



Enhance the River

Grant overview and application guide

Part of our River Health and Community Fund

April 2026



Overview of River Health and Community Fund Available Grants

At Thames Water, we know our customers care about local rivers - and so do we. That's why we're working to improve river health across our region.

Last year, we announced a major five-year investment in rivers. As part of this, we've launched the Thames Water River Health and Community Fund to support the delivery of innovative solutions to water management challenges across the Thames Water region.

Through this fund, we're currently offering three different grants: Micro, Engage the River and Enhance the River. This guide explains the Enhance the River grant and how to apply.

If you're currently running, or planning, a water-based environmental project that delivers lasting improvements and benefits for rivers, local communities and the wider environment across our region, we'd love to hear from you.

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Available grants

1. Micro grant

For small projects that help people connect with water

Up to £5,000



Project examples

- Pond creation
- Wildflower or raingarden planting
- Rainwater harvesting
- Accessibility in community spaces including toilets

Who can apply

- Registered charities
- Schools
- Community groups
- Social Enterprise
- Community Interest Companies
- Faith-based or church organisations



Find out more about this grant and how to apply [here](#).

2. Engage the River grant

For medium-sized projects that encourage access, recreation, and learning around water

Up to £50,000



- Water sports and angling
- Water quality and river monitoring, data, mapping, and citizen science
- Community engagement and access
- Education, skills, and STEM projects

- Registered charities
- Schools
- Community groups
- Social Enterprise
- Community Interest Companies
- Faith-based or church organisations



Find out more about this grant and how to apply [here](#).

3. Enhance the River grant

For large projects focused on delivering direct environmental improvements and benefits.

Up to £150,000

- In-channel habitat restoration and enhancements
- Riparian habitat restoration and enhancements
- Fish passage improvement and reconnection
- Floodplain and wetland connectivity/naturalisation
- Improve biosecurity and/or target invasive non-native species (INNS)

- Registered charities
- Schools
- Community groups
- Social Enterprise
- Community Interest Companies
- Faith-based or church organisations
- Community / Parish councils
- Local authorities and other public sector organisations



Find out more >

Keep reading to find out more about this grant and how to apply.



Enhance the River grant applications

Our Enhance the River funding programme offers grants of up to £150,000 to help support the delivery of a wide range of partnership-led water management projects.

Aims

- Support the delivery of projects that matter most to our Catchment Partnerships and local communities
- Promote collaborative and partnership-led project delivery
- Support the delivery of projects that deliver lasting environmental benefits within our river catchments

Assessment

To apply for an Enhance the River grant, you will need to complete the application form we provide on the next page. The most important questions for assessing your project are numbered in this form, with their scoring shown in italics to guide your responses. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of local experts, using the assessment criteria outlined on this page.

Projects with significant co-funding and a letter of support from their Catchment Partnership will score more favourably.

When to apply

Over the next four years, the fund will open periodically, with eight-week application windows per round. You can find the dates for upcoming grant application periods on our Community funding webpage [here](#).

The letter should confirm that the project aligns with and complements the Catchment Plan priorities and existing work.

Tackling invasive non-native species (INNS) across our region is one of our main objectives. If your project focuses on INNS, we may be able to offer additional funding alongside the Enhance the River grant, depending on how well it aligns with the aims of our INNS strategy outlined here. This will not affect the Enhance the River assessment process, and projects that address INNS will not receive any advantage in scoring.

Please be aware that submitting an application does not guarantee funding.

Our assessment criteria



Applications will be assessed on:

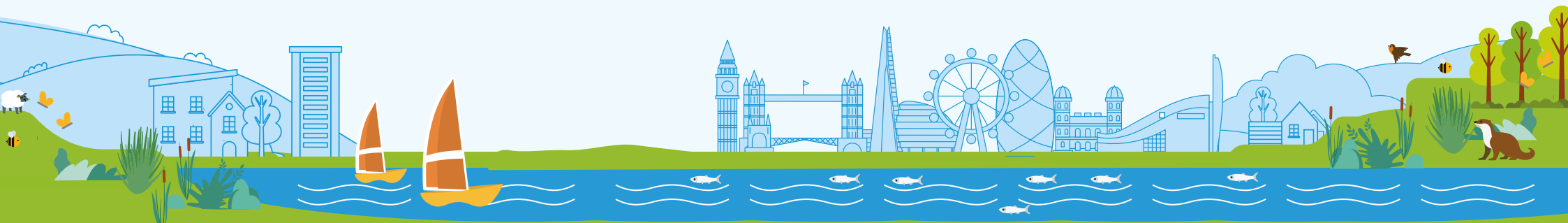
- How well the project meets our funding aims
- Clarity of the project plan and expected outcomes
- Project readiness
- Project funding
- Project scale, impacts, and benefits
- Partnership working
- Community involvement

