

How to complete the Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier application form

About these notes

These notes help you complete your Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier application form and maps in 2018.

Please read the notes carefully and use them to complete your application accurately and fully, including all supporting documents.

This will help Natural England make a timely decision on your application.

For further advice please contact Natural England. (See Annex 9 of [MT Manual](#))

Application Steps – how to apply

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Double check you've answered all questions and have provided all information required

Before you complete your application

Read:

- the 'Important information about your application – please read' page sent with your application form. If any information is missing or incorrect please contact Natural England.
- the Countryside Stewardship (CS) Mid Tier (MT) Manual available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-mid-tier-including-water-quality-capital-items-manual>
- information about options and items available using the CS online grants finder tool: <https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants>

Make sure that:

<p>You, and the land that you are including in your application, are eligible for Countryside Stewardship (see Section 3 'Who can apply' of the MT Manual).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>You have read and understood the Countryside Stewardship scheme rules and requirements. (The CS terms and conditions can be found at Annex 1 of the MT Manual)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>You have registered all of the land in your application on the Rural Land Register. This includes farmyards on which you apply for capital works or Maintenance of Weatherproof Traditional Farm Buildings.</p> <p>The application does not have to cover the whole holding but it MUST include all land parcels that will support rotational options plus ALL SSSI or Scheduled Monuments within your control. Please note Basic Payment Scheme cross compliance requirements apply across the whole holding.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>You have a Single Business Identifier (SBI) number and a Vendor number. See the 'Register land with the Rural Land Register' guidance at https://www.gov.uk/register-land-rural-land-register.</p> <p>Note: References in the above guidance to empowering agents do not apply to Countryside Stewardship. To authorise an agent to act on your behalf for this application, complete Question 2 of the CS application form and give the agent permission to act using the Rural Payments service (see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-authorise-an-agent for more information on setting permissions in Rural Payments).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>You have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number See the 'Get a CPH number from the Rural Payments Agency' guidance at https://www.gov.uk/get-a-cph-number-from-the-rural-payments-agency</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Unless you told us that you had a valid Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER), one will have been initiated when you requested your application pack. If you have not received it within 4 weeks please contact Natural England.</p> <p>For a HEFER to be valid it must be less than 3 years old and there must have been no changes or new archaeological features identified to your holding since it was created.</p> <p>Use the HEFER to inform your choice of Historic Environment (HE) options and prevent the use of damaging options on HE features.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>You understand the evidence requirements of your application, dependent on your option choice. This may include a valid organic schedule and certificate, NE Approval to use specific options, necessary permission (e.g. planning permission) or a completed CS Facilitator endorsement form. Annex 4 will help you with this part of the application.</p> <p>See Section 6.4 of the MT Manual for further information on Evidence, and the 'Mid Tier options, supplements and capital items' part of the MT Manual for full evidence requirements of each options and capital item.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If someone else claims Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on any land parcels you include you have read Section 3.3.2 of the MT Manual on dual use and enclose the required evidence with your application.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If you are a tenant of a Public body landlord, you enclose a copy of your tenancy agreement with your application.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On the application form itself:

Step 1 - Confirm which type of agreement you are applying for

Choose from Mid Tier **or** Mid Tier water quality capital items only

NB you can claim for both water quality and boundary capital items in Mid Tier; you should select 'Mid Tier water capital items only' if you **only** wish to apply for water quality capital items.

Then enter an Agreement title, this can be the farm name or what the land is commonly known as.

Step 2 - Complete Section 1: Application Details and Section 2: Farm Business Details

Complete this Section to record the applicant(s) details. Only complete Section 2 up to and including question 13.

