Countryside Stewardship (CS): How to apply for a CS Protection and Infrastructure Grant

Contents

Countryside Stewardship (CS): How to apply for CS Protection and Infrastructure Grant

This guidance explains how to complete your Countryside Stewardship (CS) Protection and Infrastructure Grant application

Be aware of fraud

How to avoid fraud and what to do if you suspect an attempted fraud.

Fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments and we're aware that in the past some customers have received emails, texts and telephone calls claiming to be from RPA or Defra. Links to a fake website designed to look like an authentic RPA or Defra online service are sometimes included in the message. We do not send emails or text messages with links to websites asking you to confirm your personal details or payment information. We strongly advise anyone who receives such a request not to open the link and delete the item.

As fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments, remember:

- never discuss your bank account details with someone you don't know
- we will not ask you to make a payment over the phone
- delete any emails or texts you do not believe are genuine, and do not open any links – our main email addresses are:
  - ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk
  - rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk
  - FETFEnquiries@rpa.gov.uk
  - FETFClaims@rpa.gov.uk
  - FTF@rpa.gov.uk
- be cautious about what information you share externally, particularly on social media.

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact:

- RPA's Fraud Referral Team on 0800 347 347 or FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk
- Action Fraud (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime) on 0300 123 2040.

1 Introduction

This guidance explains how to complete your Countryside Stewardship (CS) Protection and Infrastructure Grant application.

You can download an application form from the how to apply website on GOV.UK.

You will need to have an agreement in place to receive a capital grant before making a claim. You can claim once work has been completed by a contractor, or yourself or your employee and you have paid all invoices.

If you cannot access the internet to download an application form, you can call us on 03000 200 301 and we'll try to help.

To find out what this grant covers, you can see our guidance on GOV.UK.

When to apply

There is no deadline for the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to receive your completed application and supporting documents. The application and supporting documents should be sent at the same time.

We recommend that you submit your application as early as possible and well before the commencement of construction to allow time to resolve any queries. This will help the Forestry Commission make decisions and recommendations about your application.

Getting started

To get started it's important that you do the following:

1. Register or sign in to the Rural Payments service

To receive CS payments, you must be registered in the Rural Payments service. To find out how to do this, read 'Register or sign into the Rural Payments service' below. If you do not have access to the internet, call us on 03000 200 301 and we'll try to help.

2. Check and change

You must check that your personal details, business details, permission levels and digital maps are up to date, and update them if needed before requesting your pack. You may find the RLE1 guidance useful, which is on GOV.UK.

3. Complete the CS Protection and Infrastructure Grant Application Form

Make sure you have one of the following before you apply:

- a current woodland management plan, or
- a woodland creation plan, or
- an agreement from your woodland officer that a road is necessary for the maintenance of the woodland.

Download and complete the CS Protection and Infrastructure Grant Application Form from the gov.uk website

If you do not have access to the internet and cannot download the form, please call 03000 200 301 and we'll try to help.

4. Planning permission

Provide evidence that you have contacted your local council to see if you need planning permission for the road you want to construct.

5. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA determination will be carried for the proposed works unless they have already been considered under an EIA in the last 5 years.

6. Read the scheme manual and other guidance

All the guidance and information you need for Countryside Stewardship is on GOV.UK:

- search for the CS Protection and Infrastructure manual
- for information about the evidence you need for your application, and whether you need to submit it with your application or keep it until you're asked for it, search for Countryside Stewardship grants.

If you do not have access to the internet you can email or call us to request a paper copy of the manual.

You can read guidance about Agri-environment agreements and BPS on GOV.UK. Search for Agri-environment schemes (CS and ES) and BPS.

Remember, it's your responsibility to make sure that:

- you meet the scheme rules
- all the eligible land included in your application is correct, to the best of your knowledge.

2 How to apply

This section gives the information needed to apply for the CS Protection and Infrastructure grant

Before you start, check that you have the following:

- CS Protection and Infrastructure grant application form
- 3 quotes
- Evidence that you are in the process of obtaining consent from the relevant bodies
- A Woodland management plan or a Woodland Creation Plan or an agreement from your woodland officer.

If you've received your pack by post, fill in the application form then either post the documents to us; or you can scan them into your computer and send them to us by email at ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk.

3 Complete your application form and maps

This section tells you how to fill in your CS Protection and Infrastructure grant application form

Step 1 – Start your application form

If you've received the pack by email – after you've saved it to your computer, fill in the form on your screen.