Our INNS strategy



Tackling INNS is one of our main objectives. Our strategy focuses on:

- Controlling or managing the spread of INNS
- Promoting good biosecurity practices
- Improving INNS monitoring and surveying across catchments
- Researching new ways to reduce INNS
- Raising awareness about INNS and their impacts





How to apply

Follow these four steps to apply for an Enhance the River grant:



1. Check your project

Check your project is in the Thames Water region before applying. You can still apply if your water and wastewater suppliers are different, as long as Thames Water is one of them.

www.water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier



2. Check application timelines

For the latest information on grant application timelines and key dates, see our Community funding webpage [here](#).



3. Complete an application

Apply directly to us by completing the Enhance the River grant application form. The Word document form can be found [here](#) and under the 'Enhance the River grants' dropdown section of our Community funding webpage.

Remember to complete the form with as much detail as you can so we have all the information needed to assess your application fairly and thoroughly. Projects that align with a Catchment Plan, shown by a letter of support from a Catchment Partnership, will receive a higher score. Find your local Catchment Partnership [here](#).



4. Submit your application

Email your application to partnerships@thameswater.co.uk. You'll receive a confirmation email once we've received your application. Please note, you must provide an answer to ALL of the questions on the application form for your application to be considered.

What happens next?

Here's what to expect after you've applied for an Enhance the River grant:



We'll contact successful applicants via: partnerships@thameswater.co.uk.

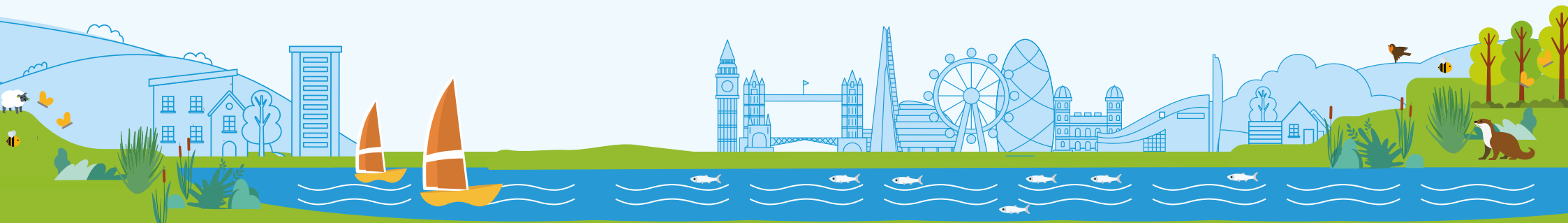
We'll put in place a grant funding agreement with you as well as a payment schedule. We'll handle final checks and manage grant payments. Successful applicants will also need to provide regular project updates and complete associated reporting forms.



We'll contact unsuccessful applicants via: partnerships@thameswater.co.uk.

We'll provide you with feedback but are unable to have detailed discussions once a decision has been made.

If your project doesn't meet our Enhance the River grant requirements, you may be able to apply for the other grants within our River Health and Community Fund. Find out more [here](#).





Frequently asked questions



I have a good project idea but am unsure about eligibility. What should I do?

1

If you're unsure about project eligibility or fund requirements, please contact our partnerships team at: partnerships@thameswater.co.uk.



Can I apply for two projects?

2

Yes, you can submit more than one application in the same funding year. Each eligible application will be assessed separately.



Can two or more organisations apply together?

3

Yes, we welcome partnership applications. However, one organisation must be nominated as the lead and be responsible for funding, communications with us and project delivery.



When must projects be completed?

4

All partnership projects must be completed by December 2029.



5

How are applications assessed?



Applications for an Enhance the River grant are reviewed by a panel including Thames Water and local organisations. Projects scoring highest against the assessment criteria outlined in this document will be successful. Preference is given to projects with a letter of support from a Catchment Partnership and those with significant co-funding to maximise impact and collaboration.

7

How is funding released?



If your application is successful, we'll put in place a grant funding agreement with you as well as a payment schedule.

8

What if I need more advice on my application?



This document contains all our Enhance the River grant information. If you have further application questions, our partnerships team is happy to help. Contact them at: partnerships@thameswater.co.uk.

For more information on the other grants in our River Health and Community Fund: Micro grant and Engage the River grant, please visit our Community funding webpage [here](#).



Thank you for your interest.

Find out more about how we're working in partnership to improve the rivers and community spaces across our region on the Working in Partnership webpages [here](#).