Question 1	Enter the Single Business Identifier (SBI) number of the applicant.
Question 2	If you are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not an agent (or a partnership representative acting as an agent) acting on behalf of the applicant(s) tick 'No'.• an agent (or partnership representative acting as an agent) acting on behalf of the applicant, tick 'Yes' when the individual(s) on whose behalf you are applying has given you permission in Rural payments. Anyone listed on the People and Permissions screen with 'Full permissions' under 'Business details' can do this. This MUST be completed before submitting the application.
Question 3	Complete (a) to (f) with the contact / applicant(s) details. For partnership agreements enter the names of all partners in the box at question 5. Please inform us immediately of any changes to your contact information.
Question 4	Enter the County Parish Holding (CPH) number of the land you are including in the application. If you have more than one holding please enter the CPH of your primary holding.
Question 5	Tick if the applicant is a Partnership, Charity or Public Sector Body. As applicable, list additional partners or tell us more about the type of Public Sector Body.
Question 6	(a) Tick to confirm whether the applicant currently has management control of all of the land in the application for the entire length of the proposed agreement and can meet the Declaration and Undertakings in Section 4. If ' Yes ' go to Question 7. If ' No ' complete Question 6 (b). (b) Complete a 'Countryside Stewardship Land Ownership and Control' form with each person who would take over the applicant's responsibilities should they cease to have management control over any of the land - normally the landlord or another person with management control. Tick 'Yes' to confirm that these are attached then go to Question 6 (c). The form can be obtained from your Natural England office or https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-land-ownership-and-control-form . (c) Confirm if any of the counter signatories are a Public Body. If ' No ' go to Question 7. If ' Yes ' go to Question 6 (d) (d) Include a copy of your Tenancy Agreement with your application, so that we can ensure your application is valid. Tick to confirm you have done. See Section 3.2 'Management control, eligibility and scheme rules' of the MT Manual . Go to Question 7

<p>Question 7</p>	<p>(a) If you have any obligations in your tenancy to carry out environmental management on the land in this application tick 'Yes', and go to Question 7 (b), otherwise tick 'No' and go to Question 8.</p> <p>(b) Obligations of your tenancy agreement cannot be funded by Countryside Stewardship. Tick 'Yes' to confirm that this application will not seek funding for these activities. Go to Question 8.</p>
<p>Question 8</p>	<p>If the applicant has applied for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in 2018 tick 'Yes', otherwise tick 'No'.</p> <p>If 'No' please provide compatible BPS land use codes in Annex 1, as described in Step 4 of this guidance.</p>
<p>Question 9</p>	<p>If someone else claims BPS on any parcel in the application tick 'Yes' at (a) then state if you are the Landlord or tenant at (b). Confirm by ticking 'Yes' at (c) that you have read Section 3.3.2 of the MT Manual and that the required evidence has been provided.</p>
<p>Question 10</p>	<p>If the applicant receives funding other than from BPS for the management of the land in the application tick 'Yes' otherwise tick 'No'.</p> <p>If 'Yes' enter the details of the other funding in the box below Question 10.</p> <p>See Section 3.4 'Land receiving other funding' of the MT Manual.</p>
<p>Question 11</p>	<p>Confirm whether any land in the application is designated by HM Revenue & Customs as national heritage property under the conditional exemption tax incentive (heritage property relief).</p> <p>If 'Yes' enter the name of the exempt property as it appears on HMRC website (http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm) in the box provided.</p> <p>See Section 3.4.8 'Inheritance Tax or Capital Gains Exemptions' of the MT Manual.</p> <p>See the 'Tax relief for national heritage assets' guidance at https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-national-heritage-assets.</p>
<p>Question 12</p>	<p>Confirm whether you are a member of a Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund (CSFF) facilitated group</p> <p>If 'Yes' complete and enclose your facilitator's endorsement form with your application. If requested, this was sent with your application pack.</p> <p>See Section 5.2.1 'Facilitation funding' of the MT Manual.</p> <p>See 'Guide to Countryside Stewardship: facilitation fund' at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-countryside-stewardship-facilitation-fund</p>
<p>Question 13</p>	<p>a) Go to Section 4.3.3 of the MT Manual</p> <p>b) a) Check whether any options or capital items in your application require Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer (CSFO) approval. If not, tick 'No'. If so, contact your local CSFO. If you have received the CSFO Approval form tick 'Yes'.</p> <p>c) b) Confirm that the CSFO Approval form is enclosed and that you have taken account of the advice in your choice of options and capital items.</p> <p>d) c) Confirm whether your application includes other options to improve water quality that you have discussed with your CSFO, so that your application may be eligible for an uplift in score</p> <p>e) d) If applicable, name your CSFO and the Catchment /River Basin.</p> <p>For more information on Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) see https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution</p>

