network in the Landscape for all users, including walking, cycling, and horse riding. Funded activities will in general be those that improve access for a wide range of users, including those with restricted mobility.

These may include works to improve the surface of paths to enable a wider range of users and replacement of stiles with gates ('least restrictive access'). Bodies may consider funding new promoted routes on existing rights of way, or improving existing ones, through signage and the provision of interpretation, particularly where this improves public enjoyment of natural or cultural heritage. Other suitable activities could include provision of cycle stands, repair equipment or water sources at trailheads and rights of way access points, or other similar projects that support cyclists or horse riders.

There is a presumption against funding new permissive paths or seeking to create new legal PRoW. Bodies should exercise caution that farmers are not funded for activities that fall within the legal responsibility of the landowner, such as clearing obstructions from a PRoW or maintaining stiles and gates. The SFS regulatory baseline includes adhering to legal responsibilities regarding PRoW and Open Access land.

Note that all Ffermio Bro projects should primarily support delivery of the Sustainable Land Management Objective 'Maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide', and access activities should be supplementary to this objective within a project, rather than being its primary element.

Bodies may however wish to consider whether a PRoW can be used to support creation of a collaboration between farmers. This would in general be where a PRoW passes through a number of adjacent farms, and collaboration could be structured around improving and creating habitats on holdings along that right of way.

Where a body funds an access project, they are required to complete the Access Project Monitoring Form in accordance with guidance provided by the Programme Manager.

### **Heritage**

Today's natural environment is the product of thousands of years of human interactions with natural ecosystems. The cultural and natural elements of landscapes are inextricably linked;

both are essential, and both are vulnerable. Therefore, maintaining, improving and restoring habitats is not just good for nature and biodiversity – it can also enhance the historic environment. Historic assets in your project area are not a constraint to be avoided – they are an opportunity to deliver wider benefits, and integrated environmental management is fundamental to achieving good outcomes.

Therefore, it is essential that you consider the impact of your proposals on the historic environment from the outset and look for opportunities to provide positive management for the historic environment.

Our National Parks and National Landscapes are rich in heritage. There are 1360 Scheduled Monuments within the Designated Landscapes - over 30% of the total for Wales.

Unfortunately, 465 of these are in an unfavourable condition (again over 30% of the total for Wales). In addition, 447 SMs in Designated Landscapes intersect or lie within SSSIs, 144 of which are in an unfavourable condition. Ffermio Bro could therefore play a critical role in returning some of our Scheduled Monuments into more favourable condition, helping protect them for generations to come.

Designated Landscape bodies are encouraged to support projects that benefit or enhance historic assets (such as through scrub clearance or erosion repair) or the enjoyment of them (through works that enhance access to these features, such as improving physical access, interpretation boards).

Heritage projects funded must go beyond the requirements of the SFS Universal layer.

Landscapes must consider the impact of projects on historic environment features (HEFs) and Scheduled Monuments (SMs) prior to awarding funding. Bodies should review all applications against Historic Environment mapping to determine whether any historic assets are located within your project area:

The location of all scheduled monuments in Wales can be found at: [Search Cadw records | Cadw](#)

The location of Historic Environment Features can be found on Datamap Wales at WOM21 Historic Environment Features (HEF) | DataMapWales

### **Scheduled Monuments (SMs)**

- Where the project area overlaps with a scheduled monument you must consult with Cadw (email: [ScheduledMonuments@gov.wales](mailto:ScheduledMonuments@gov.wales)).
- Where an activity would cause ground disturbance within a scheduled area (such as installing fence posts, digging scrapes or tree planting) Cadw must be consulted prior to the works being undertaken.
- Where a project is situated on or within 100m of a SM, Landscapes must consult with Cadw to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the SM or its wider landscape setting.
- Where the activity is the introduction of grazing or changes in grazing, and involves no disturbance to the ground surface, then no is required, and the project can proceed without consultation with Cadw.
- Where a project potentially affects a scheduled monument proof that Cadw have agreed to the works must be provided (eg copy of email confirmation from Cadw). This step must be carried out before any final decision on funding is made.

### **Historic Environment Features (HEFs)**

- Where a project is situated on or within 50m of other historic environment features, Designated Landscape bodies should consider whether the activities under the project would cause ground disturbance on or in the immediate vicinity of the feature.
- Where an activity would cause ground disturbance (such as installing fence posts, digging scrapes or tree planting), then a project summary form (available from the Programme Manager) should be sent to Heneb for screening. Where possible, the Designated Landscape archaeologist should provide a recommendation. This step must be carried out before any final decision on funding is made. The outcome of this screening will be provided within 2 weeks. The Programme Manager will provide further guidance on this process.
- For all other projects where no ground disturbance would occur on the feature or within 50m of the feature no consultation is required.

### **Invasive non-native species (INNS)**

INNS projects should be undertaken only where sustainable control action is deliverable within year (or by 31 March 2028 for 2 year funded projects).

Note, there are certain restrictions, already set out in law, which will apply specifically to the Sustainable Farming Scheme (those falling under the 'regulatory baseline'). Landowners should not receive funding for activities that breach the regulatory baseline. For example, plants listed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting Order) 2019, must not be planted or actions taken which would 'otherwise cause them to grow'.

Designated Landscape bodies must ensure that the parties undertaking the INNS control have appropriate experience and expertise, and any appropriate licences. Documentation demonstrating the competence of the parties undertaking the work should be retained. This is particularly important where projects are below the value threshold for procurement procedures to be followed. Consultation with Natural Resources Wales may be appropriate in some cases.

