



Project Groundwater Innovation Fund

Prospectus



The Project Groundwater Innovation Fund application deadline is **9am 24th March 2025**. Successful applicants must complete their projects by **31st December 2025**.

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What is the Project Groundwater Innovation Fund?

The Project Groundwater Innovation Fund is dedicated to empowering and engaging local communities across the Chiltern Hills and Berkshire Downs to address groundwater flooding issues in order to help them become more resilient to groundwater flooding. This grant will enable local community organisations and individuals to access funding for projects that will encourage using grassroots knowledge to drive solutions for managing groundwater flooding, ensuring the outcomes align with the needs of the community.

The activities funded by The Project Groundwater Innovation Fund will be designed to also make a significant contribution to a number of wider social and environmental objectives, notably:

- Increasing awareness and education on groundwater flooding
- Developing innovative solutions to mitigate groundwater flooding
- Actively monitoring flood events and improving warning systems
- Supporting sustainable water management practices
- Enhancing community resilience to flood events
- Strengthening community involvement in environmental stewardship
- Fostering collaboration between local groups

There are many ways to address flooding. Below are some examples of activities your project could include:

- Developing sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)
- Enhancing natural flood management techniques
- Creating water storage or infiltration areas
- Planting trees or vegetation to support water absorption and biodiversity
- Installing rainwater harvesting systems
- Conducting educational campaigns or workshops on groundwater management
- Increasing access to flood-resilient infrastructure for vulnerable groups
- Encouraging community driven monitoring and maintenance of flood prone areas

These are just examples and your project does not need to include any or all of them. We welcome any other innovative ideas or approaches you believe will address groundwater flooding while benefiting your community.

If you are unsure if your idea fits with the objectives, please get in touch with Groundwork London for guidance.



Who funds the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant?

The Project Groundwater Innovation Fund is led and supported by Buckinghamshire Council and administered by Groundwork London.

What is Project Groundwater?

Project Groundwater supports communities to be more resilient to groundwater flooding. It is funded by Defra as part of the £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes, managed by the Environment Agency to develop and test new approaches to resilience tailored to local communities.

Project Groundwater's vision is to forever transform how communities prepare and respond to groundwater flooding. By working together, Project Groundwater will develop innovative and sustainable solutions to groundwater flooding that will:

- Share understanding and increase awareness
- Actively monitor flood events and improve warning systems
- Prepare communities to respond to and withstand flood events

As a community-focused partnership, Project Groundwater is underpinned and directed by four core principles:

- Collaboration – so that those impacted by groundwater flooding can be at the heart of everything we do
- Innovation – because communities deserve the best service possible which existing systems and technology may not achieve
- Sustainability – because the risk of groundwater flooding will continue into the future
- Transparency – because we understand the real-world impacts of groundwater flooding and want to maintain people's trust in the project

Who does the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant fund?

The Project Groundwater Innovation Fund supports local organisations and individuals in nine 'pilot' communities across the Chiltern Hills and Berkshire Downs:

- Chalfont St Peter
- Chesham



- Colnbrook with Poyle
- Hinksey Park
- Kimpton
- The Lambourn Valley
- Luton
- Marlow
- The Pang Valley

The following types of groups/organisations are eligible to apply:

- Education Establishment
- Religious Organisation
- Small or Medium Sized Enterprises (SME)
- Local Authority
- Registered Charity
- Informal or unconstituted group
- Company Limited by Guarantee
- Not for Profit Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Social Enterprise
- Constituted Community Organisation
- Friends of Group
- Tenants and Residents Association

Unconstituted groups are able to apply. These are community groups of more than one person who meet regularly, are not formally arranged or constituted, but do put energy and enthusiasm into their projects. If you are applying as an informal non-constituted group, you will need to provide reference details in your application for someone who can vouch for your work in the local community. This could be:

- A local councillor or council worker
- A school representative (e.g. teacher, head teacher, administrator)
- A local charity representative
- A healthcare professional (e.g. doctor, nurse or healthcare worker)
- A local shop or business owner
- A religious leader
- A qualified professional (e.g. solicitor or social worker)
- A local police officer

Please get in touch with Groundwork London if you are unsure who to ask.

You will also need to have a bank account with at least two signatories. You may need to partner with an organisation who can hold the grant money for you, if you are successful, as grant money cannot be paid into a personal bank account. This



partner organisation could also assist you with delivery and planning, if you would like, but this depends on the arrangement you agree with them.

If you are interest in applying but unsure if your group/organisation is eligible, please contact Groundwork London to discuss.

