

# How to apply

**This is an old version of the page**

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

The version of this page applicable to the AECS 2021 restricted round can be found in the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme full guidance archive.

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## Introduction

The 2022 Agri-Environment Climate Scheme application round opens on Monday 24 January 2022 and is due to close for all applications on Friday 29 April 2022 apart from the exceptions below.

The closing date is extended to 31 May 2022 for collaborative applications that meet the following requirements:

- It must be a completely new collaborative project and not simply a continuation of one which has already been receiving AECS funding.
- The project must include five or more 2022-round applications from RPID registered businesses.

This is in recognition of the additional time involved to facilitate collaborative action with many businesses. However, if new applications are added onto an existing collaborative project then the 29 April deadline applies. Please note that if you use the 31 May deadline but your application is considered not to be collaborative, it will be rejected and will need to be re-submitted for consideration in a future application round. Therefore, if you have any concerns about the collaborative arrangements we strongly advise you to submit your application(s) by 29 April, 2022.

Further information on collaboration can be found under the Scoring Criteria [guidance](#) .

Applications for [Slurry Storage](#) can be made during the main AECS window (Monday 24 January, 2022 to Friday 29 April, 2022), however, the deadline for stand-alone slurry store applications is Friday 24 June 2022.

Applications for Improving Public Access may be made from Monday 28 February 2022 to Friday 29 April 2022 inclusive. Further information on IPA can be found under [the IPA guidance page](#) .

**All supporting documentation should be submitted by the relevant application deadline as outlined above.** Consider early on what supporting documents you will need. Some will require input from other individuals or organisations and it is important that you allow enough time to get these inputs **before** the closing date. Failure to submit the required documents by the closing date may result in your application being deemed ineligible.

If you intend to reapply in 2022 on the same land as in your expiring/expired AECS contract you **must** consider the current requirements of the land and not assume that the existing management can simply carry on unchanged. You must submit new information including up-to-date management plans using the latest plan templates provided.

**Note:** contracts entered into from the 2021 AECS round will be taken into account when assessing and scoring an application from the 2022 AECS round.

## Role of the case officer

When you submit your application for the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme, including Improving Public Access, it will be assigned to a case officer. They will manage the application process from the formal submission to the point at which it has been assessed and presented to the relevant individual or group who will determine whether it should be approved, either in whole or in part.

Please refer to the ' [Your application will then be assessed](#) ' step of the application process below.

