HBLB Non-Fixture Related Grants

Guidance Notes for 2027 Grant Applications

(for projects commencing 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027)

Introduction

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB), operating in accordance with the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 (as amended), is required to assess and collect monetary contributions from bookmakers and betting exchange providers and to apply them for the purposes conducive to any one or more of:

- The improvement of breeds of horses
- The advancement or encouragement of veterinary science or veterinary education
- The improvement of horseracing.

Proposals for grants for the period 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027 are now invited. This process **excludes** racing fixture-related items such as prize money, regulation and integrity grants or items falling within HBLB's veterinary science or veterinary education budget and the rare breeds society grants which have their own processes. This document provides guidance on making a grant application and how those applications are assessed by HBLB, with final decisions taken by the HBLB Board.

The HBLB strives to achieve good practice in grant management including reference, where appropriate, to the Government Functional Standards for Grants.

Eligibility Criteria

HBLB requires information on the applicant's governance structure, financial and operational history and geographical location. HBLB grants are only available for projects which can demonstrate an impact on Great British racing.

Grants are typically for a period of 12 months, although longer or shorter periods may be considered.

HBLB typically funds organisations. If you are an individual considering applying for funding, please contact the Grant Team for an initial discussion about your project at grants.admin@hblb.org.uk.

Salary Guidelines

HBLB typically awards grants for project activity and not for direct payment of salaries. Please see the following guidance on salary funding:

- HBLB expects salary costs to be met by the applicant from its own or from non-HBLB resources and, where this is not possible, an explanation is sought as to why. Where salary costs are being sought for new roles, a benchmarking report for the suggested salary is supplied by the applicant.

- Where HBLB agrees to meet salary costs, HBLB will provide a fixed sum towards administration from which agreed salary costs are itemised.

- In the event of support of a pilot project where staff costs are a necessary resource cost, the salary is agreed at the outset, with no annual review, and any uplift is met by the applicant, until an agreed review date e.g. 3 years.

- Where any salary rise is agreed by HBLB from year to year, it is capped at the average applicable to HBLB staff for that year.

Information Technology (IT) Project Guidelines

Applicants are advised that any IT related projects submitted to HBLB may be subject to assessment from a third-party subject matter expert. Applicants will be required to evidence the project has no likelihood of duplication within racing; to justify the project costs; and demonstrate value for money.

Timeline for 2027 Applications

The 2027 grant application, evaluation and decision process will run as follows, although the decision date remains subject to amendment and is at the discretion of the HBLB Board:

Grant application window	13 July 2026 – 24 August 2026
Assessment of grant applications	25 August 2026 – 6 October 2026
HBLB Board decisions	Mid-October
Notification to grant applicants by	November

All applications **must** be received by 5pm on **24 August 2026.**

HBLB Funding Priorities

HBLB has published its next three-year business plan, with a focus on a set of Racing Outcomes. The Board supports the advancement of these through its grant funding. How the grant application contributes, in a tangible way, towards these Outcomes will form part of the assessment process. They are grouped into four themes:

- Generate interest in Racing:
    - Horserace betting turnover from UK regulated bookmakers
    - Crowd numbers at racecourses & TV viewing numbers

    - Number of owners
    - Number of horses in training

- Sustain valued employment and investment in relevant skills in Racing:

    - Number of British-bred foals
    - Number of vacancies filled in Racing's key roles
    - Racing's diversity & inclusion
    - People wellbeing and engagement

- Drive high quality care and support for the horse in Racing:

    - Horse welfare perception rating
    - Impact of investment in completed research projects

- Continually enhance the reputation of Racing:

    - Racing's integrity perception rating
    - Racing's contribution to environmental impacts
    - Racing's favourability perception rating

Format and Content of Grant Applications

Grant applications must be made online using the Blackbaud Grant Management System (GMS).

Once registered with the GMS you will be able to apply for a Non-Fixture Related Grant. The Grant application process is split into four sections; Applicant Details; Project Information; Project Management; and Finance which must all be completed. **Each distinct project requires an individual application.**

Please refer to the following notes when completing the application. The sub-headings below correspond to the different sections in the application process. Where the process is self-explanatory, no notes are given.

