

This presentation is from JNCC's UK LIFE Application writing workshop held in Cardiff 2016.

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# National Trust & LIFE Funding Nature & Biodiversity Experience

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1. Context: LIFE and the National Trust
2. Experience of Nature & Biodiversity
3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips
4. Any Questions?





# 1. Context: LIFE and the National Trust



## The National Trust:

- Founded in 1895.
- A Registered Charity established by Act of Parliament for “The preservation of places of historic interest and natural beauty forever and for everyone”;
- Land and assets held inalienable – can never be mortgaged, sold or compulsorily purchased (except by special Parliamentary procedure);
- Over 4.5m members, 7,700 paid staff, 60,000 regular volunteers, +£500m annual turnover;
- 22.2m visitors to pay- for-entry sites plus estimated 200m to our free entry sites;
- Circa £90m annual fundraising target. Grants at about £25m is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest income stream (includes £12m of EU grants);
- Time for the pretty pictures...



We own over 29,500 heritage buildings and 350 historic parks & gardens, visited over 22m times last year







We also own 257,000 Ha of land,  
received over 200 m visits last year, and





Over 1,200 km of heritage coastline,  
enjoyed by 37m visitors last year





# 1. Context: LIFE and the National Trust



**Of the 257,000 Ha of land the NT owns:**

- 40% is covered by at least one natural heritage designation;
- 30% is located in Natura 2000 designated sites
- All 17 species of UK bat have been recorded as roosting or breeding in NT properties;
- 96% of all resident species of UK butterfly occur on NT land;
- NT owns land within all three UK Marine Nature Reserves (Lundy, Skomer and North Strangford Lough);
- At least 50% of all the threatened species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan occur on NT land

So plenty of reasons for the NT to apply to LIFE...



## 2. Experience of Nature & Biodiversity



### Since 1994 the NT has:

- Participated in 14 successful LIFE bids (and several unsuccessful bids);
- Acted twice as the Coordinating Beneficiary, 11 as an Associated Beneficiary and once as a Co-financier;
- Collectively helped to secure over €34.2m (includes MoorLIFE 2020 €12m) of EU funding;
- 13 of these bids were under the nature and biodiversity strand and 1 under the Environment policy strand;
- Staff capacity has been the largest barrier to not applying more frequently. This is now changing and the NT is developing a pipeline of potential LIFE bids.
- Improving land condition and nature conservation is the NT's top strategic priority for at least 2015- 2025





# NT LIFE Nature Project Examples

**MoorLIFE Blanket Bog Restoration, High Peak, Derbyshire** A 'Best Practice' partnership project delivering substantial biodiversity & ecosystem services benefits through the restoration of upland blanket bog. The total grant was €5.02m (75%) and the NT received about €750,000 of this.



**Alde-Ore Estuary, Orford, Suffolk** A joint RSPB & NT bid to restore habitats and access to the National Nature Reserve at Orford Ness, a shingle spit off the Suffolk coast and also to nearby Havergate Island. The total grant was €1.2m (50%) and the NT received about €475,000 of this.





### 3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips



#### The Start:

- Designation, designation, designation (arriving at 1 version of the truth):
  - My first step is to check on [MAGIC](#) (interactive mapping tool) to double check N2K site boundaries;
  - Then I cross reference this against [JNCC - N2K Site Data](#) for data on what is actually designated on these sites;
  - From this it is possible to download the **Standard Data Form**. This will give you an indication of the extent, conservation status, and the Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the designated habitats and species on the site;
  - I then check this against the relevant [Article 17 Habitats Directive report](#) to arrive at an assessment of conservation status.
  - [The Interpretation Manual of EU Habitats](#) is useful for understanding which habitats are EU priorities (and can attract 75% funding)



# 3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips



## The Start (continued):

### – Significance

- By now I have gained an understanding of the significance of the habitats/species in the sites.
- The next steps are to check this against relevant policies and strategies to see if these are important at the national or UK level. So check:
  - The national and UK biodiversity strategies;
  - The national and UK Prioritised Action Frameworks;
  - Species/habitat specific strategies such as the Eurobats Strategy;

## Core Environmental Problem

- The next step is to arrive at the core environmental problem that you wish LIFE funding to address. I normally carry out a Problem Tree exercise internally first, then with project partners to gain consensus
- This sets the framework for the subsequent log frame exercise and for the project scope and actions.



### 3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips



#### **The Middle:**

- The Bs and Cs
- These are the sections of the bid that take the longest to write. B2 questions are particularly time consuming
- Start your research in to past projects early. This will enable you to identify best practices/demonstration projects that you can utilise early on and where possible to contact the project managers
- Think about transferability, replicability and sustainability very early on and embed throughout the document.
- Ensure your outputs and results are realistic. Don't promise what you don't think you can deliver
- Be especially nice to your GIS mapping colleagues – you need them
- Have regular partner meetings and keep to task. Be a bull terrier and keep everyone on task.



### 3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips



#### **The End:**

- Finances
  - Ensure these are as consistent as possible
  - Your Associated Beneficiary Declaration forms will not print off until you have inputted all the actions and all the finances. So a fast turn around is essential;
  - Check and re-check your actions and expenditure is eligible
  - Have plenty of head room above the minimum 25% expenditure on concrete conservation actions
  - Read, read again and then read a third time both the questions and your answers.
  - Be on the look out for inconsistencies, for example, between actions and finance tables, between actions, milestones and deliverables.





### 3. The Start, the Middle and the End – Top Tips



#### **Final comments:**

- Allow plenty of time – it does take at least 6 months to write a LIFE bid;
- Ensure the internal experts you require are completely signed up for the duration of the development phase. Think about secondments and backfilling if required;
- Check against the log frame and problem tree: will the bid deliver against these?
- Be super clear and consistent on why your actions cannot be funded by national and/or other EU funds.
- Does your bid offer EU value for money?



# 4. Any Questions?

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