**Guide to**

**Environmental Farming Scheme**

**Agreements commencing 01 January 2024**

This Guide is for EFS agreements

commencing 01 January 2024.

For the Guides to EFS Agreements commencing in earlier years see:

[Guides to the Environmental Farming Scheme](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guide-environmental-farming-scheme-tranche-3-onwards)

[Guide to the Environmental Farming Scheme](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/guide-environmental-farming-scheme)

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1. Introduction to the Guide

This booklet sets out the general information about the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) and the process of applying for the Scheme.

Detailed information on the EFS Options and Non-productive Investments (NPIs) that make up the Scheme can be found in the EFS Information Sheets which are available on the DAERA website. Please ensure that you refer to the information sheet relating to your agreement start year. The EFS Information sheets can be accessed using the following links:

[EFS Wider Options Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-options)

[EFS Wider stand-alone Options Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-stand-alone-options)

[EFS Wider Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-non-productive-investments-npis)

[EFS Higher Options Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level)

[EFS Higher Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level)

All of the EFS information contained in this publication is intended as a guide to farmers and should not be regarded as a legal interpretation of the Regulations governing the Environmental Farming Scheme and/or other schemes.

Applicants are advised to take independent legal advice, as necessary, to ensure their interests are looked after.

# 1.1 Main EFS requirements

**Failure to follow any of the listed requirements (or requirements in your EFS Terms and Conditions) may result in no payment, reduced payment, recovery of earlier payments, or cancellation of the EFS agreement and recovery of any payments received, relating to it. The main requirements for EFS agreements are:**

* Applicant must have management control for the full duration of the EFS agreement (with minor exception- See Terms and Conditions for further details). Therefore letting of land under agreement in Conacre is prohibited during the term of the agreement.
* Have and maintain (and have management control of) at least 3Ha of eligible land over the course of the agreement.
* Must follow the strict protocol laid out in EFS Options Information Sheets for each option on EFS agreement.
* Hold a Category 1 or Category 2 Business ID.
* Keep field records.
* Retain receipts/photos/ warranties where required.
* Comply with any guidance or requests for information issued regarding your EFS agreement by DAERA over the course of the agreement.
* Apply for all options on your agreement each year regardless of whether they are due a payment.
* Comply with pest management requirements.
* Comply with cross-compliance requirements.
* Complete EFS on-line training through CAFRE by the date given- preferably prior to beginning work as this will help avoid mistakes being made, which can result in reduction, refusals and penalties being applied to your EFS payment.
* Apply for agreement and payment claim separately, and by closing dates provided by DAERA.
* Facilitate checks, including submitting geo-tagged photos if required to verify scheme compliance.
* No dual claims or dual funding is allowed (with exemptions for a small number of pre-approved EFS Higher agreements).
* Works started or completed before the notified Scheme Start Date are not eligible for payment.
* Reduce claim using an EFS SAF3 form, if you will not complete agreed work by the deadline- this cannot be done if you have already been informed of either an On-The-Spot-Check, or a non-compliance regarding your EFS agreement.
* Complete and return the Claim Confirmation Form issued to Year 1 applicants to confirm or reduce first year claimed amounts by the 31st December.
* Where you are applying for a T7 Higher agreement, and you already held a T1 or T2 agreement you must ensure that where any of your fields were already in an EFS agreement you only apply for additional works over and above those already completed in those fields. Rotational Options, , and Natural Regeneration of Native Woodland are completed each year, or at end of Year 5, so may be re-applied for in the same fields in Tranche 7 as in Tranche 1 or T2. In all other cases it is not permitted to re-apply for the same Option/NPI in the same field, unless it can be demonstrated by the agreement holder on request that works pertaining to the new agreement are additional works over and above those already completed in this field in Tranche 1 or Tranche 2. DAERA will undertake pre-approval checks on Tranche 7 Higher applicants that have previously held a Tranche 1 or Tranche 2 EFS Agreement to ensure double funding does not occur. Where DAERA detects double funding through pre-approval checks, these Options/NPIs will be ineligible for payment and will be removed from the EFS application prior to offer of Agreement. It remains the responsibility of the application or agreement holder to avoid double funding. If double funding occurs, and is uncovered after agreement acceptance, recovery of payments may apply.

**The above list is by no means exhaustive.** Full Terms and Conditions are available on the DAERA website:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level-terms-and-conditions>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions>

**It is your responsibility to become familiar with, and adhere to the Terms and Conditions of your EFS Agreement. It is these Terms and Conditions that you will be bound by upon signing of an EFS agreement.**

# 1.2 Points to note before you start:

* You should read this Guide before you visit the online application available on the DAERA website at [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services)during the open application period.

**As the application is online only**, you should ensure that you are set up to access DAERA Online Services through the Government Gateway or via NI Identity Assurance (NIDA) in advance of the open application period. Please ensure that you have provided your correct email address in order that DAERA can contact you in relation to your EFS agreement. **Please keep this email address up-to-date as this may result in DAERA being unable to contact you about important information regarding your Agreement.** Further information about DAERA Online Services is available at the following link.[EFS Online Services Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services)

* You must apply for your EFS Agreement(s) and your EFS Payment claim separately, the **latter is claimed every year** through the Single Application and Map service, for the duration of your Agreement(s), regardless of whether a payment is due.
* You are advised to read the guidance before you complete your application for the Environmental Farming Scheme. If you need help to complete your application you can call us on 0300 200 7848 and our advisors will provide you with the assistance you require, or email ‘efs@daera-ni.gov.uk’.
* If you have any queries about completing the online application, contact the

**EFS Advisory Service** on

**Tel:** 0300 200 7848or

**Email:** ‘efs@daera-ni.gov.uk’.

1. General Rules of the Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS)

# 2.1 Introduction

The Environmental Farming Scheme (EFS) is a voluntary scheme that will support farmers and land managers to carry out environmentally beneficial farming practices on agricultural land. EFS agreements normally have a five year duration.

The aims of the Scheme are to:

* restore, preserve and enhance biodiversity;
* improve water management and water quality;
* reduce soil erosion and improve soil management;
* foster carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture; and
* reduce greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture.

The EFS is made up of three levels:

* EFS(W), a Wider Level Scheme aimed at delivering benefits across the wider countryside outside of environmentally designated areas;
* EFS(H), a Higher Level Scheme primarily aimed at site specific environmental improvements at strategically important sites and for priority habitats and species; and
* EFS(G), a Group Level Scheme to support co-operative work by farmers in specific areas, such as river catchments, or commonages. EFS(G) is in pilot stage.

Figure 1: EFS Levels

Each EFS level has a suite of management Options and Non-productive investments (NPIs), commonly referred to as capital items.

Management Options may be made up of:

* essential capital items (NPIs) carried out to establish the Option, and / or
* recurring annual management requirements to ensure successful establishment, retention and maintenance of the Option.

Payment for the essential NPIs is included in the Option payment for Year 1 of the agreement. Some Options contain only recurring annual management requirements. Work started or completed before the start of the Scheme agreement is not eligible for payment.