Step 3 - Complete your Farm Environment Record map(s)

You must **record all environmental features and areas** on the land parcels to be included in the application and **mark parcels that are at moderate to high risk of run off or soil erosion**.

The application does not have to cover the whole holding but it **MUST include all land parcels that will support rotational options plus ALL SSSI or Scheduled Monuments within your control**. It is a condition of Countryside Stewardship that you identify, map and retain these features and areas.

If you have a FER map from a previous Environmental Stewardship agreement and there has been little or no change to the environmental features on your land, you may be able to use that map (updated as necessary) rather than complete the CS FER Basemap.

If you do not have a FER map from a previous Environmental Stewardship agreement and/or there have been changes to the environmental features on your land then complete the blank FER map included in the application pack.

Please note Basic Payment Scheme cross compliance requirements apply across the whole holding.

Identify and mark parcels identified with ‘moderate to high runoff and soil erosion risk’

Prior to completing the FER, you should consider whether any of your land is at risk from surface runoff and soil erosion.

To do this use this form

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655393/cs-runoff-and-soil-erosion.pdf

Using the risk assessment you must now mark on the FER, in brown hatching, all fields that have been identified as at moderate or higher risk of surface runoff and soil erosion.

Mark your environmental features and areas on your map

To complete your FER map(s) you will need to mark all of your FER features on the map(s). Walking your holding will inform you which parcels are suited to Countryside Stewardship options and allow you to mark the environmental features (as shown on your FER map’s key) within them on a copy of your FER map. Your Environmental Information map, included in your application pack, may also indicate features that require marking on your FER map(s).

Make sure your FER map(s) are clear and accurate.

If you wish to use a previous Environmental Stewardship FER map, you should first consider the need for any updates (see below) and then decide whether the updated map would be clear and understandable. For former ELS/HLS agreements the combined FER/FEP map may contain significant information not required for CS. If this is the case you may decide that it is preferable to complete a new CS FER map.

Use the colours on the FER map’s key. Confirm that you have a feature by marking the corresponding blank symbol on the right side of the map with the coloured pencil you have used to mark that feature.

The completed map(s) must be submitted as part of your application.

For the following features, please note the following specific information:

Marking ‘boundaries with trees’

Only boundaries with, on average, one or more eligible trees per 100 m need to be marked as ‘boundaries with trees’.

For example, a hedgerow of 400 m would need to have at least four eligible trees along its length. Eligible trees are those that are native species, standing within 1 m of a hedgerow and over 30 cm diameter at breast height.

These boundaries should be marked with a green cross over the boundary line, as shown in the FER map's assigned colour key (In-field trees still need to be counted and marked as shown on the key).

If you are using a FER from an earlier ES agreement and it shows the number of hedgerow trees, you do not need to change it.

Marking hedges

On accepting a CS agreement you will be agreeing that you will not cut more than 50% of hedges in any one year. This is a scheme baseline requirement that covers all hedges in Mid Tier and Higher Tier agreements. It covers all hedges marked on the FER which meet the following CS hedge definition:

'any planted boundary lines of shrubs (a woody plant where the distance between the ground and the base of the leafy layer is less than 2 m) which are over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide (between major woody stems at the base) and are composed of at least 80% native shrubs'.

This does not apply to road and trackside hedges that need to be cut annually or more frequently for public safety.

