

# The Countryside Stewardship facilitation fund (CSFF) – Implementation example SOUTH PENNINES



The Countryside Stewardship facilitation fund (CSFF) provides funding for a person or organisation (Facilitator) to help a group of farmers and other land managers work together to improve the natural environment at a landscape rather than single-farm scale and to achieve greater improvements than individual holdings could on their own

## Data and Facts – The CSFF Contract

**Involved parties:** Three major types of partners are involved in the CSFF group; farmers, network facilitator and funding body. The facilitator of the group is employed to bring the group together, organise meetings and invite key stakeholders and experts to provide training as well as bring new members into the scheme. They also oversee the expenses of participants and will apply for funding renewal as appropriate. Natural England provides funding, oversees the functioning of the group and provides crucial information on pressing environmental needs in the region and the actions of other CSFF groups in the area.

**Management requirements for farmers:** The maximum salary that the CSFF facilitator can get is £50k. While there is no set requirement for numbers of meeting between the members, progress reports are required every quarter along with expenses claims.

**Controls/monitoring:** Results are not monitored yet, but monitoring and evaluation is conducted through the claim expenses of the CSFF facilitators. Natural England determines whether farmers and CSFFs' case is offering good value for money.

**Conditions of participation:** The minimum number of farmers needed for a CSFF to be set up and be eligible for funding is 4 and the network should have no more than 80 members. The land covered by all members' farms must exceed 2,000 hectares; land cannot be included if it belongs to a public body. The farmer's/land manager's land should be part of a catchment area to be included.

## Implementation example – Delivering multiple environmental benefits in the South Pennines

Several key environmental benefits from the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund (CSFF) presence in the South Pennines area have been identified in order to improve habitat connectivity across and adjacent to Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and the South Pennines Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These activities include moorland restoration and enhancement, grassland habitat creation, and enhancing and expanding riparian habitats to benefit flood risk management and water quality while addressing sub-optimal land management



Credit: N. Green



Credit: D. Warland

### Problem description

The South Pennines network includes areas of protected status including SSSIs, SACs and SPAs. However unlike many other CSFFs in the Yorkshire region it is not in a National Park so does not benefit from the additional Government funding that those areas receive. Farming incomes in this area are built on a long history of mixed livelihoods, from weaving on hand looms to working in the mills during the industrial revolution. The requirement for farmers to supplement their income with out-of-farm activities continues, and can lead to sub-optimal land management. The CSFF strives for a future free from the threat of financial constraints and is aiming for continued land stewardship not intensification of farming.

### COLLECTIVE



### CONTRACT

The financing party is the government (with EU-funding).

It is a public – private contract.

**Contract conclusion:**  
Written agreement



**Payment mechanism:**  
Incentive payments



**Financing party:**  
Government with EU-funding

**Funding/Payments:**  
Government funding, up to £500 per year, per farmer in the CSFF group to cover costs of training and attending meetings.

**Length of participation in scheme:** The length of the contract is 3 years



## PUBLIC GOODS



Landscape and scenery



(Farmland) biodiversity



Soil quality (and health)



Resilience to natural hazards



Rural viability and vitality



Cultural heritage



Water quality

## Further PG's

Woodland creation and management

## LOCATION

UNITED KINGDOM



North Yorkshire  
UKE2

## Summary

The network was initially set up by a farm advisor who had good contacts with farmers, local authorities and other large landowners. Land managers in this area have previously struggled to access funding because it is not located in a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which receive additional funding from the Government. This is further compounded by the small size of many of the farms which makes it hard for them to apply to certain farm support payment schemes.

A particular highlight of this network was working with a local council that had been allocated £2 million following the 2015 floods. The group worked to ensure £500k was allocated to an Agri-Environmental Scheme (AES) which the network developed and Calderdale Council oversees. The network has also worked with the Woodland Trust to enhance the woodland creation offer.

## Objectives

- Improvements in water quality, in particular reductions in sediment and phosphate throughout the catchment, from Natural Flood Management measures
- Increased biodiversity in blanket bog, upland heath and hay meadows
- Improvements in habitats for species, in particular wading birds
- Training to provide greater knowledge and understanding of flood risk reduction and to build a holistic view of the catchment

**Participation:** At its outset in 2016 the network had 8 members and has grown to over 60 with a further 20 non-members attending meetings. The total land area encompassed by the network is 8,630 hectares made up of clough woodlands and upland livestock farms; it includes SSSI, SPA and SAC-designated sites to benefit habitat connectivity.

**Risk/uncertainties:** Seasonal fluctuations due to the nature of agricultural activities means

participation of members varies throughout the year. A large proportion of the farmers in the network rely on out-of-farm income and additional jobs meaning their time is limited for participation in the network. Most of the farmers are heavily reliant on environmental payment schemes which in some cases makes up the majority of the farm's income. There is a possibility that fellow farmers are viewed as competitors and not as collaborators.