There is also a group of additional NPIs, which can be carried out to complement certain Options. Payment for these is in addition to the Option payment for essential NPIs and must be claimed in Year one. Failure to claim for these NPIs in Year one with the exception of Follow up Vegetation Control NPIs will result in the NPI being ineligible for payment.

The agreement holder must complete the approved unit/area/length for all EFS Options and additional NPIs, to the standards set out by the Department in the ‘Requirements and Controls’ table included in the EFS Information Sheet of the Option and where applicable, the EFS Specialist Plan pertaining to the Business ID, within the required time permitted.

EFS Information Sheets are available in the [EFS Section of the DAERA website.](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/rural-development/environmental-farming-scheme-efs)

**Note, if you do not complete all work in your agreement in the appropriate timescale or to the required standard, financial penalties may be applied.**

DAERA may check your measurements at On-the-Spot-Check. DAERA’s measurement methodology is based on 2-Dimensional maps, meets EU approved Standards, and measurements are considered final. DAERA provide an e-mapping service to allow you to measure accurately.

All EFS Options must be situated on land or its boundaries that is entered into the Scheme. The same field cannot appear in two different EFS Agreements. Where boundary Options are claimed in a field, the boundary is considered part of that field.

**As most essential and additional NPIs must be carried out in the first year of the EFS agreement, applicants should be confident that they can complete all the Options they apply for within the required timescale.**

# 2.2 Who is eligible to apply for EFS?

EFS is open to applicants who have

* a DAERA Category 1 or Category 2 Business Identification Number; and
* at least 3 ha of eligible agricultural land and have management control of the land for the duration of their agreement.

In almost all circumstances, only the person actively farming the land and claiming other area-based payments will be eligible to apply to the EFS.

Where a Business ID manages a number of individual farms as a single unit, these farms will comprise one farm business.

# 2.3 Eligibility of land

Each LPIS land parcel (normally a field) has been assessed by DAERA to decide which EFS Scheme level (either Wider or Higher) it is eligible for.

EFS(H) land is split into three tiers, depending on which designated site or priority site it falls into.

* EFS(H) Tier 1: includes those fields that are within sites designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR sites.
* EFS(H) Tier 2: includes those fields that are within sites designated as biological Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).
* EFS(H) Tier 3: includes Northern Ireland priority habitats and species areas outside designated sites.

If the EFS(H) area within a larger LPIS land parcel (normally a field) is less than 0.10 ha, the entire field is not eligible for EFS(H) but is eligible for EFS(W). If the EFS(H) area is greater than or equal to 0.1ha or greater than or equal to 10% of the field area, then the entire field is eligible for EFS(H).

The land area eligible for EFS will be a direct reflection of the LPIS Maximum Eligible Area (MEA), with the exception of:-

1. woodland habitats, where EFS payments will be applicable to non-LPIS MEA woodland areas (excluding hard features);
2. moorland habitat option, Intact Lowland Raised Bog (ILR), where EFS payments will be applicable to non-LPIS MEA (excluding hard features);
3. commonage or shared grazing on LPIS, which are not eligible for either EFS (W) or EFS (H) (except where part of the EFS(G) pilot);
4. other areas deemed to be of environmental importance by DAERA: and
5. Areas subject to vegetation and invasive species control under EFS such as rush cutting.

Fields listed in the EFS agreements must be under the management control of the applicant for the duration of the Agreement. If you do not own the land you wish to bring into the scheme, ‘management control’ means a lease to cover the period of the EFS Agreement, which allows you to make management decisions concerning the land. Where leased land is entered into EFS, both landlord and tenant are advised to seek legal advice when drawing up the lease. In almost all cases, the person eligible to join EFS will be the person actively farming the land in question. Land where the applicant does not have management control of the land for the duration of the EFS Agreement is ineligible for EFS. Any loss of management control of land under EFS agreement may result in recovery of any payments for EFS Options/NPIs on that land (with the exception of rotational options).

Ensure ALL the fields you wish to be considered for EFS are listed on your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) form.

If the applicant’s eligible agricultural land falls below 3 ha at any point during the five year duration of the agreement, the EFS agreement will be terminated. Monies already paid may be recovered.

Applicants must refer to the ‘Guide to Land Eligibility’ to decide if land is eligible for EFS. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they only apply on eligible land and deduct all ineligible areas from their claim irrespective of what is indicated on their DAERA farm map.

More information about eligibility of land can be found in the individual EFS Information Sheets, Advice Notes and scheme Terms and Conditions available at the following links.

[EFS Wider Options Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-options)

[EFS Wider Level Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level-terms-and-conditions)

[EFS Higher Level Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

## 2.4 Dual use claims

If two claimants use the same land at the same time to claim two different schemes, for example EFS and BPS, this is known as dual use.

In almost all cases, the person applying for BPS on the land will be entitled to apply for EFS funding on the same land. This is in line with the general rule of one claimant for each land parcel.

With regard to EFS and Basic Payment, dual use claims (DUCs) will only be permitted in certain limited circumstances, specifically on UK national site network or ASSI designated land and in cases where the EFS applicant can demonstrate significant environmental benefit accruing from the arrangement. Where this occurs, both beneficiaries must be able to demonstrate that they each meet the requirements of their respective Schemes.

If two businesses submit separate claims on a field, one for EFS and one for BPS, it is possible that the EFS claim will be rejected unless strict criteria have been met.

# 2.5 Land receiving other funding

EFS cannot be used to pay for environmental management activities that are already being funded on the same land area by another funding source.

Applicants must check if they have land which is under contract or obligation to other schemes e.g. , Small Woodland Grant Scheme or other Forestry Grants, Management of Sensitive Sites scheme (MOSS), Heritage Lottery Funding or other similar schemes.

It is the responsibility of the agreement holder to ensure that double funding does not occur within an EFS agreement. Where there is evidence that an agreement holder has knowingly claimed under the Environmental Farming Scheme for management activities that have received or will receive payment from another source, this may result in the recovery of payments already made and possible termination of the EFS agreement.

EFS cannot be used to fund environmental management activities that are required by law or by any legally binding contract or obligation.

Where publicly owned, designated land is applied for under EFS, the applicant must provide details of the lease agreement to enable the DAERA to determine if an agreement can be offered and if such an agreement would offer significant additional environmental benefit, (over and above the management required by the lease) to the area in question.

## 2.5.1 Planning permission and remediation

EFS must not fund works that must be undertaken as a requirement of any planning permission or fund works required to restore or remediate any works undertaken illegally.

## 2.5.2 Landscape features removal derogations

EFS must not fund works that must be undertaken as remedial mitigation as a result of landscape features removal derogation under Cross-Compliance GAEC 7. This mitigation work must be completed by the business at its own cost.

# 2.6 Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland (PGS)

The CAP Reform Regulations contain a requirement to designate permanent grassland in areas, including in peat and wetlands, covered by Wild Birds Directive and/or the Habitats Directive which are environmentally sensitive and which need protection to meet the requirements of these Directives. Ploughing of permanent grassland in areas designated as environmentally sensitive is not permitted and if breached could lead to a penalty on your EFS payment).