Applicants should have regard to the fact that a grant application will be evaluated on the evidence provided.

Applicants Details: Governance Structure
Please outline your organisation's governance structure including legal status and members of your management committee or Board.

Applicants Details: Financial Policy and Controllers
Please outline your organisation's financial controls including the named financial controllers.

Applicants Details: Referees
Applications must include details of two referees that **may** be approached by HBLB to evaluate the applicants' ability to deliver the outcomes and outputs set out in the application.

Project Information: Project Details
Applicants must provide a concise summary of the project. Please include specific detail on, what your project is delivering, how it will be delivered and what impact is expected over the course of the programme.

Project Information: Evidenced Need
Applications must describe a strong and reasoned case that demonstrates specific need for the project.

Project Information: Project Impact
Please outline the long-term effects you expect the project to achieve including any complementary changes, resulting from the project meeting its objectives.

Project Information: Project Objectives
Applications must clearly state what the project aims to achieve by the end of the projects term.

Project Management: Racing Outcomes
Applications must indicate which of the 13 HBLB Racing Outcomes will be significantly impacted by the successful delivery of the project. There is no minimum number of Racing Outcomes to which a project must contribute in order to be eligible to apply, and it is not necessarily the case that the greater number of Racing Outcomes impacted, the more likely it is to receive funding. It is quality, not quantity of the impact that will be assessed during the evaluation process.

Where significant impact is indicated, evidence must be provided as to how your project will improve the Racing Outcome and how it will be measured. In addition to the KPIs, these will also form part of the quarterly reporting process.

Project Management: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
For each grant application a minimum of five KPIs and maximum of ten are required. These will be used to measure grant performance and will form part of the quarterly reporting process.

KPIs should contain:

- The expected outputs and outcomes of the activity, with milestone dates for expected achievement of each.
  An outcome is what the project/activity wants to achieve. Outputs are the activities or products/items that contribute to achieving the outcome – the steps on the way.
- How progress will be measured (including baseline data).

All KPIs and objectives/goals should be SMART. **SMART** means:

- Specific (clear, well defined)
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timebound (i.e. within a clearly defined timeline).

KPIs provided in the application may be subject to further discussion with HBLB should funding be granted. In providing KPIs, the applicant must consider:

- the specific points during the activities that lend themselves to assessment;
- the key milestones that will clearly define ongoing success;
- the likely data and results that will be available at those points of assessment; and
- the points at which the applicant may be required to make payments for the activities.

The number of KPIs in total should be adequate to measure progress and impact but not excessive.

There are a number of useful guides to setting KPIs and SMART objectives/targets on the internet, for example:
Key performance indicators (KPIs): What they are and how to use them (microsoft.com)
What is a KPI? Definition, Best Practices, and Examples | Klipfolio
How to Set SMART Objectives – SMART Goals and Targets (revolutionlearning.co.uk)
What are SMART objectives and how do I apply them? (professionalacademy.com)

There is also guidance on how to define and measure impact, for example:
3 examples of brilliant impact reporting | The Fundraiser (charitychoice.co.uk)

Project Management: Risks & Mitigations
A risk assessment must be carried out and a list of the key strategic and operational risks to the successful implementation of the project must be provided along with proposed mitigation measures.

Project Management: Supporting Documentation
Up to five documents supporting the project can be uploaded as part of the application process.

Project Management: Future Sustainability
Please outline the future sustainability of this project and describe how it might be funded.

Project Management: Post Project Evaluation
Applications must describe how the project will be evaluated.

Finance: Funding Information
Applications must provide details of any funding received or applied for from other funding sources for the same or similar activities.

Should a grant application be successful, the applicant will be asked to make a declaration that the same project work is **NOT**, in part or fully, being double funded by HBLB and any other entity.

Finance: Budget Details
Applicants must upload a financial budget spreadsheet for each application providing a detailed expenditure breakdown. A budget for the whole project must be provided, broken down by month/quarter and by expenditure type. The financial budget spreadsheet must also contain a proposed schedule for the drawdown of HBLB grant funding.

