Management options and capital items

This is an old version of the page

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Introduction

A wide range of management options and capital items are available under the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme. Management options are ongoing activities that are carried out throughout the length of your contract. They are funded at standard rates through an annual payment in each year of the contract. Capital items are one-off activities that are claimed for and paid once they have been satisfactorily completed.

The management options are listed in the Table below and the capital items are listed on the Capital Items guidance .

There are rules and management requirements for each option, which must be followed over the course of your contract. Please carefully read the individual pages for each option and item that you are interested in, to check if you can meet all the requirements. This includes the requirements at application stage and the requirements when carrying out works on the ground.

Each option and capital item page also has a link to Supporting Guidance with recommendations and best practice. It is important to read this before you prepare your application.

Only land which meets the individual option eligibility requirements can be entered for the option. For example, you cannot apply for Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds on rough grazing.

Many options and capital items require you to submit certain supporting documents (PDF, Size: 42.4 kB) with your online application (for example, a Moorland Management Plan). It’s important to allow yourself enough time to prepare these before the closing date.

Ensure that your application includes any capital items which are essential to support a particular management option. For example, the Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds option requires the Creation of Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds capital item.

For some options, there is the ability to undertake activities which are generally not permitted, where you have prior approval before you carry out the activity, e.g. “do not apply lime, unless you have prior approval”**.** Prior approval is only granted in exceptional circumstances; for example, when the case is made that an activity is required to maintain or enhance biodiversity value. It is up to the case officer to assess if the activity proposed is acceptable. Justification will need to be provided as part of your application. You may wish to discuss the activity proposed before submission, to ensure that it is appropriate. Otherwise, there is a risk that the case officer will not approve it. If the activity is approved, the AECS contract itself acts as the “prior approval”.

You cannot apply for options or items that you are required to complete as part of a statutory or legislative obligation. This would include, for example, works required under a habitat or environmental management plan as part of a wind farm (or similar) planning approval.

You cannot apply for options or items which would result in double funding or would be incompatible with other activities on the same land. This could include activities related to Greening requirements. Please see information and examples in the Double Funding and Option Incompatibility guidance which also has a link to a compatibility checker spreadsheet.

If you wish to apply for the Habitat Mosaic or Species-rich Grassland option on rough grazings you must obtain NatureScot endorsement **before** submitting your application. Please refer to the Endorsements guidance .

If you have a Scheduled Monument on your land, you can find advice in this pdf on options and capital items that may be relevant: HES Guidance on AECS and Scheduled Monuments (PDF, Size: 663.7 kB) . You can also find more information in the Designations guidance .

You can find guidance on funding, claims and payments for management options and capital items on the Claims and Payments guidance .

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Targeted options

Some options and capital items are targeted (restricted to certain parts of Scotland where they will deliver greatest benefit). The individual option and capital item pages have links to the target maps.

Please use the **targeting tool (MS Excel, Size: 12.3 MB)** to check which options are available on your holding. Please note: to use the targeting tool, you must download the file by clicking the link above, then selecting 'download file'. The targeting tool also lists any targeted capital items that are available on your holding.

You must separately enter each location code which you wish to include in your AECS application, as some options may only be available on some holdings. If you find your location code is not appearing on the targeting tool, please contact your local RPID office for assistance.

For targeted arable options, the target maps include the entire upland area. This is to allow for arable activity on the in-bye in these areas. It does not mean all the upland area is eligible for these options.

If your holding is outwith the target area of a particular option or capital item you cannot include it in your application, unless there are exceptional circumstances and you have obtained an endorsement from NatureScot. You should request the endorsement at least a month before the submit deadline. The Endorsement guidance explains how to do this and lists the options that can considered.

If you have any queries, please contact your local RPID or NatureScot office .

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Arable options

- Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife
- Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds
- Forage Brassica Crops for Farmland Birds

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- Stubbles Followed by Green Manure in an Arable Rotation
- Retention of Winter Stubbles for Wildlife and Water Quality
- Beetlebanks
- Grass Strips in Arable Fields
- Water Margins in Arable Fields
- Cropped Machair

Grassland options

- Species-rich Grassland Management
- Water Margins in Grassland Fields
- Wader and Wildlife Mown Grassland
- Wader Grazed Grassland
- Corn Buntings Mown Grassland
- Corncrake Mown Grassland
- Corncrake Grazing Management
- Management of Cover for Corncrake
- Chough Mown Grassland
- Chough Grazing Management
- Hen Harrier Grassland Management

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Upland, peatland, moorland and heath options

- Moorland Management
- Stock Control for the environmental management of designated sites (formerly called Stock Disposal)
- Away Wintering Sheep
- Summer Hill Grazing of Cattle
- Heath Management (Coastal, Serpentine, Lowland and Special Interest)
- Predator Control
- Wildcat Friendly Predator Control

Wetland and bog options

- Wetland Management
- Lowland Bog Management
- Management of Buffer Areas for Fens and Lowland Bogs

Farmland habitat and feature options

- Management or Restoration of Hedgerows
- Creation of Hedgerows
- Habitat Mosaic Management
- Managing Scrub of Conservation Value
- Tall-herb Vegetation Management
- Ancient Wood Pasture

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Small unit options

- Conservation Management of Small Units
- Cattle Management on Small Units

Control of invasive non-native species options

- Control of Invasive Non-native Plant Species – Primary Treatment
- Control of Invasive Non-native Plant Species – Follow-up Monitoring and Treatment
- Rhododendron Control – Manual Eradication – Light, Medium or Difficult
- Rhododendron Control – Mechanised Eradication – Light, Medium or Difficult

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- Rhododendron Control – Stem Injection Eradication – Medium or Difficult
- Rhododendron Control – Foliar Spray / Treatment
- Rhododendron Control – Follow-up Treatment

Managing water quality and flood risk options

- Converting Arable at Risk of Erosion or Flooding to Low-input Grassland
- Management of Floodplains
- Alternative Watering
- Coastal Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal
- Hard Standings for Troughs and Gateways
- Livestock Crossing
- Livestock Tracks
- Managing Steading Drainage and Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Pesticide Handling Facilities
- Restoring (Protecting) River Banks
- River Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal
- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Pond
- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Sediment Traps and Bunds
- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales
- Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Wetland
- Water-use Efficiency – Irrigation Lagoon

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Organic options

- Organic Farming: Conversion
- Organic Farming: Maintenance

Improving Public Access (IPA) options/items are not available

IPA is not re-opening for applications, therefore please do not apply for IPA options/items.

All capital items (note that some capital items are currently suspended or restricted)

All capital items

Recent changes

Section	Change
Whole page	Updated for 2026

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