# 2.7 EFS and BPS

Land under EFS Options is eligible for BPS for the length of the EFS agreement if SFP was claimed and paid on the land in 2008.

Land within the following EFS Options will remain eligible for BPS for the duration of the EFS agreement and for a further retention period if SFP was claimed and paid on the land in 2008:

* **ENW** - Establishment of native woodland less than 5 ha
  + Eligible for BPS during 5 years of EFS plus 15 years retention period;
* **RBS** - Creation of riparian buffer – 2 metre width – ungrazed
  + Eligible for BPS during 5 years of EFS plus 10 years retention period;
* **BNT** Creation of riparian buffer – 2 metre width – planted with native trees
  + Eligible for BPS during 5 years of EFS plus 10 years retention period;
* **RBW** Creation of riparian buffer – 10 metre width – ungrazed –
  + Eligible for BPS during 5 years of EFS plus 10 years retention period; and
* **BWT** Creation of riparian buffer – 10 metre width – planted with native trees
  + Eligible for BPS during 5 years of EFS plus 10 years retention period.

As above, the area fenced off for a riparian buffer, either 2 or 10 metres in width, remains eligible for BPS provided the area was claimed and paid for SFP in 2008. Under normal circumstances it would be expected that no more than an average of 2 or 10 square metres of land per 1 metre length of riparian buffer would be established. However in some circumstances it may be necessary to fence off an area beyond the 2 metre or 10 metre buffer for reasons of safety and practicality. It may be more practical to site the fence on firmer, more stable ground away from the contours of the watercourse. If the fence put up for the riparian buffer options is placed considerably beyond the 2 metre or the 10 metre point and this results in a significantly greater extent of the field being fenced off, please note that only the area covered by the EFS Option remains eligible for BPS. Any additional area fenced off will be subject to the normal eligibility rules. Consequently if this additional area is not grazed and there is no agricultural activity, it is not eligible for either BPS or EFS.

The Guide to Land Eligibility states: Agro-forestry occurs where agriculture and tree cultivation are carried out on the same land unit. Where land is managed for agro-forestry the tree density is usually in excess of 50 trees/ha but the planting has taken place in such a way that the area of the field is utilized for agricultural activity in the initial years of tree establishment. These areas are eligible for BPS in the initial years of tree establishment, provided agricultural activity remains predominant and is not significantly affected by the presence of trees.

Woodland habitat areas funded under EFS(H) will remain ineligible for BPS.

Where EFS management requirements specifically prevent applicants keeping their EFS (H) land in eligible condition, applicants should contact Countryside Management Unit to discuss land eligibility prior to claiming for their Options.

In some cases EFS(H) land that is in ineligible for BPS can still be eligible for EFS payment e.g. Intact Lowland Raised Bog (ILR) and Woodland Options (grazed and ungrazed).

Under the EFS(H) Level, the site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP) may include actions to remove LPIS ineligible features, e.g. scrub, to improve habitat condition. These areas may eventually become eligible for BPS, EFS if the business completes and submits a ‘Farmer Notified Change (FNC)’ form to DAERA to amend the MEA of the field.

**2.8.** **Retention period for EFS Options**

Some Options include a retention period of 10 or 15 years after the end of the agreement and during this time the area can be claimed for BPS, provided SFP was claimed and paid on the land in 2008.

# 2.9 Cross-Compliance

Cross-Compliance applies to all Area-based Schemes including EFS. Scheme participants must meet the Cross-Compliance verifiable standards on all the agricultural area of their holding. Failure to meet the Cross-Compliance requirements could lead to the application of penalties to all Area-based Schemes including EFS. Further details on Cross-Compliance can be found on the DAERA website: [2024 Cross-Compliance Verifiable Standards - Full Version.pdf (daera-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/2024%20Cross-Compliance%20Verifiable%20Standards%20-%20Full%20Version.pdf)

# 2.10 Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Scheme participants must implement Principles 2 and 8 of Directive 2009/128/EC, Establishing a Framework for Community Action to achieve the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (Integrated Pest Management (IPM)).

Principle 2 states that harmful organisms must be monitored by adequate methods and tools, where available. Such adequate tools should include observations in the field, scientifically based warning, forecasting and early diagnosis systems, where feasible, as well as the use of advice from professionally qualified advisors.

Principle 8 states that based on the records on the use of pesticides and on the monitoring of harmful organisms, the professional user should check the success of the applied plant protection measures.

# Table 1: Methods of Integrated Pest Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| IPM Section | Methods |
| Section 2: Monitoring of Harmful Organisms | Use early warning/weather forecasting systems |
| Use weather forecast to aid decisions |
| Accurate pest and disease identification |
| Monitor crops for pests/diseases |
| Adviser monitors crops |
| Use traps/sticky pads/lures |
| Section 8: Checking and recording the success of the applied crop protection measures | Success or failure of intervention measured |
| Crop yields /disease and pest incidences recorded |
| Member of discussion group |
| Success or failure of intervention recorded |
| Results discussed with adviser |

It is the agreement holder’s responsibility to keep accurate and up to date evidence that they have implemented Principles 2 and 8 of IPM. The evidence for all years of the Scheme must be available for an inspector to check at any time.

An example of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) record keeping can be viewed in the EFS field records templates which can be accessed using the following links.

[EFS(W) field records template](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-level-field-records)

[EFS(H) field records template](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

# 2.11 Record keeping

An agreement holder must keep and maintain records relating to the Scheme, as stated in the ‘Requirements and Controls’ for each Option/NPI and ssRMP. Field records must be kept up to date throughout the period of the contract and the agreement holder must retain all records throughout the period of the contract.

Records must be available to DAERA at any time of the year. If DAERA completes an EFS inspection, the inspector will check that the records are accurate and up to date. The inspector will also check that the information entered in the records confirms that the correct management has been undertaken. Failure to keep complete and accurate records may lead to a reduction or recovery of payments.

You may use your own preferred format to record the required information as detailed in the EFS(W) templates for Options/NPIs and / or ssRMP ‘Requirements and Controls’ section. DAERA has developed field record templates which you can download and print from the DAERA website using the following links:

[EFS(W) field records template](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-level-field-records)

[EFS(H) field records template](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

An example of completed field records is included in the documents.

# 2.12 Training

EFS Agreement holders must complete training in order to demonstrate their understanding of the Scheme requirements and the management activities/specifications associated with each Option/NPI. The training will be provided on-line, through the Cafre.ac.uk, and is a compulsory part of the scheme. Where training remains incomplete payment will not be made and the agreement may be cancelled. Scheme participants will be enrolled on and must complete each course associated with the EFS Options and NPIs that are included in their Scheme agreement. **Training should be completed before carrying out the works. If training is incomplete by the date notified to Tranche 7 Agreement Holders by DAERA in first year of the agreement, agreements will be cancelled.** The email given at scheme application is important in order to complete the online training. Please ensure this is accurate at application.

