

Management options and capital items

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](#).

Important updates

In 2021 AECS will be restricted to the following application types:

Applications to benefit protected (designated) areas

Organic farming

Vulnerable Priority Bird species – Waders, Corncrakes & Corn Buntings

Slurry storage

Improving Public Access (IPA)

Applications for Vulnerable Priority species (VPS) are limited to the following bird species in 2021: Lapwing, Curlew, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Snipe, Corncrake & Corn Bunting). Only options and capital items listed against the VPS can be included. For further details, consult the [How to Apply](#) page.

Applications for protected (designated) areas (SSSIs and European sites) must only contain the options and capital items that will directly benefit the designated features of the site.

Applications for organic farming must only contain organic conversion or maintenance options. Capital items are only permitted on organic conversion projects under exceptional circumstances.

Please note that Improving Public Access (IPA) is not open for application until 1 March 2021 (closing on 30 June 2021). The guidance for IPA is currently being updated and further information will be issued nearer the time.

Please use the [Targeting tool](#) to check which options are available on your holding.

You must enter all location codes separately for all holdings that form part of your farm business and which you wish to include in your AECS application. 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 or NatureScot (formerly SNH) office to discuss this matter further.

Updated spatial target maps have been added for the following options for the 2021 application round.

[Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife](#)

[Corn Buntings Mown Grassland](#)

Also, for the 2021 round, the spatial target map for the Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds option has been removed. This option will be available throughout Scotland if it is an option available to your application type.

For some options, there is the ability to undertake activities, generally not permitted, if you have prior approval, **e.g. do not apply lime, unless you have prior approval.**

In general, 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. The AECS contract provides the prior approval and it is up to the Case officer to assess if the activity proposed is acceptable. Justification will need to be provided as part of the 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.

As all the activities requiring prior approval are slight deviations from the option management requirements, if approval is not granted, it will result in you having to adhere to all management requirements as they stand, or removing the option from your application. If, by removing the option, there is a significant change to the scale and value of the application, there is a risk that the whole application will be rejected.

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A wide range of management options and capital items are available under the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme.

There are rules and management requirements for each and they must be followed over the course of your contract. Also, supporting information is available which provides recommendations and best practice in relation to the why, where, how and what for each option and capital item.

For all arable options, the spatial targeting 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.

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

[Contact us](#)

Supporting information is available which provides recommendations and best practice in relation to the why, where, how and what for each option and capital item.

“*if you think any of these options may be necessary for managing a designated site, you must contact NatureScot to discuss further **before** submitting your application”

**If you think Alternative Watering may be necessary for organic conversion management, you must contact RPID to discuss further before submitting your application

[Arable options](#)

- [Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife](#)
- [Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds](#)
- [Forage Brassica Crops for Farmland Birds](#)
- [Stubbles Followed by Green Manure in an Arable Rotation](#) (not available in 2021)
- [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](#)

[Upland, peatland, moorland and heath options](#)

- [Moorland Management](#)
- [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](#) (not available in 2021)*
- [Creation of Hedgerows](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Habitat Mosaic Management](#)
- [Managing Scrub of Conservation Value](#)
- [Tall-herb Vegetation Management](#)
- [Ancient Wood Pasture](#)

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](#)
- [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](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Management of Floodplains](#)
- [Alternative Watering](#) (not available in 2021)* **
- [Coastal Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Hard Standings for Troughs and Gateways](#) (not available in 2021)*
- [Livestock Crossing](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Livestock Tracks](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Managing Steading Drainage and Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Pesticide Handling Facilities](#) (not available in 2021)*
- [Restoring \(Protecting\) River Banks](#) (not available in 2021)*
- [River Embankment Breaching, Lowering or Removal](#) (not available in 2021)*
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Pond](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Sediment Traps and Bunds](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Swales](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Rural Sustainable Drainage Systems – Wetland](#) (not available in 2021)
- [Water-use Efficiency – Irrigation Lagoon](#) (not available in 2021)

Organic options

- [Organic Farming: Conversion](#)
- [Organic Farming: Maintenance](#)

Improving Public access options

- [Improving Public Access](#)

[All capital items](#)

[All capital items](#)

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