What funding is available?

We offer two tiers of grants:

- Standard grants of £5,000 to £10,000 for community projects addressing groundwater flooding
- Flagship grants of £10,001 to £20,000 for larger stand-out projects, or projects that link several targeted communities. For more information see below.

Any eligible group/organisation can apply for Standard and Flagship grants.

What is a flagship project?

A flagship project refers to a standout initiative, distinguished by their scale, innovation, or potential impact and are designed to serve as a model or inspiration for others.

For the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant, flagship projects might include:

- Large scale or high impact interventions that significantly address groundwater flooding challenges
- Projects that demonstrate innovative or creative approaches to building resilience against groundwater flooding
- Initiatives that connect or benefit multiple eligible local communities, enhancing collaboration and shared learning across communities
- Projects that are particularly effective in raising awareness and serve as a visible example of best practices in managing groundwater flooding

Flagship projects will typically have a broader reach, higher visibility, and a stronger impact on setting a benchmark for others to follow. These projects are eligible for larger grants (£10,001 to £20,000) to support their ambition and potential impact.

What can the funding be used for?

You can apply for funding for a wide variety of items, such as materials, sessional workers' fees, plants, tools and storage. See the table on the next page for examples.



Type	Description
Capital	This includes items which will be used to physically create the project. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tools and equipment hire• Plants and compost• Materials such as wood, benches, nails, screws, paint etc.
Revenue	This includes costs needed prior to the physical works and staff costs. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labour costs• Sessional workers• Educational sessions relating to creation, maintenance or environmental benefit of the project• Design fees• Volunteer management and recruitment
Ancillary	These are costs which are not essential to the project being completed, but which can help to make it more successful. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Celebration event• Volunteer travel and refreshments• Promotion and marketing

Please note that we will want to see that the items in the budget offer good value for money. This does not mean you need to choose the cheapest option, but you should be able to show that your budget offers both quality and a reasonable price.

If you have any queries regarding which category particular costs would fit into then please contact Groundwork London to discuss.

How can the Project Groundwater Innovation Fund help you?

The Project Groundwater Innovation Grant is designed to empower communities to take proactive steps in addressing groundwater flooding, which can have long lasting and devastating impacts. Groundwater flooding has seen the lowest levels of investment, action and consideration by authorities compared with the focus on river, coastal, and more recently surface water flooding. This grant aims to change the narrative by supporting innovative, community driven projects.

The application form will ask you to demonstrate the need for your project within your local community. This can be anything from grassroots knowledge of an issue to community consultation at any level.



By accessing this grant, you can:

- **Explore New Approaches** – the project encourages making use of new and innovative ways to tackle groundwater flooding issues to transform how groundwater flooding is addressed in your area
- **Enhance Local Resilience** – build resilience and knowledge within your community to better understand groundwater risks, manage flooding events, and minimise their impact on homes, businesses, and shared spaces
- **Empower Community Led Solutions** – develop and implement innovative ideas tailored to your local needs using grassroots knowledge and engagement
- **Set an Example** – your project could help to demonstrate practical solutions that will be shared with other communities, helping to address similar challenges and extend the impact of your work

Whether your project focuses on improving flood warnings, increasing community awareness, or testing innovative approaches, the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant can provide the funding and support you need to make a difference.

We actively encourage new applicants, even those without prior experience in securing grant funding. Contact our team for support with your application or project ideas.

Timeline

Applications can be made at any time until the deadline, 9am 24th March 2025 (see below).

The timetable below sets out the relevant dates on which applications will be assessed, application workshops held, awards made, and initial payments provisionally made.

Event	Date
Application window opens	03 February 2025
Application support workshop	w/c 17 February 2025
Application window closes	9am 24 March 2025
Processing of applications	w/c 24 March 2025
In principle awards made	w/c 31 March 2025
First payments made	w/c 14 April 2025
Delivery starts	21 April 2025
Mid project monitoring	August 2025
Project complete and final monitoring	31 December 2025



Are you eligible to apply?

Please review the checklist below before you apply to ensure you are eligible for the fund. We will ask you to complete a short eligibility checker prior to accessing the application form portal.