# 2.13 Consents and Permissions

In certain circumstances, special consent or permission is required before any work can be carried out for Higher or Wider EFS Agreements. Further detail is available in the Terms and Conditions of the scheme.

[EFS Wider Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level-terms-and-conditions)

[EFS Higher Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

**2.14 Extraction of peat, sand or gravel**

The extraction of peat, sand or gravel is not permitted on land subject to any EFS (H) ssRMP, except peat cutting consented by DAERA and/or DAERA consented existing turbary rights.

## 

1. Making an application to the Environmental Farming Scheme

# 3.1 The application process

Applications are made on-line only, through DAERA On-line, in the ‘open for applications’ period.

Completing the EFS application online through DAERA Online Services allows all applicants to view their land, select appropriate options for the EFS(W) and establish if they can apply for EFS(H) Level. The EFS online application form helps applicants avoid mistakes; the system warns an applicant if they have missed part of the application process. Applicants also receive an instant receipt and summary of their application.

**If you are already registered with DAERA online services:**

* Log on to DAERA Online Services using your Government Gateway or NI Identity Assurance (NIDA) details at: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-online-services](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/daera-online-services).
* from the list of “Services” select ‘Environmental Farming Scheme” to start your application.
* if you need help, at any stage of the process, please select from the help methods available, which include the option to phone us on 0300 200 7848 and ask to speak to our EFS Advisory team.

**If you are new to DAERA Online Services**

You must be registered to use DAERA Online Services. Their contact details are:-

* email at [onlineservices@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:onlineservices@daera-ni.gov.uk?subject=DAERA%20online%20services)
* telephone on 028 9442 6699

Once registered, you will be given instructions on how to access our on-line services, including the EFS Application online. You can also [authorise another person](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/appointing-agent-act-your-behalf-authorised-persons-covid-19), such as an agent or a family member, to submit your on-line application for your EFS Agreement (this is a separate form to the nomination form that you will use for your EFS payment claim application i.e. for the Single Application and Map Service). You will also need to provide an email address for us to contact you.

Fields that were entered in the applicant’s previous Single Application will be listed in the current year EFS online application, separated into fields eligible under the Wider and Higher levels. Any fields that are not classified as Wider or Higher will not be displayed.

# 3.2 Making an EFS(W) application

#### **3.2.1** **Access DAERA Online Services**

After logging into your EFS application, in the EFS(W) section all fields declared by you in the previous year’s Single Application which have been identified as within the EFS(W) area will be listed.

Please ensure that you include a current email address, either for yourself or your business, in your application for the purposes of scheme administration.

#### **3.2.2** **Selection of EFS(W) Options**

The application process is underpinned by mapping data which determines where Options may be undertaken in each individual field. Not all EFS(W) Options will be available in all field parcels. Although there is no Tranche 7 EFS (W), there are Wider options still available for those successful applicants applying for Tranche 7 Higher were agreed under their ssRMP.

In addition, you should consider the suitability of your field for the Option as you must successfully establish and retain the Option you select. For example, if your land is not capable of successfully establishing and growing ‘Provision of winter feed crop for wild birds’, you should not select that Option.

EFS(W) is not a whole farm scheme so applicants can select which Options to undertake on which land parcels.

The Options in the EFS(W) Level, which focus on biodiversity, climate and water management, are listed below in **Table 2: EFS Wider Level Options and Payment Rates.** EFS(W) applicants can select from these when making their online application.

Applicants must apply for between **one** and **four** **EFS(W) Options**. One Option can be selected on several different field parcels, if necessary, and is counted as one Option.

There are minimum and maximum areas / lengths / units for each EFS(W) Option and these limits are built into the EFS online application. A warning will appear on the screen if the applicant is breaching these limits. Should you accept an agreement and are selected for OTSC where the Inspector determines that the minimum eligible length is not there or not to specification, the Option and associated NPIs will be ineligible for payment and removed from the agreement without penalty.

Details of the work to be carried out under these Options, including the maximum and minimum thresholds, can be found in the EFS Information Sheets for each Option and NPI which are online at the following link:

[EFS Information Sheets Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level)

It is recommended that applicants read the EFS Information Sheets to understand what they will have to do while in the Scheme, before starting the online application. Applicants should also be confident that they can complete all the Options they apply for within the required timescale and to the required standard.

Table 2: EFS Wider Level Options and Payment Rates\*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area** | **Description of Option** | | | **Code** | **Payment Rate**  **(per ha unless stated otherwise** | |
| **Year 1** | **Years 2-5** |
| **Biodiversity** |  | | |  |  |  |
| Traditional dry stone wall rebuilding | | Single skin | SSW | £13.02 / m | £0.00 / m |
| Double skin | DSW | £22.95 / m | £0.00 / m |
| Creation of pollinator margins | 10 m width | Pollen and nectar | PAN | £465.00 | £465.00 |
| Annual wildflower | WFM | £2,530.00 | £2,530.00 |
| Creation of arable margins | 6 m width | Rough grass | RGM | £841.50 | £707.00 |
| Cultivated uncropped | CUM | £702.00 | £702.00 |
| Provision of winter feed crop for wild birds | | | WFC | £590.00 | £590.00 |
| Retention of winter stubble | | | RWS | £85.00 | £85.00 |
| Creation of traditional orchard | | | CTO | £3,832.68 | £110.00 |
| **Climate** | Establishment of agro-forestry | | | EAF | £1,637.00 | £65.00 |
| Natural regeneration of native woodland | | | NRW | £360.00 | £360.00 |
| Planting native tree corridors | | | NTC | £2,146.90 | £465.00 |
| Planting new hedgerows including two protective fences | | | PNH | £17.63 / m | £0.00 / m |
| **Water Management** | Creation of riparian buffers | 2 m width | Ungrazed | RBS | £6.97 / m | £0.07 / m |
| Planted with native trees | BNT | £7.21 / m | £0.07 / m |
| 10 m width | Ungrazed | RBW | £8.53 / m | £0.36 / m |
| Planted with native trees | BWT | £9.03 / m | £0.36 / m |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Description of Option** | | | **Code** | **Payment Rate**  (per ha unless stated otherwise) | |
| **Year 1** | **Years 2-5** |
| **Stand-alone Options** | Traditional native breeds (Irish moiled Cattle) | | | IMC | £95.00 / Livestock Unit | £95.00 / Livestock Unit |
| Establishment of native woodland less than 5 ha | | | ENW | £2625.00 | £516.00 |
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Some of the EFS(W) Options contain essential Non-productive Investments (NPIs), which must be carried out within Year 1 of the scheme. These are listed in **Table 3: Essential NPIs included in EFS Wider Options.** For example, in the Option ‘Planting native tree corridors’, the planting of native trees and erection of tree guards and canes must be carried out by the dead line detailed in the Information Sheet in the first year of the EFS Agreement, unless specific communication has been shared by DAERA informing applicants that the deadline has been extended. Payment for these NPIs is included in the Option payment for the first year of the Scheme. Failure to complete these NPIs within the required timeframe may result in penalties.

