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| **Option Name:** | **Creation of riparian buffer – 2 metre width - ungrazed** |
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| **Option Code:** | **RBS** |
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| **Option Payment:#** | Year 1: | £6.90 per m |
| Year 2 – 5: | £0.07 per m each year |
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| **Option Aim(s):** | This Option will reduce the risk of nutrients, sediment, manure andpesticides entering watercourses. It will also reduce bankside damage. |
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| **Scheme Applicability:** | Wider – EFS(W) | **✓** | Higher – EFS(H) | **✓** | Group – EFS(G) | **✓** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **This option is made up of:** | Annual Management requirements | **✓** | NPI (capital items) | **✓** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **This option is:** | Permanent | **✓** | Rotational |  |  |
|  |  |
| **Option Description and Outcome:** | This Option is a combination of essential non-productive investments referred to as capital works) to establish the Option with a range of recurring annual management requirements to ensure successful establishment, retention and maintenance of the Option. Payment for the essential capital works is included in the Option payment rate. A stock-proof fence is erected two metres on average from the top of the bank of a watercourse. A watercourse is defined as a ‘dry sheugh, wet sheugh, stream, river, lake or waterway which is at least one metre wide on average’ and a ‘riparian buffer’ refers to the area along a watercourse and standing waters, such as lakes or ponds.The vegetation in the riparian buffer is not cut or grazed. For EFS(H) sites the ‘Creation of riparian buffers – 2 metre width - ungrazed’ Option is eligible where it will maintain and enhance the water quality and biodiversity value of these sites and is included in the site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP). |
| **Choice of site:** | This Option is suitable for undesignated watercourses alongside grazed grassland fields. It is particularly suitable where there is bankside damage or where livestock access a watercourse to drink or cross. |
| **Essential capital works:** | Creating the ‘Creation of riparian buffers – 2 metre width – ungrazed’ by erecting a protective fence is considered as essential capital works. |

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| **Additional optional capital works available for this Option:** | Gate and two gate posts – stock-proof fenceDrinking troughDrinking trough baseDrinking trough pipe work – not available for Tranche 7 agreements starting 01 January 2024Pasture pump and associated pipe work |
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| **Length Permitted:** | **Minimum** | 10m | **Maximum** | As per maximum Agreement value\* |

\* DAERA reserves the right to limit a Higher Level agreement value where it considers appropriate to ensure value for money.

**Requirements and Controls:**

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| **Code** | **Non-productive investment requirements (capital works)** | **Control type(1)** |
| **Admin** | **CwRS** | **OTSC** |
| **RBS1C** | Complete all capital works required (erection of protective fence) by 1st June in the first year of the EFS agreement. | **✓** |  | **✓** |
| **RBS2C** | Create the claimed area of ‘Creation of riparian buffer – 2 metre width – ungrazed’ in the correct location in the field(s) where the Option has been approved. The watercourse must be within the boundary or touching the boundary of the field in which the RBW has been claimed. The entire length of the watercourse along one field boundary must be fenced. Internal watercourses (not along a field boundary) must be fenced on both sides. |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| **RBS3C** | An average of two square metres per one metre length of ‘Creation of riparian buffers – 2 metre width – ungrazed’ must be established. |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| **RBS4C** | Erect the protective fence to the standard given in the Specificationbelow on the field side of the riparian buffer. | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |

The possible control types for each requirement may be: -

1. ‘Admin’ – administrative checks, ‘CWRS’ – Control with Remote Sensing, ‘OTSC’ – On-the-Spot Check
2. Refer to the ‘EFS(W) agreements started 1st July 2017 - 12 month and 18 month payment requirements’

See section below: -

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| **Code** | **Annual management requirements**  | **Control type(1)** |
| **Admin** | **CwRS** | **OTSC** |
| **RBS1M** | Retain and manage the same area and location of ‘Creation of riparian buffer – 2 metre width – ungrazed’ for the duration of the EFS agreement. Under this option, farmers will be paid for a period of 5 years and must retain the buffer for an additional period of 10 years. Farmers can claim the Basic Payment Scheme for the length of the commitment (inclusive of the retention period) if Single Farm Payment was claimed and paid on the land in 2008. |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| **RBS2M** | Maintain the protective fence in a stock-proof condition for theduration of the EFS agreement. |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| **RBS3M** | The riparian buffer must not be cut or grazed. |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| **RBS4M** | No fertiliser (organic or inorganic) may be used. | **✓** |  | **✓** |
| **RBS5M** | The ‘Creation of riparian buffers – 2 metre width – ungrazed’ Option must be established, retained and managed as detailed in the ssRMP for EFS(H) sites. | **✓** |  | **✓** |
| **RBS6M** | Field records detailing area established, location, date established and all Management Requirements including Integrated Pest management (IPM). | **✓** |  | **✓** |