Technical notes are in development for INNS control actions for the optional layer of the SFS. These documents mostly cover types of control for terrestrial and freshwater invasive plants. They also cover grey squirrel and mink. They will describe the minimum standard of work required in order to receive payments. Designated Landscape bodies must take these documents into account, and we will circulate them when they are published.

### **Watercourses and Natural Flood Management**

Designated Landscape bodies are encouraged to fund collaborative projects that restore in-channel, riparian and floodplain habitats, improve water quality and deliver Natural Flood Management (NFM) on a catchment- or landscape-scale. Standard rates are available for many associated activities, but we recognise that the unique nature of projects on watercourses means that bespoke costing outside of the standard specifications may be necessary.

Projects that carries out activities in or near a watercourse are likely to require permission or consent from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and/or the Local Authority. Where essential to the project, the cost of obtaining these permissions and consents may be considered a capital item and funded under Ffermio Bro. Landscapes should consider the time and input required for these items in scoping potential projects.

Local Authority Flood leads should be informed of any NFM works once these have been completed to improve our collective evidence base.

Designated Landscape bodies should seek expert advice, particularly for more complex projects. Advice should be sought from specialists within your organisation, NRW and Welsh Government. Where necessary, external expertise may also be sought through Farming Connect, or where this is not suitable, funded through appropriate Ffermio Bro revenue funding allocations. When in doubt, bodies should consult the Programme Manager.

### **Working on Designated Sites**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are legally protected to safeguard the range, quality and variety of natural habitats, species and geological features across Wales. SSSI consent is required from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) before undertaking management activities which are listed on the Operations Likely to Damage the Special Interest (OLDSI) list, which is bespoke to each SSSI.

In addition to being designated as SSSI, some areas of land are also designated as European sites – either a Special Protection Area (SPA), designated for birds, or a Special Area of Conservation (SACs), designated to protect other species and habitats. Such area

Works on SSSIs, SPAs and SACs may be required as part of a Ffermio Bro project and are encouraged. Designated Landscape bodies and Local Assessment Panels should not score projects more highly *only* because they support a designated site. However, where activities on SSSIs and other designated sites are aligned to the priorities set out in a body's EPS, they *should* seek to support these works, and this alignment should result in a higher project scoring.

Landscapes should engage with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) regularly as part of Ffermio Bro project development. It is expected that Designated Landscape bodies undertake monthly meetings with relevant NRW Environment Teams (where necessary), and all Local Assessment Panels should include a representative of NRW. Bodies should complete the SSSI Engagement Form for all works that may impact an SSSI and supply this in a timely manner to NRW Environment Teams, in accordance with guidance provided by the Programme Manager. Bodies should endeavour to provide any additional information required by NRW for projects on SSSIs and other designated sites. This engagement should enable early discussion of projects within a designated site and/or likely to affect a European site such that the management proposal is designed in such a way as to maintain and ideally enhance the special features of the relevant protected sites. This should then mean that the process of considering and issuing SSSI consent will be straightforward.

In addition, bodies should deliver project information to NRW Local Assessment Panel members no less than two weeks prior to a panel meeting, other than where exceptional circumstances prevent this. Note that NRW have a regulatory role in the case of SSSIs and other designated sites, whereas for projects outside designated sites they have an advisory role as part of the LAP.

The Programme Manager will continue to develop opportunities to strengthen engagement with NRW, including training for Ffermio Bro advisors and early liaison with the relevant NRW Environment Teams to make the process of obtaining SSSI consent both straightforward and timely.

Under the SFS, designated site management plans (DSMPs) will be developed for all SSSIs as a phased approach between 2026 and 2030. . As such, many designated sites in the designated landscapes will not have completed DSMPs available during this scheme phase that runs until March 2028. In these cases, bodies may choose to fund works on these sites based on ecological input, the body's EPS and other strategic plans and based on discussion with and obtaining SSSI consent from NRW. As time progresses, DSMPs will be developed to recognise and support investment from Ffermio Bro and other capital schemes, so information about the nature of interventions should be freely shared with DSMP officers.

When DSMPs are available, bodies should be guided by these and other than in exceptional circumstances, fund only those activities specified in the plan on these sites. These activities should already have a valid SSSI consent in place, obtained at the point at which the DSMP was agreed, and therefore no additional SSSI consent should be required, subject to NRW guidance and direction. Bodies are able to input into these management plans and should engage with relevant NRW personnel to ensure appropriate alignment of DSMPs with priorities within their Ffermio Bro EPS and planned Ffermio Bro projects. A mechanism will be developed on RPW to ensure any Ffermio Bro-funded actions are recorded on Designated Site management plans held in RPW.

Where possible, bodies should engage with NRW to align visits to sites by NRW SSSI management plan teams and Ffermio Bro staff in order to avoid duplicate visits that may cause confusion for landowners.

## **Common land**

Designated Landscape bodies should ensure that any applications for activity on common land is supported by the written consent of the landowner for any actions which differ from the registered rights over the area of common land in question. It is suggested this also clearly identifies which actions require formal consent under the Commons Act 2006 or other relevant legislation together with those actions which do not. If formal consent is required, the Designated Landscape body should request from the applicant the likely timescale to achieve the necessary permissions.

To avoid undermining any agreement, the landowner should agree not to exercise their right to 'surplus' grazing where graziers are reducing numbers of livestock grazing as part of their management agreement.

Where common land is an SSSI, consent from NRW is required.

Where applications on common land do not include all parties with a legal interest over any part of the area of the application, Designated Landscape bodies should ensure applicants clearly set out how the objectives and outcomes of the proposal will be achieved and not compromised by not having all those with a legal interest involved.