If you've received the pack by post:

- use black ink and CAPITAL LETTERS. Do not use pencil or felt-tip pen
- do not cross through whole pages or remove pages
- do not use correction fluid. Correct mistakes and initial and date them Completely fill any checkbox containing a mistake and put an 'X' or a tick in the correct box.

You must sign your application at Section 5 if you are submitting a paper application by post.

Front page

Section 1: Applicant Details

1. Enter your name, or the name of the agreement holder of the Woodland Creation or Woodland Management plan that will be used in support of this application.
2. You can find your SBI on your Woodland Management or Creation Plan Agreement.
3. Enter the agreement title, for example the land or farm name. This must match the agreement title entered on the application form.
4. Enter the county where the woodland in your application is located. If your woodland crosses a boundary give the county where the greater proportion is found.
5. Tick the box if you have sent us a Land Ownership and Control (LOC) form. You need to send us a LOC if you do not have management control over all the land included in this application for the duration of the proposed agreement.

You can get a copy of the [CS LOC form](#) on GOV.UK. Or call us to ask for a paper copy if you cannot get online.

Section 2:

6.Enter the lead applicant's full name.

7.Confirm if the agreement holder will be conducting the work. We can only pay for 80% of the awarded grant amount if the work is conducted by you and/or your employee(s).

8.Tell us the name of the Forestry Commission area that the woodland in your application is located. If your woodland crosses a boundary, select the area in which the greater amount is found.

For information about Forestry Commission areas and contacts read [Office access and opening hours](#) on GOV.UK.

9.Enter a 6 figure, OS grid reference for the central point of the woodland, formatted as 2 letters followed by a space, 3 digits, a space and then the final 3 digits, for example, GR 123 456.

10.Find information about planning on GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/planning-permission-england-wales If 'Yes' go to 11 (a), if 'No' go to 11 (b)

11(a). Tick 'Yes' if the local planning authority have confirmed that you will need planning permission. Go to Question 12. Tick 'No' if you do not require planning permission from the local planning authority and continue to Question 11(b)

11(b). Will the project be undertaken via permitted development

If 'Yes' please provide evidence from your local authority when submitting your claim. You will also need to advise your local Forestry Commission Woodland Officer that you have contacted your local planning authorities when you apply. If planning permission is required, please provide evidence of granted planning permission from your local authority when submitting your claim. See section 4.6.1 of the [Countryside Stewardship Protection and Infrastructure Manual](#) for more information.

12.Enter the Forestry Commission reference number for your approved Woodland Management Plan or Woodland Creation Plan. This is usually a 5 digit number. You must have a Woodland Management Plan approved or approved in principle by the Forestry Commission before you submit your initial application.

You will also need Forestry Commission approval and a valid reference number for Woodland Management Plans that have not been funded through the Forestry Commission (for example. via UKWAS 33 certification).

If you do not have your reference number, contact your local Forestry Commission Woodland Officer. Read about the Requirements for a Woodland Management Plan in Annex 5 a) in the CS Higher Tier manual.

13.Confirm if you have had an Operational Site Assessment (OSA). An OSA is a check list that may be used when planning forest operations such as harvesting or civil engineering work.

Please see here for more information: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-and-protect-woodland-wildlife

14.Confirm if any of the land in your application contains a Special Area of Conservation and/or a Tree Preservation Order.

Section 3

Land Parcels you wish to apply (FY2 Woodland Infrastructure)

Land Parcel. The land parcel reference is the Ordnance Survey (OS) Map sheet reference and National Grid field number. It must contain a 10 character reference, made up of 2 letters, 4 numbers and the final 4 numbers indicating the centre of the land parcel (for example, LP12345678). We need the whole reference to identify the land parcel.

SSSI or SM Designation State yes or no whether a land parcel contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and/or a Scheduled Monument.

See 4.6.1 of the CS Protection and Infrastructure Manual [link] for more information.

Type of Road on this land parcel: You can find information about types of tracks in 'Table 1: Description of Tracks' in the Operations Note 25 on GOV.UK.

Total Length of Road (approximate)

This is the length of your road in meters when it has been completed.

Agents Fees

An agent in this context is someone who either manages the construction project or helps find the right contractor or quotes. This is not to be mistaken for an agent who fills out your RPA online claim or your application form on your behalf.

