

Fisheries Improvement Programme 2022/23

Update for external stakeholders

December 2021

During 2021 we have reinvested £900k in projects. The Fisheries Improvement Programme (FIP) is funded from the coarse, trout and eel fishing licence income and provides a direct benefit to anglers.

The Environment Agency is continuing to seek project ideas from clubs, fisheries and other partners to improve local fish stocks and angling opportunities.

Priority outcomes

- 1) **Angling benefits:** the water where the project is planned must be fished (or there is a demonstrable link). We would also expect the fishery to be open membership or day ticket so that the maximum number of licence holders benefit.
- 2) **Coarse, trout and eel habitat/passage:** these are the key constraints for good fish populations, addressing them will result in more sustainable stocks and improved connectivity. Our work on rivers often involves the local Rivers Trust and the Wild Trout Trust who we have established relationships with.
- 3) **Angling access and facilities:** platforms, pegs and pathways for rivers and stillwaters. Ensuring the needs of less able bodied anglers are considered. We know that 70% of our licence holders preferentially fish stillwaters; therefore proposals are welcomed from angling clubs and other local partners to create or improve community and urban-based fisheries (which may require both habitat and access work).
- 4) Proactive management of **prolonged dry weather and/or climate impacts.** This may involve supporting fishery owners with supplementary aerators/WQ meters. Where possible work should contribute to carbon Net Zero targets.

Other important considerations

Projects should include **socio/economic and wellbeing benefits:** evidence and examples are contained within [National Angling Strategy](#). The coronavirus has increased the awareness that our sport can provide significant physical and mental health benefits for participants of all ages and abilities.

All projects should provide evidence of **match funding:** applicants should seek to secure additional funds or 'in-kind' support. The value of volunteers can be calculated using the following rates:

General, unskilled labour	Skilled, trained labour	Specialist services	Professional services
Per hour £8.91 / Per day £70	£26.10 / £210	£43.50 / £350	£70 / £560
Supervised scrub clearance, ditch-digging, planting, basic administrative support	Operations for which certificated training is a requirement, such as operating dangerous equipment, driving off-road vehicles, using chemicals	Supervising, training labour teams, surveys, diving, designing, photography	Consultants, lawyers, planners, engineers, accountants, auditors

We encourage you to identify and work with other partners and stakeholders. For example, if you are leasing a fishery you will need to involve the landowner. Working on rivers may benefit from working with your local Rivers Trust or the Wild Trout Trust. In an urban setting there may be a good reason to contact your local authority or other community groups. As well as being able to provide advice these partners could contribute funding. Our aim is for every £1 of fishing licence money we invest in projects to secure £2 of match funding.

It is often the case that with a little investment and providing appropriate advice/training that a proactive club or fishery can take on more responsibility. There are good examples of water quality monitoring, making and deploying floating islands and having a tool bank to enable owners to cut weed and undertake bankside tree and vegetation management. Please ensure that your club is aware of the responsibilities to your members and the general public and has the necessary insurance and H&S procedures (such as risk assessments). A good starting point is the [Volunteer Guide available on the Angling Trust website](#).

We cannot pay for work already completed or pay for materials/services already purchased, but we welcome projects which form part of a wider ongoing programme of improvements at the venue.

On completion of a successful project, we expect the work to be promoted either through a traditional press release or using social media channels. We want to spread the word about good news angling stories and how we reinvest licence income to support clubs and fisheries.

How to proceed

We have initially up to £500k available in 2022 and our intention is to allocate this money to FIP projects to commence in April. Therefore, if you have any ideas we need to know about these soon!

If you have previously submitted a proposal in 2021, we already have this information and therefore please do not resubmit.

Your best course of action is to contact your local fisheries officer or catchment co-ordinator to discuss your proposal. They will be able to provide guidance and advice about the preferred approach. If you do not have a named contact call our main switchboard (03708 506506) and ask to be put through.

There is also an online portal for clubs and fisheries to submit project ideas for our consideration and potentially to form part of future Area FIP. The access to the portal is [here](#) and further information is available on the [Angling Trust website](#).

Please be aware too that we also reinvest licence income to deliver the [Angling Improvement Fund](#), administered on our behalf by the Angling Trust. The focus is on predation management action (mainly otters and cormorants) and biosecurity. The 2022 fund will be open for these themes later in the year so keep an eye on the website for when applications will be invited from clubs and fisheries.

If licence sales remain strong then we plan to make more money available for FIP projects from September onwards.

Who can apply?

We welcome contact and project proposals from angling clubs, fisheries, charities, local authorities or other community organisations involved in angling. To be eligible, the projects must be located in England and involve a form of angling covered by a valid Environment Agency non-migratory trout and coarse fishing licence. Projects only benefiting salmon or sea trout, and sea angling projects cannot apply.

We welcome proposals from river, canal and stillwater fisheries. If you do not own or manage a water, you may still apply, but should obtain in advance the permission of the organisation who leases the venue.

We particularly encourage proposals from small angling clubs with limited finances; usually run by volunteers and with smaller needs. Our involvement could make a real difference for the survival of these clubs and a limited investment could result in the turnaround in their fortunes and an increase in membership.

Key Dates

Date	What is required
December 2021- February 2022	Local Environment Agency Area fisheries and environment programme staff draw up a potential FIP based on the indicative budget. External partners such as the Rivers Trusts and Wild Trout Trust are encouraged to engage and suggest potential projects. The Angling Trust online portal will be refreshed, and clubs/fisheries encouraged to submit ideas. Areas have copies of all proposals submitted during 2021, any new projects received will be forwarded on, or just after, 5/1/22, 19/1/22, 2/2/22, 16/2/22, and thereafter on a monthly basis for the remainder of the year.
March 2022	Area FIP proposals will be submitted for review and approval. National confirm projects receiving funding from initial £500k.
April 2022	Commence delivery of 22/23 FIP projects.
August 2022	Decision on whether to release additional budget, based on licence sales.
March 2023	Complete all FIP projects and ensure payments are made in full. Local media opportunities should be actively sought.

Planned Allocations

Initially we intend to allocate £500k to Areas, if licence sales hold up as expected we will release further funds mid-year. The Area budgets are based on the level of local coarse trout and eel activity locally using established metrics:-

1. Number of licences sold, to reflect our current customer base;
2. Number of angling clubs and fisheries venues, to reflect where angling happens;
3. Number of fish movement permits, to ensure stillwater fisheries and angling activity is fully considered.

Area	FIP Budget	Area	FIP Budget
Cumbria & Lancashire	26k	Lincs & Northants	25.5k
Devon, Cornwall & IoS	19k	North East	19k
East Anglia	63k	Solent & South Downs	31k
East Midlands	30k	Thames	34k
Gt. Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	38k	Wessex	34k
Herts & North London	28.5k	West Midlands	67k
Kent, South London & East Sussex	35k	Yorkshire	48.5k

We will be unable to fund everything, and therefore applicants should be realistic in their expectations- we will review all ideas and seek to progress the best ones; working with partners to secure funds, permits through to implementation. If we are unable to financially support your idea, we may still be able to provide advice on the issue you are facing or seek to involve others to try and resolve.

If you have taken time to submit a project proposal we will read each and every one and consider how best to take forward the work. We realise that anglers are passionate about their sport and we want to support you and together we can make fisheries better for all.

Any Questions?

For further explanation about the FIP contact Roger Handford (roger.handford@environment-agency.gov.uk or 07881 510916).

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03708 506 506

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0800 80 70 60

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