## **Section F: Eligible costs**

All costs must be directly linked to project activities which support the aims and focus of the project. (e.g. replacement fencing of a field boundary would not be eligible, however, replacing fencing to enable a new hedgerow to be planted would be eligible,)

Where Welsh Government has a standard cost for an activity/item as part of current schemes, and this is available for this scheme, these Standard Costs must be offered and the technical specification followed.

Where the Technical Specification cannot be used, for example because of environmental considerations, Designated Landscape bodies can calculate the grant value using the actual costs. The body must retain a record of why the standard cost has not been applied and why this procurement route has had to be followed, along with other information on the project.

For capital equipment, where bodies decide to fund **part** of an activity that has a standard cost rather than in full, then they should still use 40% of actual cost as the basis for calculating the contribution from Ffermio Bro. For example, an individual element of a cattle handling system or other equipment.

For environmental works, if there is a project being carried out where there is not a standard cost available, up to 100% of the costs of a project could be paid where it is directly linked to environmental gain and the farmer will not make a private commercial gain, or it is not linked to primary production.

If the farmer will benefit commercially from a project, the programme will fund a proportion of the costs. The amount will depend on how much the project will benefit the farmer's business. Designated Landscape bodies should carry out this assessment and if in doubt advice should be sought from the Programme Manager.

Where standard payment rates are not being used, the procurement rules of each Designated Landscape body managing the grant must be followed. Bespoke activity for environmental benefit and interventions which are primarily delivering public goods will require applicants to obtain quotes for work (following competitive tendering and public procurement rules) on an actual cost basis. This can be *up to* 100% funded on a cost incurred basis, where it is directly linked to environmental gain and not linked to private commercial gain or primary production. Designated Landscape bodies must consider the extent to which there is commercial gain to the farmer and determine an appropriate intervention rate between 40% and 100%.

Capital items or machinery directly linked to project activities may be eligible if the project can demonstrate they contribute to the focus of the project, leading to significant outcomes and offer good value for money. These should be reviewed on a project-by-project basis by the DL body, and, if deemed eligible a contribution to those costs may be made on that basis. Where the intention is for equipment to be purchased by a single applicant and shared with other farms as part of a collaborative project, this must be done on a non-profit basis both during the life of the project and beyond. DL bodies must receive written confirmation from the beneficiary that this will be the case. High-cost capital items or machinery linked to primary production or commercial activity are ineligible. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Programme Manager.

From time-to-time, Welsh Government may need to amend certain standard payment rates and/or technical specifications during the period covered by a grant award. We will notify you of any amendments and this will need to be applied for any awards made by you from the time that we notify you.

For two-year awards, where payment rates have been changed after a grant has been awarded, Designated Landscape bodies may apply the new rate for the second year of the grant. In these cases, this decision will need to be made by the Local Assessment Panel and a new grant award provided to the recipient(s).

If a farmer opts not to complete works because a rate has subsequently increased after their award was made, they may not re-apply in future years for the same items in order to access a more preferential rate.

Professional fees, consultant's fees, technical costs, ecological and hydrological site surveys and fees related to environmental and economic sustainability; planning application fees and costs; fees incurred for statutory permissions, licences and consents are only eligible where the Designated Landscape body considers these as capital costs and essential for the capital works to be undertaken.

It is very important that DL bodies retain records themselves that:

- They have applied standard rates to payments.
- Where they haven't applied standard rates, record this decision with explanation.
- That they are satisfied there is no double funding – refer to Section G: double funding for more information.
- That any consents and other requirements are in place.
- Record progress against scheme Indicators.

### **Capital efficiency – equipment**

The Welsh Government offers a Small Grants – Efficiency scheme via application windows. It is planned that these will instead be made available through the SFS Optional Layer. In general, farmers should be directed to apply separately for capital efficiency equipment. However, where farmers have identified a need for such equipment **within a wider Ffermio Bro project**, this can be funded via Ffermio Bro. For any rates for equipment, you **must** use the most recent published rates available from Welsh Government. Payment rates may be reviewed in 2027-28.

The types of equipment that could be eligible include machinery (e.g. machinery rings and such as seed harvesters, attachments to quad bikes, seed drills, mobile livestock equipment), infrastructure or other equipment to facilitate ecosystem restoration, enhancement, resilience or creation, including facilitation of sustainable grazing (e.g. mobile cattle crushes or handling systems).

It could also include funding for innovative technology and equipment such as plastic posts with gliders to push single strand fencing up and out of the way during flooding and lowered again in the summer to prevent livestock from entering watercourses, solar pumps and troughs, cattle collars, and badger troughs.

Certain eligible capital costs require careful consideration, and separate advice will be provided by the Programme Manager. These include but are not limited to: GPS cattle collars, metal gates and fencing, cactus tree guards and herbal leys. The Programme Manager will maintain and issue guidance on such activities and Designated Landscape bodies must take every reasonable step to adhere to this guidance.

## **Section G: Double funding**

An approved Ffermio Bro project cannot receive funding for activities or works that are currently being funded by other schemes or programmes unless the Ffermio Bro activity or management is over and above the existing requirement.

A project cannot receive funding for like for like replacements of previously funded activities/items unless it's a continuation of management or further enhancement or restoration of those activities and was not a requirement of the original grant to do so.

Land within a Ffermio Bro project may be part of and include other programmes or schemes that enhance or complement the project outcomes, but separation must be clearly defined identifying which activities are funded through each programme scheme and any activities or management must be over and above the requirements of the existing contracts.