# Table 3: Essential Non-productive Investments included in EFS Wider Options\*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| EFS Option | Essential NPIs included in the EFS Option |
| Traditional dry stone wall rebuilding – Single skin | * Rebuilding single skin stonewall |
| Traditional dry stone wall rebuilding – Double skin | * Rebuilding double skin stonewall |
| Creation of arable margins – 6m wide – rough grass | * Establishing the rough grass margin (cultivation and sowing the grasses) |
| Creation of traditional orchard | * Fruit tree planting * Protection with spiral guards * Fixing trees to a stake with tie |
| Establishment of agroforestry | * Planting the trees * Erecting tree guards * Anchor pegs and stakes |
| Planting native tree corridors | * Planting native trees * Erecting tree guards and canes |
| Planting new hedgerows including 2 protective fences | * Planting new hedge including trees * 1.2m guards and stakes for trees * Erecting 2 protective fences |
| Creation of riparian buffers – 2m wide - ungrazed | * Erecting protective fence |
| Creation of riparian buffers – 2m wide – planted with native trees | * Erecting protective fence * Planting native trees and shrubs * Erecting tree guards and canes |
| Creation of riparian buffers – 10m wide - ungrazed | * Erecting protective fence * Erecting access gate(s) and gate posts |
| Creation of riparian buffers – 10m wide – planted with native trees | * Erecting protective fence * Erecting access gate(s) and gate posts * Planting native trees and shrubs * Erecting tree guards and canes |
| Establishment of native woodland less than 5 ha | * Planting native trees and shrubs and erecting tree guards and canes as necessary |

\*subject to change, any changes will be notified prior to signing of EFS agreements

#### **3.2.3** **Selection of EFS(W) additional NPIs**

Each EFS(W) Option selected may offer other NPIs which can be undertaken to further improve the environmental benefit.

When selecting an Option during the online application process, a list of these additional NPIs or capital items will be available and applicants can choose if they want to add one or more of these to their form. Please note that where the EFS Option is not completed by the applicant, additional NPIs will not be eligible for payment.

The value of these NPIs is added to the Agreement Value.

The NPIs available can be found in Table 4: EFS Wider Level Non-Productive Investments and payment rates.

# Table 4: EFS Wider Level Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) and payment rates\*

These capital items are undertaken in the first year of the Scheme only.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EFS Wider Level Non-Productive Investments | Code | Payment rate |
| Stock-proof fencing | SPF | £6.90/m |
| Permanent electric fencing (including energiser) | PEF | £5/m |
| Gate and 2 gate posts –  stock-proof fence | GPS | £267.33/gate + 2 posts |
| Drinking Trough | DTR | £79.50 each |
| Drinking Trough Base | DTB | £58.28 each |
| Pasture Pump and associated pipe work | PAP | £312/pump |
| Parkland/Fruit/ Standard native tree guard | SNT | £147/guard |
| Parkland/Fruit / Standard native tree stake | SNS | £5.22/ stake |

#### 

### 3.3 Stand-alone EFS Options

The stand- alone Options have their own individual prioritisation and selection criteria and are not included in the maximum agreement value limits.

The three stand-alone Options are:

* Establishment of native woodland less than 5ha,
* Traditional Native Breed – Irish Moiled Cattle,

## 3.3.1 Establishment of Native Woodland less than 5ha

This Option aims to ensure the successful establishment, retention and maintenance of native woodland. A minimum of 0.1ha and a maximum of 4.99 ha must be completed in the first year of the EFS agreement, made up of one or more individual woods. Trees may be planted on land declared as eligible agricultural area on the Single Application by the farm business but must not be planted on priority habitats such as species rich grassland, heath or bog. Permanent Grassland Sensitive (PGS) fields and breeding wader habitats are also unsuitable. A woodland creation plan (WCP) prepared and approved by DAERA, is a requirement of this Option. After applications for this Option are received, each applicant will be contacted by DAERA in relation to the WCP preparation.

Applicants must be prepared to retain native woodland established under this Option for a period of 15 years after the scheme. EFS payments will be made for the successful establishment and management of the woodland in its first 5 years.

Provided SFP was claimed and paid on the land in 2008, land planted in this manner is eligible for BPS for the 5 years of the EFS agreement and a further 15 years retention period.

In the event of oversubscription to the Woodland Options, it may be necessary to apply the following selection criteria to all eligible applications:

* Prioritisation of location, based on environmental benefit;
* Prioritisation of larger woodland areas.

Selection, prioritisation and scoring criteria may vary for each new application period.

DAERA may reject applications or require them to be varied if, in its opinion, they are not likely to contribute to the objectives of the Option.

The submission of a valid application does not guarantee entry under the EFS Woodland Option. Successful applicants will be notified in writing of their acceptance into the EFS Woodland Option and the commencement date of their agreement.

For more information on the EFS (W) Option “Establishment of Native Woodland less than 5ha” view the EFS Information sheet for the Option at the following link.

[Link to ‘Establishment of Native Woodland less than 5 ha' Option EFS Information Sheet](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-stand-alone-options)

## 3.3.2 Traditional Native Breed – Irish Moiled Cattle

This standalone Option aims to help ensure the survival of the Irish Moiled traditional breed. Female Irish Moiled animals aged 6 months or over on 01 January in the claim year are eligible for payment. For EFS(H) sites, the ‘Traditional native breeds’Option is eligible where it will maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of these sites and is included in the site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP).

In the event of oversubscription to the Traditional Native Breed Option, it may be necessary to apply the following selection criteria to all eligible applications:

* Prioritisation of smaller herds over larger herds;
* Prioritisation of location: - herds that are geographically isolated from other herds will be prioritised for funding. This will aim to mitigate the potential spread of diseases which could reduce Irish Moiled Cattle numbers.

Selection, prioritisation and scoring criteria may vary for each new application period.

DAERA may reject applications or require them to be varied if, in its opinion, they are not likely to contribute to the objectives of the Option.

The submission of a valid application does not guarantee entry under the EFS Traditional Native Breed Option.

Selected successful applicants will be notified in writing of their acceptance into EFS Traditional Native Breed Option and the commencement date of their agreement.

For more information on Traditional Native Breeds then view the information sheet at the following link:

['Traditional native breeds' EFS Option Information Sheet link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-wider-stand-alone-options)

For EFS (H), organic options will not be eligible.

# 3.4 Rotational Arable Options

Rotational Arable Options include the following:

* [Retention of winter stubble (RWS)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/AE1%2016%20352497%20%20EFS%20information%20sheet%20%28W%29%20-%20Retention%20of%20winter%20stubble%20%28RWS%29%20-%2022%20February%202017.pdf);
* [Creation of arable margin- 6m width – cultivated uncropped (CUM);](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/AE1%2017%20134233%20%20EFS%20information%20sheet%20%28W%29%20-%20Creation%20of%20arable%20margin%20-%206%20metre%20width%20-%20Cultivated%20uncropped%20%28CUM%29%20-%2022%20February%202017.pdf)
* Provision of winter feed crop for wild birds (WFC);
* [Creation of pollinator margin – 10m width –annual wildflower (WFM)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/AE1%2017%2059808%20%20EFS%20information%20sheet%20%28W%29%20-%20Creation%20of%20pollinator%20margin%20%E2%80%93%2010%20metre%20width%20%E2%80%93%20annual%20wildflower%20%28WFM%29%20-%2022%20February%202017.pdf).