HBLB wishes to link payment of funding to the achievement of project milestones. Using the milestones and KPIs set out in the application please provide a proposed payment schedule with dates and amounts. A small amount of the funding (usually not exceeding 10% of the total requested) can be requested on signature of the grant agreement to provide funds to initiate the project. The final grant payment (usually not exceeding 10% of the total requested) will not be payable until HBLB are in receipt of the final grant report and any other required documentation.

The payment schedule will be agreed on an individual project by project basis.

Note: HBLB is not registered for VAT. HBLB expects that all grants issued will be outside the scope of VAT as the amounts granted are given freely and HBLB neither derives any benefit from the grant nor receives any services as part of the arrangement. If you are unsure if VAT applies it is recommended you consult your tax adviser. Please provide all financials net of VAT, or gross if applicable.

Finance: Financial Narrative
Please provide narrative to evidence value for money for the project. Include detail on why this approach is being chosen over others with reference to the Four E's Framework: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.

- Economy: demonstrate efforts to ensure costs are reasonable considering the required quality of the goods and services to be procured.
- Efficiency: provide evidence that the implementation process is appropriate to deliver its outputs in the smoothest way possible.
- Effectiveness: provide evidence that the project is achieving results that are transformational and sustainable.
- Equity: provide evidence that specific measures have been put in place to address the priorities of the most vulnerable.

HBLB uses the HM Treasury Green Book definition – the optimal use of public resources to achieve a given set of objectives.

Submission of Applications

Once the four sections of the application process are complete, applicants will be able to agree and submit applications online in the Blackbaud Grant Management System.

Any questions about the application process should be sent to the following email address: grants.admin@hblb.org.uk.

Assessment of Grant Applications

HBLB is committed to ensuring that the assessment process is carried out in an evidence-based, non-discriminatory, and timely manner. Grant applications will be assessed by the HBLB Executive and, where appropriate, relevant bodies and interested parties may be consulted with copies of an application provided to them as necessary. A set of recommendations will be made to the HBLB Board for decision.

HBLB may examine recent published and audited accounts of any applicant organisation whilst assessing eligibility.

Awarding of Grant Funding

If the application is approved for funding, a Grant Agreement Letter will be issued to the successful applicant. Funding is subject to the acceptance of the terms of the Grant Agreement Letter, including the grant terms and conditions and that:

- The project continues to make satisfactory progress.
- The applicant provides quarterly update reports (including financial updates) in a timely manner.

Rejected Applications

In the event that the HBLB Board rejects the application, HBLB undertakes to provide a reasonable explanation of the decision to the applicant.

Within two weeks of this, if the applicant considers that HBLB has not followed an appropriate process in reaching its decision, the applicant may notify this in writing to HBLB and the Board will decide whether the application, unchanged from the original application, needs to be reassessed.

If, as a separate consideration to this, the applicant has new information that was not available at the time of assessment of the application by HBLB, this should also be provided to HBLB within two weeks and the Executive will consider on a case-by-case basis whether to bring forward a revised application to the Board.

Performance Reporting

All approved grants are required to provide quarterly update reports via the grant management system. Tutorial support will be provided for successful applicants by HBLB for the grant manager to enable their completion. Reports will focus on progress made against the stated KPIs with specific reference to targets and milestone dates; progress made against Racing Outcomes; identification of any new issues or risks as the work progresses; and a financial reconciliation of expenditure for the reporting period and expenditure against budget/forecast for the grant term. Quarterly reports are required to be submitted to HBLB by the 15th day of the month following the quarterly period i.e. by 15 April for the period 1 January to 31 March.

A final report is required on completion of the funded activities. The final report will focus on the extent to which objectives were met, the impact achieved by the activities and a financial reconciliation. This report can be produced internally by the organisation applying for the grant or by external parties. Any costs for an external evaluation must be met by the applying organisation or included within the project budget.

More details will be provided to grantees within the Grant Agreement Letter and Terms and Conditions.