RPW will not need to provide any approval such as double funding checks for the DL bodies to provide funding offers to farmers to commence work. However, **there is a responsibility for the DL bodies to ensure there is no double funding**. The DL bodies must determine this in discussion with the farmer, and the farmer must provide a written guarantee/disclaimer in their grant application or acceptance form. RPW will however check there is no double funding at claim stage, if double funding is identified, no payment will be made for the amount of double funding. The DL must retain records to evidence they are satisfied there is no double funding including geotagged before and after photos.

## Section H: Ineligible costs

### Ineligible activities

There are a number of activities and investments that are not eligible for funding under Ffermio Bro:

- Investment in the primary production of agricultural or timber products.
- Habitat management payments as set out in current or legacy schemes, and
- Any physical work or any other expenditure incurred before the project start date without prior written approval from Welsh Government.

The following items are examples of activities, which are not eligible for grant support. This is not a definitive list, and all items will be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- Communication and dissemination: farmers cannot claim costs to support the communication of the proposed project activities; this should be done by the Designated Landscape body in conjunction with the Programme Manager.
- Evaluation: farmers cannot claim for the cost of having any evaluation of the project, unless a report is considered an essential requirement, and the Designated Landscape body considers these as capital costs. A key outcome of Ffermio Bro is to understand how both local and national schemes are operating, and the Programme Manager/Welsh Government will therefore be making arrangements to learn lessons from the projects delivered and the programme as a whole.
- Where the fencing is purely for stock management without a habitat improvement reason, then this would not be appropriate for a Ffermio Bro grant.
- Replacement of boundary fencing, where no traditional boundary creation or restoration is being undertaken that would, ordinarily, require protective fencing.
- The purchase of land.
- The purchase of livestock.
- The purchase of buildings.
- The purchase of high value machinery and other capital assets not directly linked to environmental outcomes or and the focus for the project or direct project activities.
- The purchase of cars, vans, motorcycles, bicycles and any other form of personal transport (for whatever purpose).

- The purchase of vehicles for external transportation (such as lorries, buses, vans, minibuses, or any other kind of vehicle used to transport goods or people).
- Temporary works not directly related to the execution of the project.
- Support for activities that can be delivered through other mechanisms outside Welsh Government schemes, such as existing arrangements for sectoral development.
- Maintenance costs for existing buildings, plant or equipment.
- Like for like replacement items.
- Costs connected with a leasing contract such as the lessor's margin, interest financing costs, overheads and insurance charges.
- Costs of arranging loans, VAT and other taxes recoverable by the beneficiary, administrative and staff costs or compensation paid to third parties for expropriation, etc.
- Overheads allocated or apportioned at rates materially in excess of rates for similar costs incurred by other comparable delivery mechanisms.
- Notional expenditure.
- Payments for activity of a political nature.
- Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of assets.
- Provisions.
- Contingent liabilities.
- Contingencies.
- Dividends to shareholders.
- Interest charges.
- Service charges arising on finance leases, hire purchase and credit arrangements.
- Costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors.
- Costs involved in winding up a commercial company.
- Payments for unfunded pensions.
- Compensation for loss of office.
- Bad debts arising from loans to employees, proprietors, partners, directors, guarantors, shareholders or a person connected with any of these.
- Payments for gifts and donations.
- Personal entertainments (including alcohol).
- Statutory fines and penalties.
- Statutory taxes (excluding irrecoverable VAT).
- Criminal fines and damages.
- Legal expenses in respect of litigation.
- Reclaimable VAT.
- Computer software and apps for hosting of systems for general business management / accounts / marketing and promotion / websites / online sales.
- Support for activities that can be delivered through other mechanisms outside Welsh Government rural development and transitional schemes, such as existing arrangements for sectoral development.
- Support for the supply chain co-ordination of fisheries and aquaculture products are not eligible under this scheme, and
- High-cost capital items or machinery linked to primary production or commercial activity.

## **Section I: Applying for a Ffermio Bro grant**

### **RPW Online**

Designated Landscape bodies can only complete an application for the Ffermio Bro grant by accessing Rural Payments Wales (RPW) Online. If you already have a Customer Reference Number (CRN) you should have received a letter informing you of your activation code to set

up your account. If you no longer have this, please telephone the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004 (Monday – Thursday 8:30 – 17:00, Friday 8:30 – 16:30) and tell the operator your CRN. They will send you a new activation code.

To register your business details for the first time, you need to complete the online registration form. Please refer to the [how to register guidance](#) for further details. The vast majority of changes to business details can be done online. However, we may require further details on any major changes. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre for further information.

Once registered, you can access your [RPW Online account](#). Ffermio Bro is available from the “Applications and Claims” section of your account.

If you have any questions about registering for RPW Online or completing your application, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004. They will be able to provide advice, including the digital assistance that is available to you.

Further details regarding RPW Online are available on the [our website](#).

## Submitting an application

[Guidance on how to submit your application via RPW Online](#) is available here.

It is your responsibility to ensure the application is correctly completed and the information provided in support of your project is accurate.

You must complete the application in full and provide comprehensive documentation in support of the application to enable us to assess the project. Please ensure you follow the guidance as failure to do so may delay the appraisal.

## Section J: Appraisal

Each application from a Designated Landscape body will be appraised by the Welsh Government policy team with input from the Programme Manager, to ensure local delivery complies with the expectations and objectives of the scheme.

### Ffermio Bro appraisal criteria

For the grant, all applications will be assessed against a set of selection criteria and scored using a scale of Low, Medium or High.

