

Further requirements for applicants

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

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Introduction

When you apply for this scheme, there are a number of things you need to consider.

The [Important Tips and Guidance](#) for applications and the [Checklist of Requirements](#) highlights key points to consider before applying to the Scheme. The guidance below explains the following items in more detail:

- The consents and licences you may need.
- Taking account of Protected Species.
- Guidance on quotes for actual cost capital items.

Consents and licences

When you first think of the work that you wish to progress through this scheme, if you consider that a consent or licence may be required, you should contact the relevant organisation for advice as soon as possible.

Their staff or their websites will provide details on consent / licensing requirements in your specific circumstances and advise on how to proceed.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you have any necessary authorisation for the work that you wish to carry out.

Some examples of where you might require a particular authorisation include:

- Felling licence from Scottish Forestry for removing heavy scrub under the Control of Scrub / Woody Vegetation capital item, or if relevant, for tree felling under Improving Public Access.
- Authorisation from the [Scottish Environment Protection Agency](#) (SEPA) if an abstraction from the water environment is required to fill the lagoon under the Water-use Efficiency – Irrigation Lagoon capital item.
- Consents from [Historic Environment Scotland](#) (HES) relating to [Scheduled Monuments \(PDF, Size: 799.9 kB\)](#)
- Licences for trapping of birds or mammals (see below*)

Please note:

For IPA applications, your application must include a statement from the relevant Planning Authority stating whether or not a planning application is required for the works in your application. For more detail, please see [How to Apply for IPA](#) .

If your application includes proposals for land in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or European site, we will consider any effects on these sites. Please refer to the guidance on [designated areas](#). If your application is successful and you are awarded a contract, you will not need consent from NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) for the activities covered by the contract.

If you are in any doubt about whether your proposed works will affect a protected species, refer to the guidance on protected species (see below).

If you have already received consent or written approval from a consenting authority you should upload a copy of the relevant documentation to accompany your online application. You should make sure that you keep a copy available for inspection. If you have not received a necessary consent or licence from the relevant authority by the time you submit your application, you must submit evidence that you are in discussion with the relevant authority about this. However, for the avoidance of doubt, you must ensure that you hold any required licence or consent before you start the management for which a licence or consent is required.

* If applying to control birds or mammals under the AECS [Predator Control](#) option, please check that you can meet the relevant [licensing](#) requirements.

Please note:

- Some changes to [General Licences for birds](#) came into force on 1st April 2020. For crow trapping, under General Licence GL01/2020, trap operators must [register](#) with NatureScot and then display the registration number on the traps. Also, if trapping will be within one of the European sites (SPAs or SACs) listed in Annex 2 of GL01/2020 you must comply with the [Standing Conditions](#) for the site.
- [Stoat trapping](#) : from 1st April 2020 this is now under General Licence GL14/2020 and there are changes to the types of traps which can be used.
- Snares for foxes must be tagged with the Police Scotland authorised Operator Identification Number.

Protected species

There are several pieces of legislation giving protection to species found in Scotland. In many cases it is an offence to kill or capture animals including birds, or to uproot plants. The law also protects some wild creatures from disturbance or harassment, or disturbance of their nests or resting places. Examples of commonly encountered species are shown below. Further details can be found on the [NatureScot protected areas website](#) .

You should therefore consider whether the management options or capital items you propose will affect any protected species. Please take into account the timings and locations of works (for example avoiding disturbance of birds during the breeding season). You should note the presence of any protected species in your application.

The [interactive tools on NatureScot's SNHi](#) may be helpful, over and above your own knowledge of the land and [NatureScot area staff](#) can provide further guidance where necessary.

You must organise an appropriate ecological survey of the area if you know that your land supports protected species which may be affected by your proposal.

The survey report should include ways to mitigate unavoidable damage or disturbance and suggest ideas to compensate for any losses. The report should also identify any licensing requirements which might allow the work to go ahead in spite of the protected species.

You should also submit the report along with your application.

Please contact the [NatureScot licensing team](#) if you need more advice on survey requirements and licensing.

Commonly encountered protected species include:

- Bats, otters, great crested newts and natterjack toads – these are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).
- Wild birds protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

- Red squirrels, pine martens, water voles and other animals – these are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended).
- Plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Beavers are fully protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). This protection also extends to lodges and burrows used for breeding and can apply to dams.

Quotes

Before applying for any actual cost capital items, please read the [Funding under this scheme guidance](#), to check that you meet the eligibility requirements, and please ensure that your application includes adequate justification for the use of actual capital costs. You must submit written competitive quotations for the actual cost items included in your application to demonstrate that the project costs are reasonable.