To mark the cutting regime of the hedges on the FER map you will need to use two different types of marking as indicated in the FER map's assigned colour key, as per the definitions below:

- i. Hedgerow (meets 50% cutting limitation). For those hedges that are managed as the baseline of the scheme and no more than 50% of these hedges are cut in any one year (this includes hedges that are to be included in CS capital or revenue options and will therefore have specific management prescriptions). If hedges are in specific CS hedge management options, these specific prescriptions should be followed by the agreement holder and checked on inspection, rather than the baseline requirement.
- ii. Hedgerow (exempt from the cutting limitation). For hedges that are exempt from this as they need more regular cutting to maintain public safety.

Updating an Environmental Stewardship FER map

If you are using a FER map from an earlier ES agreement, you must check that it is up to date before submitting it with your CS application.

Please check and update it as follows:

1. On the ES FER map:
 - a. Strike out any land on the ES FER map that is not to be included in the CS application.
 - b. Add in any new features not showing on the ES FER (for example, a new pond).
 - c. Hedgerows: identify any hedgerows that are to be exempt from the 50% annual cutting limitation, by marking them up using the symbols indicated on the CS FER Basemap key.
2. Compare the new CS FER basemap key with your existing ES FER map key:
 - a. If there are any features listed on the CS FER key that are not on the ES FER key mark them up on the ES FER map, using the symbols given in the CS FER basemap key. (Some earlier ES FER maps did not include Earthbanks, Scrub, bracken, boulders & rocky outcrops).
3. On the CS FER basemap:
 - a. Mark up the environmental features and soil erosion risk on any new land not included in the ES FER map.
4. Sign and date the updated ES FER map, to confirm it is complete and accurate. If you have made any annotations to the CS FER Basemap you will need to include both maps (ES FER and CS FER, with the application).

The updated map must be clear and understandable. If we find that a FER map is not sufficiently clear and understandable, we will not be able to accept it.

Step 4 - Complete your CS option map(s) and option/capital item annexes

Before you begin

- Choose your options and capital items, using the guidance given in Section 2.1 'Selecting multi year options and capital items' and Section 4.5 'Developing an Application' of the MT Manual.
- If you have requested a postal application and have insufficient space to add all of your options/capital items to the data sheet table in an Annex, photocopy the relevant Annex before you complete it to use it as a continuation sheet. Where you have used continuation sheet(s), please indicate this on the relevant data sheet and on the Confirmation of attached application form and supporting documents page at the end of the application form, attach them securely to your application.

If you do not have access to a photocopier, please use your own continuation sheet(s), ensuring that you include all of the information required in the related data sheet.

Complete the CS options map for multi-annual options and capital items in your Mid Tier application

For each **CS non-rotational option** (including capital items) you wish to include, complete the CS Options map(s) as follows:

- mark every instance of the option using the appropriate colour specified on the Options map key and;
- write the appropriate option code, using a black pen, on or against the option in each place where you have marked it on your Options map(s).

Please take care to measure option lengths or areas and then calculate values accurately as errors may lead to the reduction of payments and to penalties being imposed.

For double sided hedges you will have to add the hedge twice, either side of the boundary.

Note this is only allowed where both sides of the boundary are registered on the RLR. If one side has not been registered you are only allowed a single sided hedge.

Or

Create a sketch map for Mid Tier water quality capital items only

Create a sketch map showing the location of the farm yard and all farm yard water only options.

Now complete the application Annexes

You need to complete all of the green tabs in the application Annex. First complete the 'START HERE' tab with applicant name, SBI and application ID.