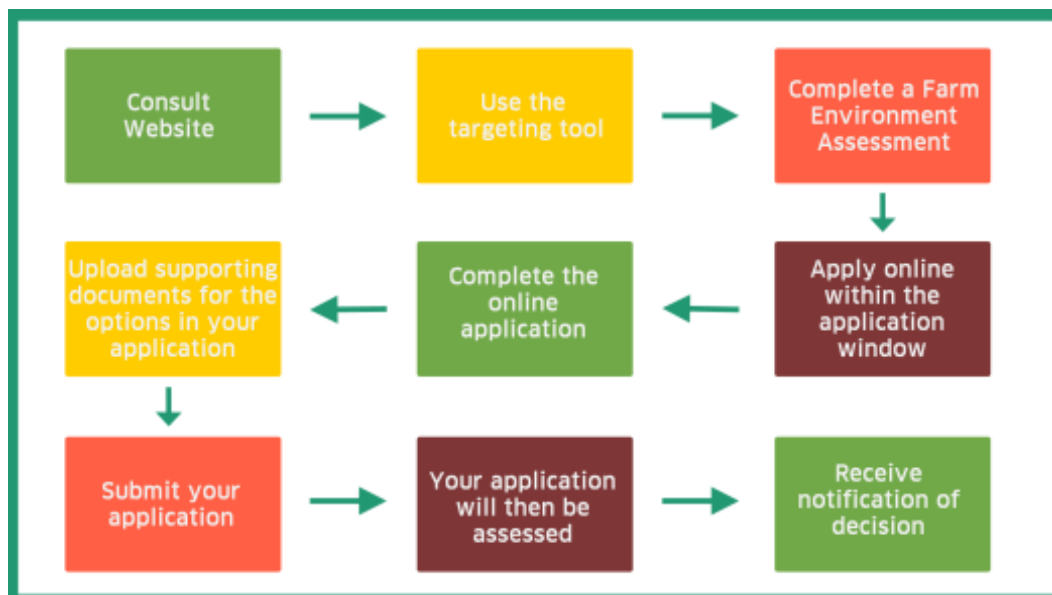
## Application process

### 1. Consult website

You should first check the relevant sections of the AECS and IPA website to get a better understanding of the rules of the scheme, and to check that you will be eligible to apply and meet the entry criteria for the 2022 application round. Please read the [Eligibility](#) guidance.

Links to all the individual pages of the full scheme guidance, together with rules and management requirements for each management option and capital item, can be found below:

- [Agri-Environment Climate Scheme full guidance](#)
- [Management options homepage](#)
- [Capital items homepage](#)



### 2. Use the targeting tool

Enter your holding number into the targeting tool to ensure that you only apply for options or capital items which are available on your land. If you have several holdings, you will need to enter each of these separately.

For Slurry storage applications, a simple catchment [search tool \(MS Excel, Size: 208.1 kB\)](#) is available to identify the relevant catchment type/name for a given farm code. Before using the catchment [search tool \(MS Excel, Size: 208.1 kB\)](#) you must check that slurry storage is available on the farm code where the work is proposed by checking on the [AECS targeting tool](#).

Note that some farm codes around the boundary of designated NVZ areas may be incorrectly showing as eligible for slurry storage. If a farm code is known to have land in a designated NVZ area the eligibility for slurry storage should be checked with the relevant RPID area office before commencing an application.

If you find your location code is not recognised when you enter it on the targeting tool, please contact your local RPID or NatureScot office to discuss this matter further.

### 3. Complete a Farm Environment Assessment where necessary (not required for IPA)

All applications will need to include a Farm Environment Assessment (FEA), apart from applications which are solely for the following:

- Coastal embankment breaching, lowering or removal.
- River embankment breaching, lowering or removal.
- Restoring (protecting) river banks.
- Stand-alone slurry stores.
- Organics.
- Upland habitat impact assessment for deer management (as stand-alone capital item).
- Improving Public Access.

The Farm Environment Assessment is a tool to help you to take stock of the important environmental features on your holding and plan what to include in your application.

You can find out more about Farm Environment Assessment on the [guidance page](#) . The webpage also explains the requirement to carry out a Diffuse Pollution Assessment and a Diffuse Pollution Steading Assessment if applicable.

### 4. Apply online within the application window

Your application for support under this scheme must be submitted online by registering and logging in to Rural Payments and Services.

[You can register for this service here](#) if you have not registered already.

Please refer to [Eligibility](#) page for information on how many applications can be submitted per business per year.

### 5. Complete the online application

Once you have logged in to Rural Payments and Services, you will be able to submit an application online.

You can do this by clicking 'Applications' from your customer home page and selecting 'Agri-Environment Climate Scheme' from the drop down list to start a new application.

You will be asked a series of questions about your application. You will also need to enter the management options that you wish to undertake as well as any capital items.

The relevant Land Parcel Identifiers (LPID) will need to be used (unless not yet allocated by RPID) and you will need to supply the areas (hectares) to be managed under the relevant options and capital items.

The application system will prompt you when errors arise during the completion of the application. For example, you will be prompted when information requested at a particular section has not been provided to allow you to progress to the next stage of the application process.

The Online application guidance is provided below.



[Online application guidance \(PDF, Size: 4.1 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-2022---Online-Application-Guidance.pdf> (Guidance)

### 6. Upload supporting documents for the options in your application

Along with the information you complete online you will also need to supply additional documents - see [checklist of requirements](#) . A link to a separate IPA checklist will be provided soon.