The possible control types for each requirement may be:

 ‘Admin’ – administrative checks, ‘CwRS’ – Control with Remote Sensing, ‘OTSC’ – On-the-Spot Check

**Specification for ‘Stock-proof fencing’:**

* All remnant fence material must be removed before erecting the ‘Stock- proof fencing’.
* New materials must be used for ‘Stock-proof fencing’.
* The fence must be erected to BS 1722-2:2006.
* The minimum standard for ‘Stock-proof fencing’ is galvanised woven wire and three strands line wire **or** five strands line wire.
* The overall height of the fence must be at least 1.20 m from the ground to the top wire.
* Straining posts must be equivalent in strength and durability to 125 mm top diameter round timber or 125 mm x 125 mm sawn timbers.
* Straining posts must be set at centres not exceeding 150 m or at each change in direction or gradient.
* Struts must be equivalent in strength and durability to 75 mm top diameter round timber or 75 mm x 75 mm sawn timber.
* Struts must be mortised into the straining post.
* Intermediate posts must be equivalent in strength and durability to 75 mm top diameter round timber or 75 mm x 75 mm sawn timber and set at centres not exceeding 3.00 m.
* Intermediate wooden posts must be at least 1.83 m long.
* All posts must be free of bark.
* Posts must have a potential minimum 15 year life, clearly indicated on manufacturer’s literature/invoice or on application of a subsequent treatment again clearly indicated on manufacturer’s literature/invoice. Where wooden posts have been treated with a preservative, this must have been applied by the manufacturer.
* Use strands of galvanised 4 mm mild plain steel wire or 2.5 mm barbed wire.
* The ‘Stock-proof fencing’ must be properly strained and secured to posts with galvanised staples or appropriate fastenings (such as galvanised wire or bespoke fasteners).
* ‘Stock-proof fencing’ must be erected as detailed in the ssRMP, for EFS(H) sites.

**Further Advice**

Avoid locations where banks are likely to be undermined by erosion from the watercourse. If

this happens, you will need to move the fence back and put it up again two metres from the

top of the bank. Do not place the fence so close to the top of the bank that it will compromise bank stability. Do not create this Option where livestock could cross over from the other side of the watercourse and graze the strip.

Instead of spraying noxious weeds and invasive non-native species, hand weeding may be

used to remove these. Approved herbicides/pesticides may only be applied to the area of

the riparian buffer if justified as part of the implementation of IPM, including for the control of

noxious weeds or invasive species by spot spraying of an approved herbicide.

Where drinking troughs or pasture pumps are installed to replace in-channel drinking, these

should be located as far away from the watercourse as possible.

Approval should be sought from DFI Transport NI before new gates and gate posts, fencing

are erected along a roadway.

For stock-proof fencing, straining posts should be at least 2.10 m long when not set in

concrete and at least 1.87 m long when set in concrete. Struts should be set at least 450

mm into the ground. To allow for future adjustments and to prevent damage to the

galvanising, staples should be driven in at an angle, but not fully home. Do not attach the

‘Stock-proof fencing’ to trees, hedgerows or electricity poles and do not block or restrict

rights of way.

If you intend to complete this option on a march boundary you should ensure that you have

fully discussed and agreed that you can carry out the option requirements and controls on

the march boundary with the person who has control of the neighbouring land.

Employ good soil management in the adjacent field. This will reduce the run-off pressure on

the buffer strip, improve and prolong its effectiveness, and reduce the costs of managing and

repairing it.

In general, anything which reduces the length of uninterrupted slope along the field to the

watercourse will help reduce run-off. For example, establishing a hedge parallel to the buffer

strip, or along the field side of the strip itself, would enhance its effectiveness as a buffer.

Similarly establishing a hedge or shelterbelt of woodland in the sloping fields running

towards the riparian buffer will reduce the run-off reaching it.

Avoid placing spoil from the watercourse on the riparian buffer