Section to be assessed	Score
1 – Programme Management	Low-High
2 - Strategic Context	Low-High
3 - <b>Collaboration</b>	Low-High
4. Ecological Prioritisation Statement	Low-High
5 - Value for Money	Low-High

For each criteria, the assessment will be made based on the information and evidence provided and where projects can demonstrate in the application how the proposed actions and interventions are meeting the strategic aims and outcomes of the scheme. There is no

guarantee all of the funds will be allocated, or all applications will be selected to receive the grant if they do not score sufficiently high.

## **Application Questions**

Bodies will need to demonstrate the following for the relevant Designated Landscape:

- How Ffermio Bro will be managed effectively. This should include, but not be limited to, governance, staffing and management arrangements, assessment arrangements, training and promotion.
- How they will support landscape-scale delivery through collaboration.
- How they will ensure that the Sustainable Land Management Objectives, particularly "Maintain and enhance resilience of ecosystems and benefits they provide", will be met through delivery of the grant.
- How they will align delivery with the priorities set out in the relevant statutory Management Plan(s) and any other key strategic document, e.g. Area Statements, Nature Recovery Action Plans.
- How they will prioritise delivery to maximise their contribution to the 30x30 target, through an Ecological Prioritisation Statement (EPS).
- How they will ensure project costs will be reasonable and appropriate, and how value for money will be embedded.

## **Scoring**

The following scoring will be used to appraise Ffermio Bro applications from Designated Landscape bodies:

**High:** The applicant has provided significant and clear evidence to support their application. They have provided significant and clear evidence that the project will be appropriately managed and will achieve the desired outcomes.

**Medium:** The applicant has provided satisfactory evidence to support their application. They have provided sufficient evidence that the project will be appropriately managed and will achieve the desired outcomes, although this could have been strengthened in some areas.

**Low:** The applicant has provided incomplete or insufficient evidence to support their application. They have not provided sufficient evidence that the project will be appropriately managed and will achieve the desired outcomes.

A score of Low in any of the selection criteria will prevent the application from being considered for the grant.

Higher scores will be achieved by providing clearly evidenced explanations supported by examples of proposed activities.

## **Appraisal outcome and grant award offer**

There are 2 possible outcomes from the appraisal:

a. Your project is not eligible for the grant. You will be informed of the reasons why your application was not successful via your RPW Online account

b. Your project is eligible and is approved for an award. A Grant Award Letter will be issued to you setting out the terms and conditions of the award via your RPW Online account. As agreement, you accept the terms and conditions therein. The Grant Award will also provide

you with the authority to start work. You will need to accept or decline the Award within 30 days. Failure to accept the award within 30 days will lead to the offer being withdrawn.

We will issue a reminder via your RPW Online account prior to the acceptance deadline.

Full details of when your Award must be accepted and the deadline for claims will be in the Grant Award Letter.

If you accept your Grant Award Letter you will also be required to complete a delivery profile to confirm when you will be making claims and the value.

If, after being selected, you decide not to proceed with your Grant Award or fail to accept the Grant Award within the time permitted, you may not be able to apply for Ffermio Bro in the future. If you decide to withdraw prior to completing the work you may not be able to apply for Ffermio Bro in the future.

Subject to the requirements of the Welsh Governments Code of Practice on Public Access to Information, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004: all information given to the Welsh Government will be treated in strict confidence. You should be aware that if successful, the Welsh Government reserve the right to publish the name of the company and the amount of grant awarded along with a summary of the project.

We (Welsh Government) want to work with organisations who are proud of their reputation, what they deliver, and their conduct. The following link will direct you to guidance which is designed to highlight and clarify the types of behaviours, cultures and values Welsh Government expects to see 'lived out' by its grant recipients. [Welsh Government expectations of grant recipients \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES.](#)

### **Starting work**

You must not start work until you have been offered a Grant Award. If you do start work, the Welsh Government may reject the work started or terminate the Award and recover payment made.

## **Section K: Conditions of grant**

Ffermio Bro – Farming in Designated Landscapes is subject to a range of relevant legislation (see Section R). Welsh Government and the applicant/recipient must act in accordance with that legislation.

The offer of a Ffermio Bro grant is made subject to terms and conditions, which will be set out in full in your Grant Award Letter and include those set out below. The grant award period will from the date the award is issued until 31 March 2028.

Failure to meet the terms and conditions of the award could result in the cancellation of your award and/or the recovery of sums already paid, or a reduction of the amount of grant payable.

### **Conditions**

The award is made on the basis of statements and declarations made by you or your representatives in the application form and the claim form and any subsequent correspondence. The making of false or misleading statements is an offence.

You must not begin any work on the project without first obtaining written authority to do so from Welsh Government.

You must meet any legal obligations imposed and UK law.

No alterations may be made to the project, including the location without the written approval of Welsh Government.

The applicant is required to comply with the rules on eligible costs as detailed in the scheme guidance notes.

Projects should be completed within the timetable agreed with Welsh Government. You should not deviate from this without prior written agreement from Welsh Government.

Claims must be submitted via the RPW online contract claim form and supported by all supporting documents as required by the scheme.

Claims must be submitted in accordance with the timetable set out in the grant award letter. You must not deviate from the agreed timing and value of your claims without prior written agreement from Welsh Government.

You must provide confirmation that no other public funding (whether from EU or UK sources) has been sought. If it is found that you have received public funding from another source your claim may be rejected, payments may be recovered, and penalties may be applied.

Records concerning the application and claim for this grant, including all original invoices and any other related documents, must be retained for at least seven years after the project end date.

You must allow representatives of Welsh Government, the Auditor General for Wales or their representatives to inspect the project. On request, you must provide them with information and / or access to original documentation in relation to the project.

The information provided in the application and any supporting documentation is subject to the requirements of the Welsh Government's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You should be aware that, if successful, we reserve the right to publish the name of your business or company, the amount of grant you were awarded and a summary of your project.