Any supporting documents should be uploaded directly into the application system. If you have problems doing this or are not sure which documents you need to submit, contact your local Rural Payments and Inspections Division area office or [NatureScot](#).

Supporting documents should be submitted by the relevant application deadline for the application type you are applying for, as set out in the Introduction above.

## 7. Submit your application

Once you have completed your application successfully, the system will display a summary of the options or items you have applied for.

A more detailed Schedule of Works will also be available setting out the proposed claim profile of either annual management option payments or payment details for capital items or both (whichever is applicable to your application).

If you are satisfied that the summary and Schedule of Works are accurate and correct, you should then confirm you have read the declarations and undertakings.

You will then be directed to click '**Submit application**'. An acknowledgment of your application will appear on screen along with your application reference number. This reference number can be used to track the progress of your application.

You **cannot** amend an application after it has been submitted. However, an application can be withdrawn and an amended application submitted before the closing date.

## 8. Your application will then be assessed

There are two levels of entry to the AECS scheme (for non-IPA cases) and applications falling into each level will be assessed and scored as follows:

- Level one – this is for lower value applications up to an agreed monetary value for the round. This agreed value is dependent on the amount and value of the applications received. Applications at this level will undergo an initial assessment by a case officer including a discussion with you. The discussion may take place during an on-farm visit, depending on the options you have applied for. Your application is then considered by the Rural Payments and Inspections Division or NatureScot (formally Scottish Natural Heritage) for approval or rejection.
- Level two – this is for higher value applications above an agreed monetary value for the round. This agreed value is dependent on the amount and value of the applications received. Applications for this level will undergo an initial assessment as per level one. After assessment the case will be considered for approval or rejection by an expert panel constituted on a national basis.

Assessment of IPA applications:

- IPA applications undergo an initial assessment by a case officer including a discussion with you and usually a farm/site visit. Your application is then considered by NatureScot (formally Scottish Natural Heritage) for approval or rejection. For higher value applications, normally above £250,000, the case will be considered for approval or rejection by an expert panel constituted on a national basis.

The [Application Assessment](#) and [Eligibility](#) pages have more detailed information

### Scoring criteria

As the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme is a competitive scheme, we will compare your application against other applications received using scoring criteria.

Please see the [scoring criteria](#) for agri-environment applications.

The organic maintenance or organic conversion element of applications will be scored separately.

The Slurry Storage element of applications will be scored separately. See the [targeted slurry storage scoring criteria \(MS Excel, Size: 14.4 kB\)](#), agreed with SEPA.

IPA applications are scored separately, find further information on the [IPA scoring criteria](#).

## 9. Notification of decision

Once your application has been assessed, you will be notified as to whether it has been approved or rejected. If your application is approved you will then be sent a contract. In some cases, only part of your application may be approved.

You should read the contract offer letter and all the contract documentation and ensure it is acceptable before formally accepting the contract terms.

You must follow the instructions included both in the contract offer letter and within the contract itself to confirm that you wish to accept the terms of the contract offer.

In particular, you should note that there may be additional conditions included in the contract which are specific to your application.

The contract will specify what the funding is to be used for – this will be based on the information supplied in your application. For IPA this is also based on capital item specifications.

An agent, acting as an accountable person, can only accept on behalf of a business if they have the mandated authority to do so.

If you are an agent accepting a contract on an applicants business' behalf, the case officer will contact the relevant RPID area office to request confirmation that you have the authority to sign the contract. Any mandate in place will apply to the office that an agent works from. It does not apply to the agent as an individual.

You may only start work when you have accepted the contract offer and have received a confirmation letter letting you know that you can begin.

You are under no obligation to accept the contract offer. If you decide not to proceed, please tell us and we will cancel the contract. The case officer will formally acknowledge your rejection.

## Recent changes

Section	Change
<a href="#">Introduction</a>	Opening and closing dates for 2022 application round. Removal of restrictions related to the 2021 restricted round.
<a href="#">Application Process</a>	Updated guidance on the process for the 2022 application round.

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

## Download guidance

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