



Information guide

Category C grants:

Enabling a European dam removal movement



The European Open Rivers Programme was created with funding from [Arcadia](#). Arcadia is a charitable foundation that works to protect nature, preserve cultural heritage and promote open access to knowledge.

About this information guide

We appreciate the time and effort that is required to prepare projects and apply for funding. Therefore, we aim to be as clear as possible about what we support, how to apply, and how your application will be assessed. Please read these guidelines carefully before applying.

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1. Category C grants: enabling a European dam removal movement

1.1 Introduction

These grants support interventions that result in dam removal becoming more widely accepted and implemented by others, which results in more rivers being restored across Europe.

Category C grants provide support in three strategic areas. Applicants may apply for projects that contribute to one or more of the following:

- **Knowledge development and dissemination**
To support the analysis of existing information, the development and sharing of best practices, and/or the generation and dissemination of new information that fills knowledge gaps.
- **Policy advocacy**
To support work that ensures that dam removal is incorporated into EU and national policies, to support policy implementation, and for policy makers to better understand and support dam removal.
- **Communications and awareness raising**
To support targeted communications that help to build enthusiasm and highlight the benefits of dam removal.

1.2 Application stages and timing

Category C applicants do not need to submit an Expression of Interest, only a proposal. Applications will be invited three times each year, dates to be announced on the programme's website. Please review our [Grant Calendar](#) for upcoming important application dates.

2. Eligibility criteria

2.1 Who can apply?

We recognise that projects often involve a diverse range of partners and contributors including NGOs, government, academia, the private sector, community groups and individuals. We welcome and encourage applications from diverse consortiums and collaborations. However, we have specific criteria for who can be a coordinating partner.

A coordinating partner is the applicant to the programme, and they will take a lead in managing the project. They will receive and manage the grant finances, sign a grant contract with the programme, and take responsibility for the effective delivery of the project. They will usually be based in the country of implementation. Non-resident coordinating organisations will need to be able to justify that their role is essential e.g. there is no suitable national coordinating organisation in the implementing country.

The following organisations may apply to the programme for Category C:

- A charitable organisation.
- An organisation with not-for-profit status.

We expect most applicants will be organisations with an environmental focus and a track record of restoring rivers / ecological work. We recognise that public and private organisations and community groups may wish to apply, and we encourage their participation in projects as partners but will not accept unsolicited applications from these groups. These groups may contact the programme to explore options if they are not able to identify a suitable NGO coordinator for a project.

Projects must be implemented in Greater Europe and coordinating partners must be registered in Greater Europe. Overseas territories are not included.

2.2 Demonstrating the theory of change

All category C applications will need to clearly demonstrate why the proposed interventions are important and needed, and to articulate the [Theory of Change](#) (ToC). This means that all applications need to demonstrate (as much as is realistically possible) how the stated interventions will **actually** lead to dam removal being more widely accepted and implemented across Europe. Application questions will ask for the following information:

1. Why the project is needed now and why it is important.
2. Problems that are being addressed.
3. Clear and measurable goals
4. Activities / interventions (that will lead to the stated outcomes)
5. Direct measurable outputs
6. Measurable outcomes (that result in dam removal being more widely accepted and implemented)

2.3 What we are looking for – eligible projects

The tables on pages 6-8 provide guidance for applicants under the three strategic areas for category C grants. The approach has been developed based on extensive consultation with key stakeholders to incorporate some of the most important actions that are needed to ensure that dam removal is more widely accepted and implemented. All projects must demonstrate how they will result in the stated overall outcome, address one or more of the problems and implement one or more of the stated interventions.

The highest scoring projects in this grant category will be those that carry out activities that directly lead to more dams being removed. Whilst we understand that this link is not always easy to demonstrate , applicants should strive to articulate it as much as possible.

What we are less likely to support

- Those projects or activities that are not seen to be critical to enable dam removal to take place at scale and cannot clearly demonstrate how they will result in more dams being removed.
- Capacity development activities i.e. running training workshops, conferences, or sharing expertise with other organisations in a very general way, unless the interventions can be shown to result in dams being prepared for removal and demolished.

Eligible projects - strategic area 1: Knowledge development and dissemination

Aim: To support the analysis of existing information, the development and sharing of best practices, and/or the generation and dissemination of new information that fills knowledge gaps or builds new expertise for dam removal.

Problems to be addressed	Interventions should address one or more of the following:	Outcomes	Overall outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge that we have is not effectively disseminated, understood, or acted on. • Lack of solid narrative (including the costs and benefits, for private sector engagement). • Lack of strong application examples ('cases') under different contexts, highlighting best practices. • Lack of generic methodological framework for prioritising removal and maximising ecological gains from dam removal. • Public sector lacks expertise and confidence to support dam removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and share best practices for dam removal. • Share knowledge and expertise with new practitioners to help them prepare and implement more dam removal projects. • Monitor dam removal projects and share lessons, including projects supported by Open Rivers Programme. • Identify new financing mechanisms for dam removal. • Provide tools and techniques that help practitioners select dam removal projects that maximise ecological gain. • Disseminate guidance for decision makers on how to identify / prioritise dam removal projects and measure free-flowing rivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people understand how to remove dams and have the knowledge, expertise, and the necessary tools to remove dams at greater scale. • The benefits of dam removal are better understood. • Planners and practitioners have access to practical knowledge which enables them to be more effective at removing dams and achieving ecological restoration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dam removal is more widely accepted and implemented across Europe. • More rivers are restored, measured by increased river flow, biodiversity, and habitat gain.