Annex 1: Land summary	
<p>This worksheet must be completed for all applications.</p> <p>For 'water quality capital item only' applications you must complete the 'Runoff/Soil erosion risk' and 'Land use of non-declared BPS land', SSSI and Scheduled Monument columns, if these are applicable to your land.</p> <p>Purpose: to provide details of land parcels to be included in the application.</p>	
Column heading	Action required
Field parcel/OS Map Sheet ref/National Grid Ref.	<p>Details of all of the land parcels relating to your application will be pre-populated in these columns.</p> <p>If you find that some of your eligible land parcels are not shown in Annex 1 check whether the parcels are visible on the map provided with your application pack please add the details of the parcel to this sheet, otherwise please tell us.</p> <p>If any parcels are listed that you do not wish to include in your application please delete them from the annex, noting that you should not delete any which you will be using for rotational arable options.</p>
Parcel name	Enter the name that you use to identify the land parcel. If you do not have a name for your parcel, repeat the field parcel reference
Total land parcel size	Pre-populated
Does this parcel contain a SSSI?	Select 'Yes' or 'No' as applicable.
Does this parcel contain a Scheduled Monument?	Select 'Yes' or 'No' as applicable.
LFA Status	Use the key at the top of the annex to choose the appropriate status.
Will Rotational options be included on this parcel	Select 'Yes' if the parcel will have rotational options applied to it at any point in the lifetime of the agreement.
Run-off/soil erosion risk?	Select 'Yes' or 'No' as applicable. For more information on run-off/soil erosion see Step 2 - Complete your Farm Environment Record map(s)
Land use for land not declared or claimed for BPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter compatible land use codes for parcels that you have not declared use for on your BP5 form Enter land use codes for parcels where you don't claim BPS <p>For details of land use codes, see the latest list of codes on the 'BPS 2017' page at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bps-2017</p>
Is this parcel included in the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package ?	Select 'Yes' or 'No' as applicable.

Annex 2: CS Options	
This worksheet must be completed for all applications.	
Purpose: to apply for multi-annual options	
Column heading	Action required
Parcel name	Select from the drop down list
Rotational or Non-rotational-option?	Select from the drop down list
Option Group	Select from the drop down list. This will generate a tailored list of options in the 'Option' column based upon the type of land you wish to manage, e.g. grassland, arable, etc.
Option	Select the option you wish to apply to that parcel from the drop down list. If the option you wish to use does not appear in the drop down list make sure you have selected correctly in the 'Rotational or Non-rotational option' column.
Quantity	Add quantity to 4 decimal places for ha and tonnes only. Use whole numbers for metres.
Area of linked feature	If the option has been selected to protect/enhance an environmental feature, enter the feature's measurement (e.g. length, area, unit), otherwise leave the column blank.

Annex 3: Capital Items	
Purpose: to apply for Capital Items.	
Column heading	Action required
Parcel name	Select from the drop down list
Capital Item Group	Select from the drop down list. This will generate a tailored list of capital items in the 'Capital item' column based upon the type of works you wish to undertake, e.g. Boundaries, Livestock, etc.
Capital Item	Select from the drop down list
Quantity	Add quantity to 4 decimal places for Ha, Meters and tonnes only.

Step 5 – Confirm evidence submitted with the application

Complete **Annex 4** to confirm that the required evidence will be submitted with the application refer to Section 6.4 of the [MT Manual](#) for full evidence requirements.

The green boxes in Annex 4 indicate that additional evidence may be required. You must read the options and prescriptions for full details to determine the evidence you must provide.

In the green box select 'Yes' from the drop down list to show that the required evidence accompanies the application, or 'None supplied' if this has not been supplied.

Please note:

- Pre approval for the use of some MT options is required.
- Options GS2 Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs) and GS5 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs require initial soil samples, but the results do not have to be submitted until the first payment claim stage.

- For organic options, ensure that you have also completed Section 3 of the application form as additional evidence is required.

The 'Application summary' and 'Grant totals' annexes provide useful information on the options you have selected and the financial value of your application. These annexes are automatically populated as you complete annexes 1 to 3.

If you are applying for one of the Wild Pollinator Farm Wildlife Packages (WPFWP) then the calculators in the blue annexes will help you ensure you are meeting the requirements of the respective package.

