

Fisheries Improvement Programme 2021/22

Update for external stakeholders

March 2021

With the resurgence of angling in 2020 we were able to release over £1.5M of funding for projects. The Fisheries Improvement Programme 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:** water where the project is planned must be fished (or there is a demonstrable link).
- 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) **Improving local evidence:** it may be sometimes necessary to undertake investigations to better understand and manage fish stocks. A small investment is warranted over and above our routine monitoring work.
- 5) **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.
- 6) **Reactive issues:** shifting resources to manage dry weather or other incidents impacting fish and fisheries if needed. Helping fishery owners to help themselves; with a small investment and providing appropriate advice/training can ensure a water is better managed. Good examples are water quality monitoring and supplementary aeration.
- 7) **Match funding:** all projects should seek to secure additional funds or 'in-kind' support.

How to proceed

We initially had £500k available in 2021 and our intention is to allocate this money to FIP projects that have already applied. If licence sales remain strong then we plan to make more money available for projects from September onwards.

We want to hear the proposals from a broad range of partners and those involved in the management of fisheries.

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 the 2021 fund is also open and inviting applications from clubs and fisheries.

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](#).

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 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.

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
1st April 2021	Commence delivery of first tranche of 20/21 FIP projects. Contact Environment Agency Area staff if clubs and fisheries have ideas for projects that could be developed and delivered from September 2021. Open a new the Expression-of-Interest form on the Angling Trusts online portal as an alternative way to submit proposals.
31st July 2021	Decision on whether to release additional budget (2 nd tranche), based on licence sales.
1st September 2021	Commence delivery of second tranche of 20/21 FIP projects.
31st March 2022	Complete all FIP projects and ensure payments are made in full. Promote successes.

Thank you for reading this guidance and we look forward to hearing from you and receiving your project ideas.

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).