Eligible projects - strategic area 2: Policy advocacy

Aim: To support work that ensures that dam removal is incorporated into EU and national policies, to support policy implementation, and for policy makers to better understand and support dam removal.

Problems to be addressed	Interventions should address one or more of the following:	Outcomes	Overall outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public institutions favour building new dams rather than removing them. • Changing current policies and laws is not a political priority for decision makers. • Legislative framework (EU and national levels) does not facilitate dam removal. • Often there are no policies at the national or basin-scale that promote the removal of (obsolete) dams. • Dam removal policies are not being effectively implemented. • Dam removal is hampered (constrained) by red tape / bureaucracy. • Public sector funding is insufficient and fragmented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate dam removal into national and EU policies and legislation. • Support the implementation of dam removal policies at the operational level – national and river basin levels. • Resolve issues that are preventing effective policy implementation e.g. missing guidance on prioritising free flowing rivers. • Explain the relevance of dam removal to policy makers and water managers. • Encourage policy makers to support dam removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU and national / regional policies require dam removal to be implemented. • Dam removal policies are effectively implemented. • More policy makers support dam removal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dam removal is more widely accepted and implemented across Europe. • More rivers are restored, measured by increased river flow, biodiversity, and habitat gain.

Eligible projects - strategic area 3: Communications and awareness raising

Aim: To support targeted communications that help to build enthusiasm and highlight the benefits of dam removal.

Problems being addressed	Interventions should address one or more of the following:	• Outcomes	Overall outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders, the general public and government are not aware of the ecological importance of dam removal • Stakeholders, the general public and government are not aware of the benefits of dam removal. • 'Society' does not care about dams. • Limited number of organisations supporting and promoting dam removal in Europe. • People are afraid of change and the perceived risks of dam removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote dam removal as a beneficial tool with ecological, economic and community benefits. • Create greater public awareness. • Build enthusiasm for dam removal amongst those who do not understand the benefits. • Encourage others to fund and/or remove dams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New audiences (policy makers, general public, private sector) are interested and supportive of dam removal. • Increased number of organisations supporting and promoting dam removal in Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dam removal is more widely accepted and implemented across Europe. • More rivers are restored, measured by increased river flow, biodiversity, and habitat gain.

2.4 Eligible costs

The total budget for our support in Category C is €2.45 million between 2023 – 2027 – approximately €500,000 / year. We wish to remain flexible and support the most compelling projects that demonstrate the best potential to meet the programme's aims and we expect applicants to demonstrate value for money.

Applicants will need to submit a budget and schedule of activities spreadsheet which explains activities and costs in detail. The budget and schedule of activities should be final and cannot be changed after submitting your proposal.

All costs should be in Euros and the programme will transfer funds in Euros.

2.5 Eligible timeframes

All projects must be completed within three years from contract signing.

3. Assessment procedure

Category C applicants are required to provide information under the following headings:

1. Project title
2. Lead / Supporting partners
3. Goal(s) of the project
4. Detailed description of activities/interventions
5. Why is this project important and needed?
6. Detailed description of outputs
7. Detailed description of outcomes
8. Risks
9. Audience and beneficiaries
10. Project replicability/ knowledge transfer
11. Duration of project
12. Amount requested
13. Budget and Schedule of Activities

A full description of the requirements is provided within the application form.

All applications will be reviewed by the programme's Grant Selection Panel. Scores are assigned to applicant answers according to the strength of the answer against the criteria presented in the application form and the overall goals of the programme. All answers must be clear, specific, and concise. Scores from all reviewers are added together and a final average score is obtained.

High scoring applications will:

1. Clearly demonstrate why the stated interventions are top priorities to ensure that dam removal is more widely accepted and implemented across Europe i.e. contribute to the overall outcomes stated in section 2.
2. How the stated interventions will **actually** lead to dam removal and/or more dams being removed.
3. Clearly state the beneficiaries (who will benefit) of the interventions.

4. Lead to outcomes that have national or continental rather than just local reach.
5. Impact regions or countries where awareness of dam removal is currently poor and there is a lack of will to remove dams.
6. Impact regions or countries where increased dam removals will result in exceptionally high ecological gain.
7. Stand out as unique or important.
8. Have wider catalysing impacts / result in outcomes that have practical applicability across Europe.
9. Foster innovative partnerships between different sectors e.g. public / policy makers, private, NGOs, academia, local communities.
10. Enable the Open Rivers Programme to be more effective in meeting its [mission](#).