The information provided in the application is subject to the privacy notice. The privacy notice explains our processing and use of your personal data and your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## **Section L: Payments**

### **Claims**

Ffermio Bro is only available to claim by the Designated Landscape body using the Contract claim form on your RPW Online account. Payment will be made following the successful validation of your claim.

You may make interim claims during the period of your project.

The Contract Claim form how to complete Guide explains how to claim, available at [How to submit a contract claim using RPW Online | GOV.WALES](#)

Payment will be made following the successful validation of your claim. Claims will be paid when the Welsh Government are satisfied the relevant expenditure has taken place and the work has been completed in accordance with the Grant Award. Payment will be made by electronic transfer to your bank account.

Final claims for payment of grant should be submitted as soon as possible after the physical work on the project has been completed and no later than the contract end date. All final claims must be received no later than **31 March of the financial year to which the project relates**.

Designated Landscape bodies will receive a single offer of funding from Welsh Government for two years – 2026-27 and 2027-28. They may, in some cases, consider applications and make offers of funding to farmers for projects across these two years, i.e. in multiple financial years. Bodies must treat such projects as having distinct phases for funding purposes. Farmers must claim funding from Designated Landscape bodies by 31<sup>st</sup> March in the financial year to which the activity is carried out. Designated Landscape bodies must also claim funding via RPW by 31<sup>st</sup> March in the financial year in which the activity is carried out. Allocations of funding for each financial year will be set out in the award letter and bodies must adhere to these allocations when submitting claims.

Example: A DL body awards £50,000 to a project, £25k in 2026-27 and £25k in 2027-28. The farmer or farmers must claim for works done during 2026-27 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 and claim for works done in 2027-28 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028. The DL body must also claim the equivalent amount of funding via RPW in each financial year.

**No extension to the final claim deadline will be granted beyond 31 March of the year to which the grant relates.**

Failure to complete the project and submit the final claim by the above deadline may result in the grant paid to date being recovered.

Projects **MUST** be completed within the timetable agreed with Welsh Government. You cannot change this without written agreement from Welsh Government.

During the lifetime of the grant, when claims are submitted, they may be scrutinised to ensure expenditure is eligible and in line with that approved in the original application.

In order to receive a Ffermio Bro payment you must:

- Have accepted the Ffermio Bro award within 30 calendar days of the offer date and adhere to all the requirements.
- Ensure that you have only undertaken eligible work to meet the “Purposes” of your Grant Award Letter.
- Submit the claims using the contract claim form on your RPW Online account by the claim deadline – 31 March 2027 for activities carried out in 2026-27 or 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028 for activities carried out in 2027-28.
- Submit Schedule 5 of your Grant Award letter.

The payment will be issued to bank account associated with lead CRN on application.

For salaried staff, you will need to provide a spreadsheet of people, hourly rate and hours worked in the claim period.

For costs relating to facilitation, training and assessments, you will need to provide a spreadsheet detailing all expenditure made from each revenue budget. You must retain copies of invoices and make these available on request..

You can submit evidence by scanning it and sending via “My Messages” in your RPW Online account.

A claim is not considered valid unless it has been submitted via the contract claim form and until all supporting documentation has been submitted.

You can submit your claim at any time once the work has been completed.

We will issue a maximum of 2 reminders for any outstanding claims via your RPW Online account prior to the closing date.

It is essential that if you have any doubts about anything that you need for your project that you request written confirmation of its eligibility before you incur the costs.

If you do not complete 80% of the value for all capital works projects across a financial year, or accept a contract and subsequently withdraw, we reserve the right to reduce future allocations and/or you may be excluded from the next available window for Ffermio Bro.

## **Schedule 5**

The Chief Financial Officer or Financial Director of the Designated Landscape body will need to submit a schedule 5 declaration to sign off Local Authority Allocation Certificate. However, if the funding is less than £100,000 this does not need to be submitted.

## **Incorrect claims and penalties**

It is your responsibility to make sure the claim submitted is eligible and accurate, it is only for defrayed expenditure (the money has gone from your bank account), all the items and costs are eligible, and the claim is submitted on time.

All the activity/costs incurred must be after the award has been offered.

Your claim is incorrect if:

- you have undertaken activity / incurred costs before the award is offered
- you have not submitted a claim and supporting documents by the claim deadline

If the claim is incorrect then your claim will be reduced to the amount that is eligible and the grant to be paid will be calculated accordingly. However, if the error is more than 10% of the total amount claimed then a financial penalty will be applied. The amount of eligible expenditure will be reduced by the amount of the error and so the final amount of grant to be paid will be lower than expected.

## **Offences**

Regulation 13 of the Rural Development Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2014 (No. 3222 (W.327)) establishes criminal offences and penalties in relation to certain aspects of rural development funding. That Regulation and those offences are applicable to Ffermio Bro. Examples of offences include knowingly or recklessly providing false or misleading

information in relation to rural development funding, obstructing an inspector or official, and refusing to provide information when requested to do so.

### **Changes to an approved project**

A project change or re-evaluation is the process of agreeing significant changes to an approved project. If your project delivery is going to be different to what was agreed, you need to request a re-evaluation asking for approval of the changes.

Any changes to a project must be agreed by the grantor in writing. When you notify us that your project needs to be modified, we will explain to you how the changes will be treated.

## **Section M: Competitive tendering and procurement**

Where farmers apply to you to fund an item or activity for which there is no equivalent standard cost, you will need to ensure your competitive tendering and public procurement rules are followed, and quotes are obtained for the work on an actual cost basis. You will be asked to provide an overview of your procurement rules as part of your Stage 1 application.