Rotational Options can be moved around the farm in the normal rotation, **the claimed area should be established and maintained each year of the agreement.** If you wish to establish any Rotational Option in an alternative field specified in your agreement you will be unable to add this new field(s) to your pre-populated EFS online claim. **Instead you will have to submit an EFS SAF3 showing new field(s) details and area claimed**. If you do not have a list of alternative fields eligible for Rotational Options attached to your agreement or wish to rotate to a field not detailed on your agreement you should contact efs@daera-ni.gov.uk to validate the eligibility of any field(s) you are proposing to alternate to.

Land is classified as arable if:

• land is used to grow crops other than grass and permanent crops

• If your land will be used to grow an arable crop in this scheme year or has been used to grow an arable crop in any of the previous five years, then it will be classified as arable in this scheme year. Land used to grow grass in this scheme year but which has been used to grow an arable crop in any of the previous five years, i.e. temporary grassland, will also be classified as arable in this scheme year. Please note that the Option ‘Creation of arable margin - 6 metre width - Cultivated uncropped (CUM)’ can only be sited in arable land that is currently growing arable crops.

• Areas available for crop production but lying fallow, including areas set aside under EU schemes, in any of the previous five years will also be classified as arable land.

The Options should never be sited on Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland (PGS) fields.

# 3.5 EFS(H) application

After logging into your EFS application, in the EFS(H) section all fields declared by you in the previous year’s Single Application which have been identified as within the EFS(H) area will be listed.

Applicants must include all Higher fields over which they have management control for the duration of the EFS(H) agreement in their application.

For further information about what happens after an EFS(H) application is submitted, please see Section 4.

# 3.6 EFS Group Level

This Level is group collaboration under the EFS. Collaboration will involve a group of farmers working together to deliver environmental benefits at the landscape scale.

Each group will be co-ordinated by a facilitator. Members within a group will have their own individual EFS agreement. The facilitator will assist group members with applications, training and guidance to meet scheme requirements.

The Group projects are currently in ‘Pilot’. Further details, of the roll-out of Group, will be released after the pilots have been evaluated.

## 4. What happens after making an EFS application

**4.1**  **After making an EFS(H) Application**

After an applicant completes the initial EFS online application and indicates that they would like to apply for the EFS(H) level scheme with their EFS(H) fields, a prioritisation process is implemented, based on environmental benefit. Applicants will receive a letter advising them of the outcome of the EFS(H) prioritisation process.

Where an applicant is advised that their application has been successfully prioritised, they must engage an EFS Planner to prepare and submit a site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP) prior to the submission deadline. EFS Planner fees (net of VAT) will be reimbursed to successful EFS(H) applicants, following agreement acceptance; these fees will be recovered from the applicant should they subsequently cancel their agreement

For prospective EFS Planners, further information can be obtained by contacting DAERA on email: [EFSPlannerinfo@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:EFSPlannerinfo@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by calling Tel: 028 8675 7605.

The EFS Planner nominated by the applicant will:

1. Assess the EFS(H) fields in the application;
2. Determine the EFS Options and NPIs required to bring the land under favourable management;
3. Prepare a ssRMP which details the EFS Options and NPIs to be completed;
4. Discuss and agree the content of the ssRMP with the applicant; and
5. Submit an ssRMP on behalf of the applicant to DAERA.

The EFS Planner can select the appropriate EFS Options and NPIs from a wide range of Higher Level management Options (**Table 6**) and Higher Level Non-productive Investments (**Table 7**). EFS(W) management Options and NPIs (**Tables 2 and 4**) may also be selected by the EFS Planner (with the exception of Organic Options which are not applicable to EFS(H)).

Further information about each EFS Option and NPI can be found in the EFS Information Sheets available through the following link:

[**EFS(H) Option and NPI Information Sheets**](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level)

# Table 6: EFS (H) Remedial Management Options for Priority Habitats and Species\*

These management activities occur each year of the agreement and are paid each year. These must be included in the ssRMP for the Higher level scheme to be eligible for payment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description of Option | Annual Payment  (per ha) |
| Moorlands (Upland heath) remedial management | £40.00 **\*\*** |
| Moorlands (Lowland heath) remedial management | £40.00 **\*\*** |
| Moorlands (Montane heath) remedial management | £40.00 **\*\*** |
| Moorlands (Blanket bog) remedial management | £40.00 **\*\*** |
| Moorlands (Intact Lowland raised bog) remedial management | £40.00 **\*\*** |
| Purple Moorgrass and rush pasture remedial management | £180.00 |
| Calcareous grassland remedial management (all year grazing) | £230.00 |
| Calcareous grassland remedial management (restricted grazing) | £195.00 |
| Limestone pavement remedial management (all year grazing) | £230.00 |
| Limestone pavement remedial management (restricted grazing) | £195.00 |
| Lowland meadow remedial management (all year grazing) | £230.00 |
| Lowland meadow remedial management (restricted grazing) | £195.00 |
| Lowland dry acid grassland remedial management (all year grazing) | £260.00 |
| Lowland dry acid grassland remedial management (restricted grazing) | £230.00 |
| Coastal sand dunes remedial management | £235.00 |
| Coastal salt marsh remedial management (restricted grazing) | £45.00 |
| Coastal and flood plain grazing marsh remedial management (restricted grazing) | £180.00 |
| Maritime cliff and slope remedial management (all year grazing) | £55.00 |
| Maritime cliff and slope remedial management (restricted grazing) | £80.00 |
| Parkland remedial management | £45.00 |
| Ungrazed mixed ash woodland remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Ungrazed oak woodland remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Ungrazed wet woodland remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Grazed mixed ash woodland remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Grazed oakwood remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Grazed wet woodland remedial management | £65.00 **+** |
| Breeding wader remedial management | £195.00 |
| Reedbed remedial management | £50.00 |
| Fen remedial management | £50.00 |
| Lowland meadow and purple moorgrass rush pasture - cut for hay | £230.00 |
| Lapwing fallow plot | £699.00 |

\*subject to change, any changes will be notified prior to signing of EFS agreements

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **\*\*** Moorland payment rates: | |  | + Woodland payment rates: | |
| 0 – 50 ha | £40 / ha |  | 0 – 10 ha | £65 / ha |
| 50.01 – 100 ha | £20 / ha |  | 10.01 – 20 ha | £40 / ha |
| 100.01 ha and above | £10 / ha |  | 20.01 ha and above | £20 / ha |

Non-productive investments (NPIs) are also available in association with all EFS(H) Options.  These are listed in Table 7 below.

