

Supporting your BIP Application



The Biodiversity Improvement Projects (BIP) Fund

The Biodiversity Improvement Projects (BIP) Fund is CrossCountry's environmental grant fund, specifically designed to support biodiversity improvement projects.

The BIP Fund allows communities and stakeholders across the CrossCountry network to identify and develop local projects and schemes that can make a real difference to the natural environment and the communities we serve.

This document includes everything you need to know about the type of schemes we are looking for, how to apply, and who to contact should you have any queries.

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1. What can the grant cover?

To be eligible for the BIP Fund, projects must deliver clear biodiversity benefits. Strong applications may also demonstrate wider environmental benefits that align with CrossCountry's Sustainability Strategy. Further information on our Sustainability Strategy is provided in Section 3.

Applications will be assessed against a range of criteria. This section explains what we are looking for and how to develop a strong proposal.

We welcome applications for a wide range of schemes and activities, including habitat restoration, biodiversity enhancement, environmental education, climate adaptation projects and initiatives that improve community access to nature.

The BIP Fund is intended to support not-for-profit projects that provide tangible benefits for local plants and wildlife, while also helping to address an environmental or social need.

All projects must be completed by no later than 30 September 2027.

Applications should show how the project supports CrossCountry's Sustainability Strategy and how environmental and social value benefits will be measured through monthly data reporting.

Further guidance on data reporting is provided in the 'Social Value Reporting' section below.

To help you assess whether your project is likely to be considered for funding, please review the eligibility questions below:

Does your project:

- Increase biodiversity, enhance habitats or improve access to nature?
- Create or improve wildlife corridors?
- Measure biodiversity net gain or other environmental outcomes?
- Support carbon reduction, climate adaptation or flood resilience?
- Improve water quality, soil quality or resource efficiency?
- Provide biodiversity, climate change or sustainability education?
- Benefit local communities or strengthen collaboration with CrossCountry stakeholders?

We do not expect a single project will answer "yes" to all of the above questions. If a project can meet a few of the above, then it is likely to be considered for funding.

* Community Projects *

*Our dedicated **Customer and Communities Improvement Fund** is also open for applications. If your project is **not** specific to biodiversity, instead looks to address a generic local community need to generate social value and wider sustainability benefits, please see:*

<https://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/customer-and-communities-improvement-fund>

Our Sustainability Team would be happy to discuss any project and provide feedback on its likely eligibility. Please email environment@crosscountrytrains.co.uk if you have any questions.

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2. How to apply

The grant covers projects which bring tangible biodiversity benefits within the communities we serve. A route map can be found in Appendix A. Strong applications should have ties to the railway or promote sustainable low carbon transport.

All applications must be made via the official form which can be found [HERE](#) or on our website.

The scheme will be open for four weeks, from 22 June 2026 to 17 July 2026.

How will applications be assessed?

After the closing date, CrossCountry will review all applications and may contact applicants if there is a need to clarify any details.

A BIP Review Group comprising CrossCountry Sustainability representatives and other senior managers will carry out an impartial review and assessment process to classify all schemes as follows:

1. Preferred Project

- The scheme is one of CrossCountry's preferred Biodiversity Improvement Projects Fund applications for the current year. In this case, we may ask some further questions relating to your application.

2. Project with Potential

- The scheme has potential; however, we have some reservations and would like you to answer some further questions before we can consider the scheme's potential for this year.

3. Unsuccessful Project

- The scheme is unsuccessful in this year's BIP Fund programme, and we will be in touch as soon as possible to provide feedback explaining why we have not opted to progress the proposal.

For successful applicants, grants will be paid by 30 September 2026.

All projects must be completed within 12 months, no later than 30 September 2027.

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We care
passionately



We make the
difference



We do the
right thing

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3. Alignment to our Sustainability Strategy

We welcome schemes that align with our Sustainability Strategy pillars: People, Places and Planet.

The BIP Fund supports biodiversity projects. If your project primarily aligns with other Sustainability Strategy areas, such as Social Mobility, Safeguarding, ED&I, Connected Journeys or Sense of Place, please apply to the Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) instead. CCIF details are available on our website.



PEOPLE

We are a positive force for our employees, and wider society

Focus Areas

Accessibility - Enabling everyone to access travel with confidence and independence

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Supporting inclusive, fair and representative communities where everyone can thrive

Social Mobility and Safeguarding - Expanding opportunities and protecting vulnerable people to build safer, more equitable communities



PLACES

We support sustainable community growth across our four regions

Focus Areas

Air Quality - Improving air quality to support healthier environments for communities

Biodiversity - Protecting and restoring nature to enhance local environments and wellbeing

Climate Change Adaptation - Building resilience to climate impacts to protect communities and essential services

Connected Journeys - Making sustainable travel easier to access, connecting people to opportunities and services

Sense of Place - Celebrating local identity and heritage to strengthen community pride and belonging



PLANET

We reduce the environmental footprint of our operation

Focus Areas

Carbon - Reducing emissions to support a cleaner environment and a more sustainable future

Waste - Reducing waste to protect the environment and conserve resources for future generations

Water - Protecting water resources to support healthy ecosystems and communities



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4. Social Value Reporting

At CrossCountry, we use the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT), designed by Loop in partnership with the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to quantify our social impact. To calculate the Social Value from a project, it is necessary to collect data on the anticipated and achieved benefits.

The Rail Social Value Tool has dedicated metrics across various topics, which can be adapted to suit each project. The types of data we require will vary depending on the project aims, however some typical metrics may include the following

- Number of stakeholders who will be positively impacted by the project
 - This means the estimated number of individuals, groups, organisations or community members who are expected to benefit from the project, either directly or indirectly.
- Number of workshops/activity sessions to be delivered
 - This means the total number of separate sessions, events or activities that will take place as part of the project.
- Length of the workshop/activity session
 - This means the expected duration of each session, usually recorded in hours or minutes.
- Number of anticipated volunteer hours (paid)
 - This means the estimated number of hours contributed by people supporting the project while being paid by their employer, for example through employer-supported volunteering.
- Number of anticipated volunteer hours (unpaid)
 - This means the estimated number of hours contributed by volunteers who are not being paid for their time.
- Number of hours to be spent making/working on the project
 - This means the estimated total time that will be spent planning, preparing, delivering or creating the project, including staff, partner or contractor time where relevant.

When completing the [application form](#), **please only complete the metrics which are relevant to your project.**

Our BIP team will monitor project progress by comparing achieved benefits against the anticipated benefits set out in your application form, **so please aim to be as accurate as possible.** Projects will not be penalised if anticipated benefits are not fully achieved; instead, the BIP team will work with you to provide support and help bring the project back on track if it falls behind.



5. Associated Publicity

All projects delivered with the aid of CrossCountry funding must make clear in all associated publicity that the project has been funded or part funded by CrossCountry, including agreement on the use of company branding prior to publication.

6. Payments and Project Delivery

Successful applicants will be required to provide periodic updates throughout project delivery.

CrossCountry reserves the right to request evidence that funding has been used for the approved purposes.

Should there be genuine difficulties in carrying through the proposal, these should be reported immediately.

Failure to demonstrate that funding has been spent in the agreed way may lead to a requirement for repayment.

7. Closing Remarks

We look forward to receiving applications that will help improve biodiversity, strengthen communities and contribute to a more sustainable future across the CrossCountry network.

If you have any further questions, please get in touch at environment@crosscountrytrains.co.uk.

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Appendix A – CrossCountry Route Map



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