Quotations 1-3 Enter the following details, for 3 contractors' quotes:

- Contractor Name
- Fee amount excluding VAT
- VAT amount (enter '0' if no VAT is charged). The total amounts will be calculated automatically in the Total actual costs box
- If you are claiming agents' fees, enter the Agent Name, the fee amount excluding VAT, and the VAT amount (please enter '0' if no VAT is charged). The Total will be calculated automatically.

Selected Quotation – Quotation Ref

Choose the quote and enter a Quotation Reference (for example, the name of the contractor).

Justification for selection Explain why you have selected this quote. The cheapest quote is preferred.

Section 4: Declaration and undertakings

Complete this section to confirm that you have read and understood the requirements of the Countryside Stewardship Protection and Infrastructure grant scheme and the undertakings that you are making when submitting your application.

- Read the declaration, undertakings and warning carefully
- Sign in the box, and enter your name in block letters, your capacity (for example, sole trader, company director, agent) and the date you're signing the application
- If you're submitting your application by email you do not need to sign the application
- Before you submit your application, make sure you must have the correct permission levels in the Rural Payments service
- For information about permission levels in the Rural Payments service search for 'Rural Payments: registering and updating your details' on GOV.UK.

4 Checklist - use this to confirm that you have read and completed everything needed

Before you submit your application, you can use this checklist to help you make sure that you have done everything you need to do.

You've read and understood the CS scheme rules and requirements including the terms and conditions in the CS Protection and Infrastructure manual.

You and the land that you are including in your application, are eligible for CS – read Section 3: 'Who can apply and what land is eligible' section in the CS Protection and Infrastructure manual.

You've registered all the land in your application in the Rural Payments service. Checked all the details are correct and submitted an RLE1 form for any land that is not already registered.

If you receive payments for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), or a CS Mid Tier or Higher Tier agreement, or an Environmental Stewardship scheme agreement payment, you must follow the cross compliance rules. If you do not, your payments may be reduced. Payments for a CS Protection and Infrastructure Grant are not impacted by breaches in cross compliance rules.

If you are required to follow cross compliance rules and we find a breach of these rules anywhere on your holding (including associated common land) by any of the following, we will inform the relevant body responsible: you, others acting under your control, anyone with access to the holding under the terms of an agreement including contractors, employees or family members.

The cross compliance guide changes annually, so you need to read the latest version of the Guide to Cross Compliance in England to find out about cross compliance rules.

You have the correct permission levels in the Rural Payments service to complete and submit this application. To authorise an agent to act on your behalf of this business, anyone with 'Business Details – Full permission' for the business can give an agent 'CS Applications – Submit' permission.

For more information about evidence read the 'How to Apply' section and the CS Protection and Infrastructure manual on GOV.UK or for information about evidence for each option and capital item read Countryside Stewardship grants on GOV.UK.

You've attached any other required supporting documents, evidence, or permissions and consents applied for.

You've told us the number of continuation sheets you've used (if applicable).

5 Supporting documents and evidence

We must receive your application and supporting documents at the same time as your application. Please see below.

Supporting documents

Send the following with your application:

- Quotes from three different contractors
- Map of your holding

If you do not have management control over the land for the duration of the proposed agreement send either:

- a Land Ownership and Control (LOC) form or
- agreement if you have a public body landlord.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work
- consent from local planning authority, local highways agency, your regional internal drainage board/ environment agency, if required
- Environmental Impact Assessment for Forestry.

Evidence

Some evidence RPA may need to receive alongside your application, and some you may need to keep until you're asked for it.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work in addition to the ones stated above
- photograph of site before works starts
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter.
-

6 How to submit your supporting documents or evidence

You can scan and email all the documents to RPA.

You must put your SBI on all documents.

The maximum size of emails we can accept is 32MB.

If the email exceeds this limit, please send a further email and use the same subject heading. Add the number of emails at the end of the subject heading, for example, 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3.

For security reasons, we cannot accept discs, USB pen drives or other external storage media.

You can submit digital photos by email, but do not scan printed photos as the quality is not good enough.

Or you can post the documents to us using the address in 'More information and contacts' below.

7 More information and contact details

How to contact us

Rural Payments Agency (Countryside Stewardship)

PO Box 324

WORKSOP

S95 1DF

Rural Payments helpline: 03000 200 301

Email: ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter @ruralpay

Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, (closed at weekends and on public holidays).

For any queries about your online Wildlife Offer contact RPA. Please quote your Single Business Identifier (SBI) for all enquiries.