# Table 7: EFS Higher Level Non-Productive Investments (NPI) items\*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| NPIs available for EFS Higher Level | Payment |
| Scrub control light, machine cut, stems <7cm diameter\* | £979.13 / ha |
| Scrub control light, manual cut, stems <7cm diameter\* | £1271.83 / ha |
| Scrub control heavy, machine cut, stems >7cm diameter\* | £1942.80 / ha |
| Scrub control heavy, manual cut, stems >7cm diameter\* | £2528.20 / ha |
| Scrub control – follow-up treatment – stems <7cm diameter\* | £104.85 / ha |
| Scrub control – follow-up treatment – stems >7cm diameter\* | £183.49 / ha |
| Tree felling for biodiversity | £600.00 / ha |
| Primary Rush control \* | £89.34 / ha |
| Follow-up rush control (Year 2 – 5) | £35 / ha / year |
| Primary treatment of bracken – mechanised  or chemical | £216.35 / ha |
| Follow-up treatment of bracken – mechanised  or chemical | £108.30 / ha |
| Rhododendron and laurel – primary control \*\* | £5049.57 / ha |
| Rhododendron and laurel control - Follow-up spraying regrowth control | £90 / ha / application |
| Rhododendron and laurel control –  control by stem injection\* | Actual costs |
| Primary or follow-up treatments of invasive  non-native plants – Japanese knotweed\*\* | Actual costs |
| Primary or follow-up treatments of invasive  non-native plants – Giant hogweed\*\* | Actual costs |
| Primary or follow-up treatments of invasive  non-native plants – Himalayan balsam\*\* | Actual costs |
| Creation of wetlands | Actual costs |
| Creation of scrapes | £2.77 / m² |
| Bankside reprofiling | Actual costs |
| Structures/work to raise water levels | Actual costs |
| Ditch blocking – plastic piling dams (small) | £62 / dam |
| Ditch blocking – plastic piling dams (medium) | £151 / dam |
| Ditch blocking – plastic piling dams (large) | £385.16 / dam |
| Predator Perch removal | Actual costs |
| Predator control trap (Larsen trap) | £96.00 / trap |
| Machinery for management of fen & reedbed tall vegetation | Actual costs |
| Restorative pruning of traditional orchards | Actual costs |
| Tree surgery | Actual costs |
| Tree pollarding | Actual costs |
| Post and rail fencing | £19.25 / m |
| Rabbit proof fencing | £6.50 / m |
| Deer fence | £8.50 / m |
| Stock proof fencing | £6.90 / m |
| \*\* These capital items are area-based and may be claimed on current ineligible areas within a field. This may increase the MEA of the field parcel and this can be subsequently recorded on LPIS and in future claims. | |
| NPIs available for EFS Higher Level | Payment |
| Fence removal | £2.50 / m |
| Gate and 2 gate posts - deer fence | £276.33 / gate & 2 posts |
| Outrigger electric fence for stock fence | £0.85 / m |
| Solar powered energiser for electric fence | £327 / energiser |
| Standard parkland tree | £25 / tree |
| Standard fruit tree | £15.06 / tree |
| Native tree whip | £0.86 / whip |
| 1.2 m tubular tree guard and stake | £4.26 / guard |
| Spiral tree guard and cane | £0.63 / guard and cane |
| Woodcrete bat box | £70.00 / box |
| Red squirrel feeder | £84 / feeder |
| Large bird box | £36.40 / box |
| Small bird box | £19.67 / box |
| Barn owl box | £130 / box |
| Solitary bee box | £34.00 / box |
| Stock bridge | Actual costs |

\*subject to change, any changes will be notified prior to signing of EFS agreements

Although there is no maximum limit on the area/length/quantity of an Option that can be included in an ssRMP, any EFS(H) agreement with a total value greater than £60,000 over the 5 year period must be referred to the Scheme Manager for prior approval before a Scheme agreement can be issued.

DAERA may reject or revise any EFS(H) ssRMP which it does not deem to meet Scheme objectives and priorities and therefore does not represent value for money.

After the EFS Planner submits the ssRMP on behalf of the EFS(H) applicant, DAERA will consider the content of the documentation.

Applicants will be notified if their EFS(H) ssRMP has been successful or not. Successful applications will result in the applicant being offered a Scheme agreement. Scheme agreements must be accepted by accessing DAERA Online Services.

5. Applying for EFS payment

# 5.1 How to apply for payment

In order to receive payment for your EFS agreement an annual claim for payment of EFS Options and additional NPIs must be submitted on the Single Application and Map Service, by the deadline for Single Application submission. Please ensure that you include a current email address, either for yourself or your business (even if you are using an agent), in your application for the purposes of scheme administration. Details of the penalties for late claims are provided in the Guide to the Basic Payment Scheme which is published each year. Claims returned after the final date for receipt of claims with penalty will be deemed invalid.

Annual claims must be made for Options / NPIs even if no payment is due. Failure to

make an EFS claim for two consecutive years may result in termination of the relevant

EFS level agreement. Failure to make a claim for Options for two consecutive years will

result in termination of EFS agreements for agreements with one Option, or

termination of the affected Option for agreements with more than one Option; associated

NPIs will also be removed. Recovery of payments already made may be required,

including Planner Fees if the EFS Agreement Is terminated. Failure to claim for Year 1

NPIs on your EFS agreement will result in the NPI being ineligible for payment.

Failure to claim for a NPI in Years 2-5, (with the exception of Primary and follow-up

Vegetation Control NPIs) for 2 consecutive years will result in any previous payment

becoming ineligible. Recovery of payments already made may be required

A claim confirmation form must be submitted at the end of the first year of the EFS

Agreement. Applicants will be contacted by the Department in November of the first year

of their EFS Agreement requesting the claim confirmation.

Failure to return the claim confirmation form by 31st December, will result in termination of

the EFS Agreement, and the applicant will not be eligible for payment for any work

carried out to date.

Further information about claiming for EFS can be found via the following links:

[Area-based Schemes information for each claim year Link](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/grants-and-funding)

[EFS Wider Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level-terms-and-conditions)

[EFS Higher Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

Claimants can call the Single Application Advisory Service or use the convenient webchat facility within the DAERA online Services application should they require assistance with their payment claim. Alternatively claimants can nominate an agent to complete their payment claim for them. Details below:

Single Application Advisory Service 0300 200 7848

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/daera-online-services>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/appointing-agent-act-your-behalf-authorised-persons-2021>

# 5.2 Further information

Further information about the terms and conditions which apply to Scheme agreement holder can be viewed in the terms and conditions of the Scheme which can be accessed using the following links.

[EFS Wider Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-wider-level-terms-and-conditions)

[EFS Higher Terms and Conditions](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-farming-scheme-efs-higher-level-terms-and-conditions)

This includes information about:

* Non-compliance
* Penalties and repayments
* Withdrawing from a Scheme agreement
* Amending a Scheme agreement
* Force Majeure/Exceptional circumstances
* Review of Decisions

6. State Aid

The Environmental Farming Scheme is part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and as such is still subject to EU legislation until 31st December 2023.