There must be no conflict of interest between the various suppliers providing the quotes, or between the applicants or their agent and the suppliers. A conflict of interest is a situation where a third party, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably consider that such an interest could unfairly influence actions or decisions. For example, an agent must not tender a quote for works and this also applies to any individual or contractor who has a close connection with the business.

If the cost is £10,000 or less a minimum of two valid written quotations is required. If the cost is more than £10,000, you must submit a minimum of three valid written quotations

Only in exceptional circumstances is one quotation acceptable and the criteria that must be met is set out under '**Exceptions - acceptance of one quote**' below.

The quotations table below must also be completed for all applications with actual capital cost items, summarising the quotes information - see example below.

Actual capital cost items which are not supported by the required written quotations and are not detailed in this quotations table will not progress past the assessment stage.



[Quotations table – example \(PDF, Size: 539.2 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-edits-2022---Quotations-table-example---19-Jan-22.pdf> Example table



[Quotations table – blank template \(MS Word, Size: 84.2 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-edits-2022---quotation-table-template---blank---19-Jan-22.docx> Use this template to record the quotations you have sourced.

You must ask all suppliers to quote on a clear specification so that quotes can be compared on a like-for-like basis. The quotes must refer to this specification. You must provide a copy of the specification with your application.

Where there is an equivalent standard cost capital item your specification must use the same unit of measurement as the standard cost item.

When assessing your application, the case officer will check that the quotes are clear and accurately reflect what is being proposed, and will consider whether the proposed costs are reasonable. In checking the reasonableness of the proposed costs case officers will take account of other cost information for that activity.

The case officer will be looking for the following basic elements in all quotes supplied:

- Quotes are addressed to you, the applicant.
- Quotes are in written / printed form and clearly originated from a reputable supplier who can deliver the items or work.
- Supplier's contact / business details are clear and legitimate – on business headed notepaper.
- Quote is based on the same specifications as described in the application.

- No missing elements.
- No ineligible elements.
- Cost calculations are up to date, correct and precise.
- Wording clearly describing the work required.
- For larger projects, the quote must include a schedule which must provide a breakdown of costs for each of the main stages of the work (these can be claimed on completion of each stage of work).
- Suppliers should confirm for how long the quote is valid.
- Whether the price includes appropriate VAT rate. Details of any VAT to be paid should be shown against the relevant items. This is to determine the correct level of grant award.
- For capital items intended to benefit the environment and the long term management of scheduled monuments on designated sites (SSSI or European sites - see [Funding under this scheme](#)), the quotes would need to be sufficiently detailed to show the methodology and specialist requirements.

It is essential that you include all costs related to the project in your application as any costs not included in the total estimated costs on your application will not be eligible for funding.

If your application is successful, the amount we pay will not exceed maximum amount / total cost per 'item' shown on the schedule of your work in your contract.

If the quotes supplied are insufficient in any way, your case officer will advise you of this. It is your responsibility to remedy any deficiencies promptly and supply the case officer with the required documentation.

Failure to do so means that the relevant costs will not be considered as part of the application and, in exceptional circumstances, may risk rejection of the whole application.

If you are VAT registered you should include the lowest cost in your application net of VAT. If you are not VAT registered and have confirmed this during the customer registration process, you may claim the full cost including VAT.

If your application is successful, funding will be based on the lowest valid quote received (subject to confirmation that the costs are considered to be reasonable). You can choose to proceed with a more expensive company, if you wish, but you must be willing to fund the difference yourself.

Exceptions – acceptance of one quote

Subject to your case officer's approval, one quote may be admissible when:

1. The specifications are so specialised that only limited suppliers are available and it would be unreasonable or impracticable to find a second or third quote. For example, when the supplier is a contractor required to carry out works in a remote area where only one qualified contractor is available and the scale of works would not attract contractors from further away.

The case officer will still be expected to check value for money against standard rates for similar activities elsewhere, such as those published in the [SAC Consulting Farm Management Handbook](#) , whilst taking into account the remote location factor.

2. The individual item value is below £1,000 and you can justify why you have little alternative but to source individual items from a single reputable supplier. You must demonstrate why the work cannot be more easily tendered in larger parts and two or three quotes obtained.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Consents and Licenses	More detail on IPA.
Protected Species	Note added on beavers.
Quotes	Definition of 'conflict of interest' added. Updated quotation tables.

Previous versions

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