4. Application procedure

a) Logon to our application portal

All applications should be made online via our [application portal](#).

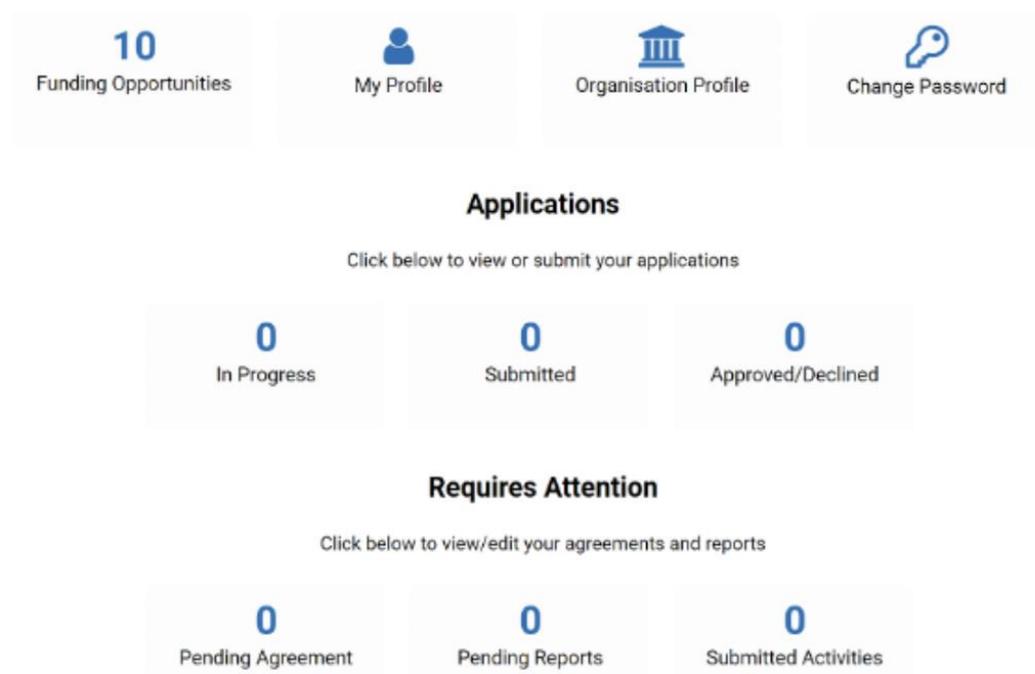
New users

Click on the 'register here' button and complete all the required fields. You will then receive an email with a link to create a password.

Existing users

Log in with the email and the password that you selected when you signed up.

Your application portal starts with a homepage like the example below:



From this page, you can click on any of the blue text as follows:

Funding Opportunities

Apply for a grant and see all of the grant types that are currently inviting applications.

My Profile / Organisation profile

Access and edit your own profile or that of your organisation

Change Password

In progress / submitted / approved / declined

Contains applications that are currently being drafted, have been submitted, and have been approved/declined by the programme.

Requires attention

This section applies to grantees and highlights when an action needs to be taken to sign a contract and submit a progress report. It includes a record of previously submitted activities.

b) Click on 'Funding Opportunities' to apply and then '**Apply Now**' under grant category C.

Please note:

- Every question will explain what is required and provide useful information to guide your answer.
- You cannot apply for multiple grants in different categories (e.g. A, B and C) in one application. To apply for multiple grants in different categories you must use separate applications.
- You can save incomplete applications and return later. The GMS will allow for a draft application to be saved and you can review it at a later date before submitting it.
- You will not be able to submit your application until all sections are completed and mandatory uploads are created.
- **Review your application before submitting it.** Consider asking someone external to review your application. Does it make sense? Can they remember the key points? Please remember that the proposal will form part of your final contract with the Open Rivers Programme. You should ensure that all information, activities, and budgets are accurate and final.

c) Submit your application

- Press the submit button at the bottom of the application before the advertised deadline. The GMS will not allow you to submit once the deadline has passed!
- After you have submitted your application, you will receive an automated response from the programme management team acknowledging receipt of your application.
- Once your application has been submitted for review, you will not be able to make any adjustments.

d) Download a pdf of your application

If you would like to download a version of your application locally to your computer, follow these steps:

1. Create a login for the Grant Management System or log in using your existing credentials.
2. Click on the grant category you would like to apply for to start the application.
3. Once in the application, you may start filling in answers to the questions or click save draft right away. This will save the current draft of your application and allow you to finish it at your convenience.
4. Once you have saved a draft, a blue button that says "EoI Summary" or "Application Summary" appears at the top of the application. If you click this, it will download a pdf of the saved version of your application so you may view the questions offline and share between project partners.
5. **Please remember to complete your application via the application portal** as this is the only way that you can apply to the programme.

If you have any queries, please contact us: applications@openrivers.eu

Thank you for reading this guide and we look forward to receiving your application.