Aid for the establishment of native woodland of less than 5 hectares and aid for agro-forestry systems are subject to retained European Commission State Aid rules and all applications will be assessed for compliance with  Articles 32 and 33 of Commission Regulation (EU) retained 702/2014 [Official Journal of the European Union L 193/1 – 75, 1 July 2014]

7.  Glossary of Terms and abbreviations

For the purposes of the scheme:

**Additional Non-productive Investments (NPIs): NPIs** available to complement certain management options and are often referred to as Additional Capital Items (see NPIs below).

**Additional Capital Items:** Capital Items available to complement certain management options and are referred to as Additional Non-productive Investments in this document.

**Agreement Document:** the document which describes the EFS Options and/or Additional NPIs to be undertaken by the Agreement holder and the payment rate associated with each EFS Option and/or NPIs.

**Agreement End Date**: the date on which the Agreement comes to an end, as set out in the Agreement Document.

**Agreement Holder:** the member or members of the DAERA farm business identified as in the EFS Agreement.

**Agreement Start Date**: the date on which the Agreement commences, as set out in the Agreement Document.

**Agricultural land:** any area of land in Northern Ireland which is registered as a parcel on the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS). These areas may include land which is deemed to be ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme.

**Annual Claim:** refers to a claim for EFS payment submitted under the Basic Payment Scheme Application in accordance with Articles 12 to 14 of Commission Regulations retained (EU) No) 809/2014.

**Agroforestry:** is a land management system which integrates trees with crops and/or livestock on the same plot of land.

**Area of Special Scientific Interest** **(ASSI):** designated sites that are protected under Northern Ireland for their nature and earth science value. They are selected based on specific qualifying features, which include earth science, habitats and species. The law relating to ASSIs is contained in the [Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002, Part IV](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2002/3153/contents).

**Authority**: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

**Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):** A direct payment to farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy from 2015.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of life on earth.

**Capital items:** are made up of those which are ‘essential Capital item(s)’ and those which are ‘additional Capital item(s)’. Capital items are also known as Non-productive Investments (NPIs).

**Confirmation Form**: Compulsory statement from all Year 1 Applicants confirming or reducing the claim submitted on their first year Single Application Form.

**Controls:** refer to the method of checking EFS requirements compliance. Checking may be carried out by administration, Control with Remote Sensing (CwRS) or by On-the-Spot Checks (OTSC).

**Eligibility:** refers to the elements which are essential to allow an agreement to take place, the disrespect of which will result in the exclusion from the Scheme.

**Environmentally Sensitive Permanent Grassland (PGS):** The CAP Reform Regulations contain a requirement to designate permanent grassland in areas, including in peat and wetlands, covered by Wild Birds Directive and/or the Habitats Directive which are environmentally sensitive and which need protection to meet the requirements of these Directives.

**Essential Capital items:** a term used to describe the work that an Agreement Holder is required to undertake as set out in the EFS Agreement to establish the EFS Option. Essential Capital items are also known as Essential Non-productive Investments (NPIs).

**Field boundaries:** includes dry stone walls, ditches, earth banks, hedges and rows of trees.

**Government Gateway account:** An account held onthe online system used for a range of Government services.

**Habitat:** the natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** is a process used to solve pest problems while minimising the risk to people and the environment

**Livestock unit (LU):** refers to a unit of measurement for livestock numbers.

Dairy cow: 1

Beef cow: 0.8

Breeding Bull: 1

Calf ,1yr: 0.4

Ewe: 0.15

Ewe and Lamb: 0.20

Sheep>1yr old: 0.20

**Non-Productive Investments (NPIs):** are **Capital items** – see Capital Items definition

**Pesticides:** a chemical used to kill harmful pests. These include insecticides, herbicides, molluscicides and fungicides.

**RAMSAR:** a wetland site of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention

**Riparian buffer:** the marginal area along a waterway and standing waters, such as lakes and ponds**.**

**Single Farm Payment (SFP):** a direct payment to farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy 2005-2015

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** a site designated under the Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC).

**Site specific Remedial Management Plan (ssRMP):** a site specific plan completed by an EFS Planner on behalf of the Applicant for land to be managed under the EFS Higher and EFS Group which details the Options and NPIs to be completed to bring the land under favourable management.

**Special Protection Area (SPA):** a designation under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)

**Abbreviations**

ASSI: Area of Special Scientific Interest

BPS: Basic Payment Scheme

DUC: Dual Use Claim

EFS: Environmental Farming Scheme

IPM: Integrated Pest Management

LPIS: Land Parcel Identification System

MEA: Maximum Eligible Area

NPI: Non-Productive Investment

NNR: National Nature Reserve

OTSC: On-the-Spot-Check

PGS: Permanent Grassland Sensitive

ssRMP: site specific Remedial

Management Plan

SAC: Special Area of Conservation

SPA: Special Protection Area

8. Contact details

If you have a specific query you can contact us using the email addresses or telephone number below. If you have a Farm Business Identification Number (6XXXXX) please quote it on all correspondence or have it to hand before you call.

**Email:**

For EFS queries email: [**efs@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:efs@daera-ni.gov.uk)

For general Grants and Funding queries email: [**areabasedschemes@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:areabasedschemes@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 200 7848

**Useful Addresses:**

If you wish to send your query by post you should send it to:

Area-Based Schemes Payment Branch

Orchard House

40 Foyle Street

Derry/Londonderry

BT48 6AT

Or you can visit your local DAERA Direct Office as listed below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DAERA Direct Offices**  **Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 10.00am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 4pm.** | | |
| **Armagh**  Atek Building  Edenaveys Industrial Estate  Newry Road  Edenaveys  Co. Armagh  BT60 1NF | **Ballymena**  Academy House  121A Broughshane Street  Town Parks  Ballymena  Co. Antrim  BT43 6HY | **Coleraine**  Crown Buildings  Artillery Road  Millburn  Coleraine  Co. Derry/Londonderry  BT52 2AJ |
| **Downpatrick**  Rathkeltair House  Market Street  Demesne of Down Acre  Downpatrick  Co. Down  BT30 6LZ | **Dungannon**  Crown Buildings  Thomas Street  Drumcoo  Dungannon  Co. Tyrone  BT70 1HR | **Enniskillen**  Innishkeen House  Killyhevlin  Enniskillen  Co. Fermanagh  BT74 4EJ |
| **Mallusk**  Castleton House  15 Trench Road  Grange of Mallusk  Mallusk  Newtownabbey  Co. Antrim  BT36 4TY | **Magherafelt**  Units 36-38, Meadowlane Shopping Centre  Moneymore Road  Townparks of Magherafelt  Magherafelt  Co. Derry/Londonderry  BT45 6PR | **Newtownards**  Sketrick House  16 Jubilee Road  Corporation South  Newtownards  Co. Down  BT23 4YH |
| **Newry**  Glenree House  Unit 2, Springhill Road  Carnbane Industrial Estate  Carnbane, Newry  Co. Down  BT35 6EF | **Omagh**  Sperrin House  Sedan Avenue  Lisnamallard  Omagh  Co. Tyrone  BT79 7AQ | **Strabane**  Government Offices  18 Urney Road  Strabane  BT82 9BX |