## Context features

**Landscape and climate:** The South Pennines CSFF land holdings are characterized by mainly upland farms 250 – 400m above sea level. These include a variety of habitats and land types ranging from upland heath, blanket bog, moorlands, riparian habitats, acid grasslands, low-input grasslands and pastures for livestock which is the major activity in the area. Towards the bottom of the catchment there are clough woodlands: woodlands that are in valleys connecting open moorland to the towns below. The area encompassed includes SSSI, SPA and SAC-designated sites to benefit habitat connectivity.

**Farm structure:** The South Pennines CSFF network land holdings are in an upland area with mainly livestock, predominantly sheep with some beef cattle, used for meat, and a small number of dairy farms and arable in the area. The sheep are usually not finished in the area but sold on for fattening in lower ground where the grassland can provide sufficient nutrients; this creates an obstacle for farmers who wish to set up community supported agriculture schemes or sell direct to the consumer as they are unable to produce animals ready for slaughter. There is no organized forestry in the area and most of the woodlands are under-managed. Many of the farms in the network are owned although some are rented.





## ASSESSMENT OF CONTRACT SOLUTION



There are a mixture of different contract solutions being operated by CSFF members and an overall assessment of their success is not possible at this time. The South Pennines CSFF group of land managers benefit from the proximity with other CSFFs that allow for positive spill-overs and common meetings between the groups. Many of the targets are difficult to evaluate as the results will become apparent over a long period of time, however, member feedback is positive and attendance at monthly meetings increases month on month. So far over 30 meetings have taken place covering topics ranging from the Climate Emergency to the marketing of rare breed mutton.

## SWOT analysis



# Main external factors influencing success

Political/governance, economic/market, social, technological, legal and environmental factors can all have a strong impact on the success of contract solutions. In this case study an in-depth analysis found that the following, selected factors were of specific importance.

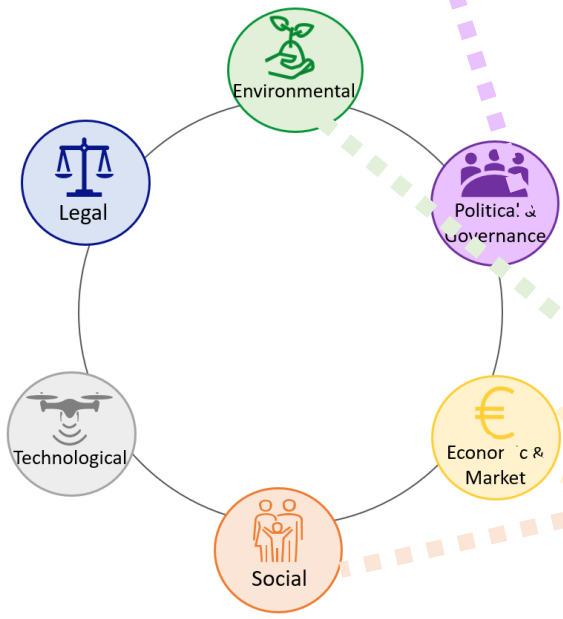


**The indirect impact of the CAP:**  
 In the cases of the CSFF networking, the long history in the area, with farmers being part of AES, has allowed for farmers to obtain better knowledge and training on how to better deliver on these various AES, given the farmers' increased reliance upon them.

**Small farms with high dependence on subsidies:**  
 The majority of the South Pennines CSFF network farmers have small holdings (average size is 30 hectares) and are involved in sheep and beef farming while there are no dairy farmers or arable/mixed farmers in the network either. Given the grass quality, **sheep are being sold elsewhere for fattening which results in lower market prices for the local farmers.**

As a result farmers have been **engaging in other economic activities to supplement their farm income** with the majority of network members having such **"out-of-farm" income**. The low price of beef is also resulting in reduced farm income. Additionally, farmers in the area have been **dependent on income from various environmental management schemes**, mainly the Basic Payment Scheme (on average, 75% of farm income comes from payment schemes).

*From all farming activities in the wider Yorkshire area, the activities that the CSFF members partake (grazing livestock) is by far the least profitable one, generating £19.3k per year, lower than the England average.*



**Brexit and new schemes: influence on contract solution and development**  
 The announced agri-environment scheme in England are intended to replace financial support to farmers and involve them in new and innovative ways in the delivery of public goods, both in local and landscape-wide projects. These scheme is called Environment Land Management (ELM) scheme and has three different categories, starting with farm-level interventions all the way to landscape recovery and restoration across multiple holdings. This scheme's payment levels and frequency, although not yet announced, are intended to replace the soon-to-be phased-out (by 2024) Basic Payment Scheme payments for farmers that have enrolled in an ELM scheme. This development would mean that English farmers would first have to carry out some activities that support and/or delivery agri-environment climate public goods so that they can receive their payment.

**Constraints by the landscape:**  
 Due to the landscape, farmers in the South Pennines CSFF network cannot diversify their production and are faced with land abandonment in neighbouring farms that further impedes delivery of public goods.