Step 6 - Return to the application form and complete remaining questions in section 2

Question 14	<p>Tick the 'Yes' boxes to confirm that you have completed your FER map(s) following the guidance above.</p> <p>and, CS options map/s for Mid Tier, and/or sketch map/s showing the location of farm yard and all farm yard water only options, as appropriate for the application type.</p>
Question 15	<p>(a) After following Step 3 of this guidance, if any of the land is at moderate to high risk from run-off or soil erosion tick 'Yes', otherwise tick 'No'.</p> <p>(b) If you tick 'Yes' to 15 (a), answer question 15 (b) as 'Yes' (once you have completed the FER map and Annex 1)</p>

Step 7 (if applicable only) - Complete Section 3: Organic Support

If you are not applying for Organic Support please go to Step 8.

Complete Section 3 to record details of your application for organic support, conversion and maintenance.

For more information see Section 3.2.7 'Organic conversion and management' of the [MT Manual](#).

Question 16	<p>(a) If the application only includes organic conversion (OR) and/or organic maintenance (OT) options, tick 'Yes' and continue to Question 17, otherwise tick 'No' and complete Question 16(b).</p> <p>(b) If you wish to continue with the organic element of your MT agreement if the non-organic element is not successful tick 'Yes', otherwise tick 'No'.</p>
Question 17	<p>Tick 'Yes' to confirm that you have read the definition of an 'active farmer' contained in the 'The Active Farmer Rule' section of the latest version of the 'The Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2018' (BPS scheme rules 2018) guidance and that the applicant meets this definition.</p> <p>This guidance is available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bps-2018</p>
Question 18	<p>(a) If the applicant is registered with a Defra licensed Organic Control Body (OCB) tick 'Yes' and continue to Question 19, otherwise tick 'No' and continue to Question 19 (b).</p> <p>(b) If you are not registered with an OCB, and wish to convert you must complete a Viability Plan and include it with your application? Please tick the 'Yes' box to confirm you have done this.</p>
Question 19	<p>Tick the 'Yes' box to confirm that you have completed and agreed with your OCB a Conversion Plan for the business and all land being entered into CS. The Conversion Plan must be submitted with your application. If you have not yet completed and agreed a Conversion plan, this must be done before the application is submitted.</p>
Question 20	<p>Enter the name and address of your Defra licensed OCB.</p>
Question 21	<p>Enter your Organic Licence number.</p>

Question 22 Tick the 'Yes' box to confirm that you are including copies of the current Schedule and Certificate from your OCB that cover all relevant land parcels in your application.

Question 23 Enter the dates covered by your Organic certificate

Step 8 - Complete Section 4: Declaration and undertakings

Complete Section 4 to confirm that you have read and understood the requirements of the Countryside Stewardship scheme and the undertakings that you are making in submitting your application.

- Read the declaration, undertakings and warning carefully.
- **Sign Section 4** and enter your name in block letters, your capacity (e.g. Company Director, Agent) and the date of your signature.

The party/parties that sign the application at Section 4 must have full authority and capacity to represent and bind the applicant.

If the applicant is a partnership and the partners have not appointed an Application Submission Agent, all partners must sign.

Step 9 - Complete the Confirmation of attached application form and supporting documents page

Complete the checklist to confirm that you have fully completed your application and attached all required supporting documents, approvals, evidence or photographs.

Step 10 - Submit your application

Please send all Sections of the completed form together with annexes, maps and other supporting documents to Natural England either via email to the mailbox address listed at Annex 9 of the MT manual or to the office address also shown at Annex 9.

It is recommended that you obtain proof of postage for any documents sent to Natural England by post. You are advised to retain a copy of your completed application form and your FER and Options maps.

What happens next?

Natural England will check that:

- you meet the eligibility requirements;
- all the necessary details have been entered on your application form and annexes;
- all of your maps have been completed; and
- all evidence has been submitted.

If your application fails any of these checks, we will contact you to explain what is wrong and how the failed check(s) can be corrected (if applicable).

The Mid Tier is competitive, which means that not everyone who applies will be successful. A scoring process based on environmental benefit will be used to select successful applicants.

What will happen if your application has been successful?

Subject to any changes agreed with your Natural England adviser, you will be offered an agreement.

What will happen if your application has been unsuccessful?

You may submit a written representation to Natural England. Your case will then be reviewed.