

## iCASP Community of Practitioners, Funding event, Bradford 20/01/2020

### Future funding discussion

The delegates at the 5<sup>th</sup> Yorkshire iCASP NFM community of practitioners discussed the following questions in the afternoon session of the event. Key points are bulleted below:

#### 1. Which mechanisms would you now look at for future funding NFM projects?

- Forest Carbon – connection of investment to the environment; peat not just trees; flexibility; long term viability/revenue payments.
  - Organisations with land holding opportunities to do carbon offsetting themselves.
  - Direct investment to a delivery organisation who understand the requirements to get best environmental benefit.
  - Carbon offsetting – CSRs of private organisations
  - Easier than asking for EA NFM funding
- EnTrade:
  - Consider putting forward projects – need clarity on process of reaching the market & best way to put forward bids. How can we formally link up with these types of funders?
- Green Bonds:
  - Applicable at council level - requires understanding of economic benefit schemes.
- Woodland management programmes – brand as pilot programmes and the requirements to provide evidence if it will work, will be less onerous i.e 90% of funding could be spent on monitoring but could be delivered by volunteers
- Grant application process - need to involve business
- Must take the time to develop a catchment network - catchment partnerships already exist, could be brokers
- Grant in aid
- Stewardship
- Non- government funding
- Payment for Outcomes - try to align funding to the environment as a whole and not just one individual issue?
- Health funding – mental health and wellbeing
- Housing infrastructure fund 106
- Private developer housing
- Highways Agency
- Public appeals
- Woodland Trust
- Green bonds are not really an option.
- Philanthropic investment – from both companies and private individuals. People genially interested in helping the environment.

## **2. What challenges might your organisation face using any of these mechanisms to fund NFM?**

- Reverse auction schemes
  - What attracts farmers in? how can they be engaged better? Concerns about transparency/inconsistent cost.
- Match timescales of provider and project constraints – need to be flexible.
- Upfront cost for applying for funding
- Funding sources having conflicting requirements to ensure we are not double funding or counting
- Strong evidence for funding (baseline data required).
- Not having time to baseline or deliver properly – requirements from funders want products in the ground and often in a short period of time e.g the end of the financial year.
- EA funding structured towards hard engineering and capital investment
- How do we package NFM accordingly
- £3 per tree for tree planting but how do we ensure maintenance? What are land owners being paid to do? Can we do low maintenance NFM
- Emphasis on individual organisations to collect data for evidence
- Reluctance of landowners to sign up to agreements
- Lack of clarity from government agencies on what they would like to achieve
- Market broken – difficult to get the private sector output - multiple agencies with competing outcomes.
- Different cost benefit analysis needed
- Green bonds need to come down to scale and not just operate in >10millions - could be difficult to monitor return as centred around societal goods.
- Rapid change
- Need long lead in time is over optimistic
- Land conversions take time
- Small organisations taking the work on
- Need to reward the first movers and encourage the most reluctant.

## **3. Do you know of other sustainable funding mechanisms/best practice we should consider?**

- Smaller local charitable foundations
- What will replace EU funding?
  - Local Authorities to make local levy more local (section 106 more local). Community infrastructure levy.
  - Carbon offsetting opportunities
  - Land management - engage farmers with more environmental alternatives to current practices.
- Parish councils as methods for flooding monitoring and maintenance
- The ‘message’ how to talk about NFM and flooding in the wider medium
- Multiple benefits, biodiversity improvement, wider funding mechanisms
- Heritage lottery fund
- Peoples postcode lottery - registered charities can apply for this and it is fairly flexible
- Citizen science & smart technology to help with monitoring and data collection
- Use of insurance cost to support funding NFM
- Businesses funding adopt a river scheme etc

**4. What other support would help organisations/catchment partnerships secure funding for NFM?**

- Revenue funding – maintenance and sustainability
- Should be an obligation to share data/evidence base/lesson learnt.
- Open sourced information/information HUB
- Funding development officers – engagement and monitoring
- Providing guidance for monitoring (CaBA, iCASP)
- Need to feed back up the chain that change is needed - funding rules do not fit what we are trying to achieve currently
- Qualify ecosystem services value of NFM - what are we selling to fit a corporate world
- Communicate the benefits of NFM more widely
- Auctions
- Education
- Linking big companies and bring it local
- Save money by pooling resources - value the in kind contribution and expertise that we don't have in house
- Look at the joint benefits that are outside of the direct benefits - could become an unwieldy thing that you have to try to manage.