To be eligible, you must:

- ✓ Start delivery of your project after **21 April 2025** and be complete by **31 December 2025**
- ✓ Deliver a project in one of the nine supported areas: Chalfont St Peter, Chesham, Colnbrook with Poyle, Hinksey Park, Kimpton, The Lambourn Valley, Luton, Marlow, or The Pang Valley.
- ✓ Have a project idea that aims to tackle a groundwater flooding issue or build resilience to groundwater flooding
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate the need for your project
- ✓ Have in principle permission from the landowner for the works at the site
- ✓ Commit to monitoring and evaluating your project's progress and outcomes
- ✓ If an informal or unconstituted group, you can provide reference details for someone who can vouch for your work in the local community
- ✓ You have a UK bank account with at least two signatories. If not, you can partner with an organisation who can hold the grant money for you

It is really important that all deadlines are met. This includes monitoring and evaluation and project completion. Please ensure you bear this in mind when designing your project and completing your project plan.

How do you apply?

We strongly suggest that before starting the application process, you review the application guidance document that can be accessed on the Project Groundwater webpage on the Groundwork website, alongside this prospectus, as this will assist with giving tips on how to answer the questions. We also advise reading the Application Portal User Guide which explains how to access and use the application portal.

Applications must be submitted through the online application portal on the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant webpage on the Groundwork website, or via the below link:

[Click here to apply](#)

We are not able to process applications in MS Word documents via email or other formats. If you need help or support accessing the application portal or completing



Project Groundwater
Are you flood resilient?



**Buckinghamshire
Council**

the application form, please get in touch with Groundwork London and a member of the team will be happy to help you.

What happens after submitting an application?

The deadline for the Project Groundwater Innovation Fund applications is **9am on Monday 24 March 2025**.

Once your application is submitted:

- You will receive confirmation of submission and a copy of your application form via email
- A panel will review applications and make funding decisions within a month of the deadline
- Successful applicants will receive an in-principle grant offer (which will include any feedback and may include conditions to receiving funding)
- Once any conditions are met successful applicants will sign a funding agreement
- Monitoring and evaluation will be required during and after project delivery to assess outcomes

If you are unsuccessful, we will provide feedback and signpost you to other potential funding opportunities. We also offer feedback calls for all applicants.

Contact details

If you have any queries about your proposed project, please talk to a member of the Groundwork London team by emailing innovationgrant@projectgroundwater.co.uk or phone 07549 020 152, 07525 703 358 or 0207 922 1230.

As mentioned above, we are happy to help talk through any project ideas or eligibility queries you might have.



FAQs

How do I know if I live in one of the eligible pilot areas?

If you would like to check whether your area is eligible, please visit the [Project Groundwater website](#). There, you will find a map and detailed information about the pilot areas included in the project.

How do I know if my business is a small or medium sized enterprise (SME)?

In the UK, a business is considered a small or medium sized enterprise if it has fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of £50 million or less. For more detailed information, visit the UK Government website.

Can two or more organisations apply together?

Yes. You can apply as partners, though one organisation must act as the lead organisation and will be responsible for money, communications and completing any monitoring requirements. When making your application you may wish to see whether there are nearby organisations that you can partner with to increase the impact of your project.

Does the project space need to be accessible to the public?

The site does not necessarily need to be open access to the public, but does need to have a positive impact on groundwater flooding for the local community. Where awareness raising is an element of the project, levels of access to the project site should be at a level that allows communities to effectively engage with the project. If there are any barriers to entry to a space to take part in the project, such as paid membership, these spaces will also not be eligible.

Can councils apply?

Yes, but the project must be one that has come from the community and involves community work, rather than council contractors. We will want to see evidence that consultation has been carried out and ideas for the final project should be decided by the local community.

Can schools apply?

Yes, but the projects must be driven by consultation with the school community, i.e. school children, parents, carers or school staff. We will want to see evidence that



consultation has been carried out and we will prioritise projects where this is the case.

What do I do if I run into problems delivering my project or something is more expensive than anticipated?

If you are successful, Groundwork London are here to support you. Please contact the Project Groundwater Innovation Grant team to ask seek advice for questions throughout your project delivery. This includes if your plans change unexpectedly, if you need to change your budget or anything else relating to your grant.

Are contractors allowed?

You can use contractors for work, and we understand that for many works this will be necessary. However, where possible we would encourage you to use volunteers from communities to help with the project, as this will help to encourage a sense of shared ownership over the achievements of the project.

Can large organisations or charities apply?

Yes, but all projects should be driven by the needs and wants of the community. Community consultation should have taken place and they should be heavily involved in the development of the project.

Do I need match funding?

No, you do not need match funding.

Will extensions be allowed in any circumstance?

We will only be able to offer extensions where there have been events which are not foreseeable or beyond the applicants control. Please ensure you bear in mind the project delivery period when designing your project and ensure your activities are suitable.