While you will need to ensure your own procedures are followed, you can also refer to the Welsh Government's guidance and requirements for Competitive Tendering, which are available at [Rural grants: competitive tendering guidance](#).

## **Section N: Changes to scheme rules**

### **Legislation changes (Including changes in interpretation)**

Legislation may change from time to time, and you and the beneficiaries you fund will be required to abide by any changes to the scheme rules following notification from the Welsh Government.

### **Changes to scheme rules or Grant Award**

We may need to make changes to the scheme rules and/or your grant award. For example, we may need to update the management conditions to take account of the latest scientific advice, amend scheme rules to take account of any changes. We will publicise changes on [our website](#) and where necessary contact you directly.

## **Section O: Controls, monitoring and record keeping**

### **Controls**

The Welsh Government must enforce the Ffermio Bro rules.

All the details in your application, the details in your claim and the declarations that you made in submitting the application and claim will be checked.

Your claim may be selected for a visit to ensure that your body has followed the Scheme Rules and that procurement rules have been followed before the payment is made to you or it may be selected for a visit after the payment has been made.

We and the specialist control bodies will try to ensure that visits cause you minimum disruption, but some checks require visits to be unannounced, which means it may not be possible to give you notice. You may be subject to more than one visit in a calendar year.

If you refuse to allow a visit or obstruct an officer or fail to give reasonable assistance, your claim may not be paid, we may recover payments, and you may be prosecuted.

You will be asked to provide regular updates on the progress of projects you fund by submitting regular progress reports reporting against your application.

### **Key learnings for Welsh Government**

Activity within this scheme will also support the development of processes, methodologies and approaches to inform the continuing development of a collaborative element of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, including gathering more evidence about the effectiveness of interventions at both a farm and landscape management scale.

Welsh Government and the Programme Manager will create a network of Ffermio Bro stakeholders to share knowledge learning.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

As a scheme aimed at supporting the agricultural industry, Ffermio Bro will also be required to work towards the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives and as part of the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023.

You must make it a requirement of your grant offer letter to successful projects that items purchased with the aid of a grant must be kept in situ, operational and in good repair, and used for the same purpose as set out in the original application, for at least five years from the date of completion of the project as set out in the grant award. This is to ensure the longevity of the project and to guarantee primary producers a lasting share of the project's benefits.

You must inspect the items purchased over this five-year period. Site visits could be made on a percentage of the projects approved within five years following final completion (grant offer letter end date).

You must also cooperate with Welsh Government's appointed scheme evaluators.

### **Scheme Indicators**

The following indicators will be utilised in 2026-28. Bodies must retain appropriate and robust data on scheme outputs and beneficiaries, and retain these according to their own data protection and retention rules:

<b>Indicator</b>
Number of supported training, advice and awareness actions or units
Number of hectares or of livestock units benefitting from eco-Schemes
Number of hectares benefitting from support for areas facing natural or other specific constraints, including a breakdown per type of area - Designated Landscapes
Number of hectares benefitting from support for areas facing natural or other specific constraints, including a breakdown per type of area - Protected / Designated Sites
Kilometres of hedgerows improved
Kilometres of new hedgerows planted

Native trees planted
Number of supported other cooperation operations or units
Managed access to the countryside and coast - Km of RoW enhanced or created
Managed access to the countryside and coast - projects to remove barriers
Managed access to the countryside and coast - total projects
Number of heritage assets/features supported
Area (Ha) of woodland supported
Area (Ha) of peatland habitat improved
Number of Natural Flood Management projects
Kilometres of rivers improved

## Record keeping

You must keep all records and information you need to evidence that you have provided complete and accurate information and have complied with your undertakings for seven years after the project end date as stated in your grant award.

You will also be required to:

- Supply to us any information about your Ffermio Bro project within the period determined by the us.
- Make available to us, our authorised persons or our agents, records, accounts, receipts and other information including access to computer data relating to your project.
- Permit us to remove any such document or record to take copies or extracts from them.

## Section P: Appeals and complaints procedure

### Appeals Procedure

Once you have accepted a grant offer, appeals concerning a Welsh Government decision will be considered under the 'Independent Appeals Process for Rural Grants and Payments'.

The appeals process consists of two stages:

- stage 1: review by RPW
- stage 2: review by an Independent Appeals Panel (if you are dissatisfied with the stage 1 response)

The Independent Panel make recommendations to the Welsh Ministers, who make the final decision, which concludes the process.

There is no charge for Stage 1 of the process, but there is a charge at Stage 2. For Stage 2 appeals received on or after 1 January 2026, a charge of £220 for a written hearing or £290 for an oral hearing will be applicable. The charge has risen to match today's cost of Independent Appeals Panel fees (no other cost will be included). These charges are repaid in full if the Stage 2 appeal is successful.

Appeals, including supporting evidence, must be received within 60 days of the date of the letter outlining the decision you wish to appeal against.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh and will respond to any correspondence in Welsh if that is your preferred language. This will not lead to delay.

Appellants or their representatives must not make direct contact with members of the Independent Appeals Panel. We may consider this to be Unacceptable Behaviour in accordance with the Managing Unacceptable Behaviour of Welsh Government Customers guidance. **Unacceptable behaviour may lead to the withdrawal of payments and/or the rejection of claims or appeals.** Further details of the appeals process and how to submit an appeal using the RPW Online appeal form, can be obtained from the RPW Customer Contact Centre or our website at: [Rural Grants and Payments appeals: guidance](#).

### **Complaints procedure**

Complaints will be dealt with under our procedure on Complaints. Further advice on how to make a complaint can be obtained from the Complaints Advice Team:

Welsh Government  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Tel: 03000 251378

E-mail: [complaints@gov.wales](mailto:complaints@gov.wales)

Website: [Complain about Welsh Government](#)

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau'n Gymraeg / We welcome calls in Welsh.

You may also choose to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales:

1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae  
Pencoed  
CF35 5LJ

Tel: 0300 790 0203

Website: [Ombudsman](#)

### **Section Q: Privacy notice: Welsh Government grants**

We provide a wide range of grant schemes to help deliver our policies and create a fairer, more prosperous Wales.

We will be data controller for any personal data you provide in relation to your grant application or request for grant funding. The information will be processed as part of our public task (i.e. exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government) and will help us assess your eligibility for funding.

Before we provide grant funding to you, we undertake checks for the purposes of preventing fraud and money laundering, and to verify your identity. These checks may require us to process personal data about you to third party fraud prevention agencies.

If we, or a fraud prevention agency, determine that you pose a fraud or money laundering risk, we may refuse to provide the grant funding you applied for, or we may stop providing existing grant funding to you.

A record of any fraud or money laundering risk will be retained by the fraud prevention agencies, and may result in others refusing to provide services, financing or employment to you.

To assess eligibility, we may also need to share personal information relating to your application with:

- Natural Resources Wales
- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Veterinary Medicine Directorate
- Welsh Local Authorities
- Food Standards Agency Wales
- DEFRA
- other UK Government Agriculture Offices
- regulatory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs, Local Authorities, Health and Safety Executive and the Police

We may also share your information with organisations which deliver training, knowledge transfer and innovation advice and support on behalf of the Welsh Government for the purposes of appropriate targeting of support.

Your information, including your personal information, may be the subject of a request by another member of the public. When responding to such requests the Welsh Government may be required to release information, including your personal information, to fulfil its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Act 2004 or the Data Protection Act 2018.

We will publish details of the amounts paid to Rural Support beneficiaries. Data will be published for all beneficiaries and will include the name and locality of the farmer/land manager and details of the amounts and schemes for which grant funding has been paid. However, for those receiving less than the equivalent of £1,250 in grant funding the name will be withheld. The data will be published annually on 31 May and remain available for two years from the date it is published.

We will keep personal information contained in files in line with our retention policy. If successful in your application, then your personal data will be kept for 10 years after the date of final payment. If you are unsuccessful your details will be kept for one year after the date you provided them.

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to access the personal data we hold on you,

- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data,
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing,
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased', and
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is the independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

Email: [dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

2nd Floor,  
Churchill House  
Churchill Way  
Cardiff  
CF10 2HH

Telephone: 0330 414 6421

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Should you have any queries regarding this privacy statement please contact the RPW Customer Contact Centre.

## Section R: Legislation

We are committed to supporting farmers to produce food in a sustainable way, whilst taking action to respond to the climate emergency and to help reverse the decline in biodiversity. Funding support for farmers, land managers and associated rural sectors is delivered through a flexible framework of support under the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Objectives set out in The Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 ('the Agriculture Act'):

- to produce food in a sustainable manner,
- to mitigate and adapt to climate change,
- to maintain and enhance the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they provide, and
- to conserve and enhance the countryside and cultural resources and promote public access to and engagement with them, and to sustain the Welsh language and promote and facilitate its use.

This award of Funding is made on and subject to the Conditions and under the authority of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs, one of the Welsh Ministers acting pursuant to functions transferred under section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006

and assimilated law, formally known as Retained EU Law (REUL) Council Regulations No. 1305/2013, 1303/2013 and 1306/2013, Implementing Regulation No. 808/2014 and No. 809/2014 and Delegated Regulation 640/2014 and 807/2014 (all as amended from time to time).

The retained EU Law is implemented in Wales through the following domestic law (all as amended from time to time), including by the Agricultural Support (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Wales) (EU Exit) Regulations 2021/400 (W.129);, The Rural Development Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2014/3222 (W.327), The Common Agricultural Policy (Integrated Administration and Control System and Enforcement and Cross Compliance) (Wales) Regulations 2014/3223 (W.328).

## **World Trade Organisation and subsidy control**

Subsidies provided under this scheme are considered to be payments under an environmental programme, which fall within the scope of Annex II of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and have been classified as 'green box'. There is the potential for innovative or novel project proposals to require equipment or resources that fall outside this scope. Where it is deemed essential for the project, the items and actions may be subject to individual subsidy control agreements and will be defined in the project agreement.

## **Section S: Contacts**

### **Enquiries: Customer Contact Centre**

For all enquiries, please contact the [RPW Customer Contact Centre](#).

Enquiries can be submitted via RPW Online at any time.

### **Access to Welsh Government offices for people with disabilities or special needs**

If you have any special needs which you feel are not met by our facilities contact the RPW Customer Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004. Welsh Government officials will then endeavour to make arrangements to accommodate your requirements.

### **Welsh Government Website**

For all the latest Agricultural and Rural Affairs information, visit the [our website](#). By visiting the website, you can also sign up to receive the Rural Affairs e-newsletter which delivers the latest news directly to your e-mail inbox.

### **Gwlad**

The Gwlad e-newsletter is the Welsh Government's e-newsletter for farm and forestry businesses and all those involved with agriculture and rural Wales. It contains news stories, guidance and information in an accessible, easy-to-read format. To keep informed and up to date with all the latest agriculture news and developments in future we would encourage you to sign up to receive the Gwlad e-newsletter. You can do this either at [Announcements](#) or at [Subscribe to farming and forestry news \(Gwlad\)](#).