

This newsletter, together with future updates, will help to keep you informed on the new SRDP, its development and implementation.

CONTENTS:

- News from Brussels
- What's changed?
- Help?
- Putting it all in place – the schedule
- Business and land registration
- What does it mean?
- Where's the news?
- Capacity-building events – 2008 Programme

News from Brussels...

A major milestone for implementation was achieved on 23 January 2008 when the EC's Rural Development Committee recommended the SRDP for approval. This has now been ratified by a formal announcement. The Cabinet Secretary has welcomed this confirmation which allows implementation of all the SRDP delivery mechanisms to proceed.

What's changed?

The approved version of the Programme includes a number of changes – we have identified 37 significant points of difference from the original June 2007 submission. Many of these are relatively minor and will impact our internal systems and processes rather than being important to applicants and stakeholders. Some items have moved between Measures or Axes, with some adjustment to rates of EC reimbursement. Other changes involve, for example, details of eligibility. A few major changes were needed to secure approval without further delay.

Some points to note are:

- Deleted measures: Animal Health and Welfare; Farm & Forest Visits & Talks; Not-For-Profit Community Events; certain Quality Assurance Scheme measures
- Moved measures: Short Rotation Coppice from Axis 2 to Axis 1, with reduced rate of support; Nutrient Management Plans into Axis 1; Business Audit split between Axes 1 & 2.
- Changes to the funding for preparation of RDC RP outcome plans.

We are working through all the changes now to understand the impact fully and ensure they are consistently covered, where appropriate, in the domestic legislation, guidance, IT systems and communications with staff and stakeholders.

Help?

There will be support available for those working with Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities (RDC-RP):

- the Customer Service Desk (CSD), co-ordinated by RPID, to deal with requests from Area staff for guidance on RDC-RP and to channel IT problems raised by Case Officers to Scottish Government's internal IT Helpdesk, and
- the Rural Payments On-line Helpdesk in the Dumfries RPID Area office to assist applicants and beneficiaries who are experiencing problems registering or logging on to the on-line system. This Helpdesk does not provide technical support for completing applications.

All SRDP queries, including requests for guidance on Rural Priorities from applicants and beneficiaries, should be directed to Case Officers within one of the local RPID, FCS or SNH offices. Case Officers should submit queries via their local SRDP Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator will double-check that the answer is not already known before formally forwarding it to the CSD. The CSD will be responsible for securing the answer from the relevant person or organisation within an agreed timescale and then ensuring the guidance is updated where necessary. Where appropriate the CSD may circulate the answer to all SRDP co-ordinators and other staff as appropriate.

Case Officers should report problems experienced processing applications and claims on the internal IT system through the CSD mailbox who will raise the issue with the relevant IT team. The email address for the Customer Service Desk is:

<mailto:RPIDCSDMailbox@scotland.gsi.gov.uk>

Putting it all in place...

Formal approval has allowed us to firm up our implementation target dates for the various SRDP delivery mechanisms. Despite the delayed approval date, we still aim to launch RDC Rural Priorities in the spring, with its Regional Priorities announced in mid March and Statements of Intent able to be submitted from April. The Cabinet Secretary has endorsed our proposed schedule (see **page 2**). Meeting the target dates for this schedule requires us to keep up very intensive work and depends on the necessary SSIs coming into force in March.

Scotland Rural Development Programme: Implementation Timetable

Key milestones and proposed dates for introduction of all SRDP delivery mechanisms

Programme approved	23 Jan 08	Wk 0	All implementation dates subject to January RDC recommending approval
Programme changes confirmed and assessed	By 31 Jan 08	1	
LFASS - issue payments	End Jan/Feb 08		
Lay further SSIs	Feb 08		Including those for RDC RP and RDC LMOs
LEADER – announce LAGs & funding	By mid Feb 08		
LEADER – 2 nd call for LAGs, strategies & bids	By late Feb 08		
RDC LMOs – issue guidance & forms	Mar 08		
SSIs approved	12 Mar 08	7	If negative (as currently envisaged) or Mar, Apr or later if affirmative process
RDC RP launch – announce Regional Priorities	By 12 Mar 08	7	Or date of SSI approval if later
RDC RP - Guidance published	By 12 Mar 08	7	Or date of SSI approval if later
FPMC – open to applications	By 12 Mar 08	6	Food Processing, Marketing & Co-operation; opening date subject to SSI approval.
<i>Easter weekend</i>	<i>21-24 Mar 08</i>		
RDC RP - initial IT systems ready	By 24 Mar 08	9	Necessary infrastructure, software, data & accounts all ready for staff & key stakeholders' familiarisation with Statement of Intent (SoI) processing.
FPMC – first round closes	31 Mar 08	10	
RDC RP - Open for applications (SoI)	7 Apr 08	11	Allows for SSI approval and Easter break
RDC RP - Respond to SoIs	From 30 Apr 08	14	Allows for minimum response time
CCAGS – Crofting Grant applications & payments	From Apr 08		Once SSI approved, existing forms & processes will continue with minimal change
Forestry Challenge Funds – open to applications	5 May 08	15	Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) and Forestry for People (F4P)
RDC RP - IT system for Proposal available	By 12 May 08	16	To give staff and key stakeholders opportunity for familiarisation
FPMC – PAC meeting	w/c 12 May	16	Project Assessment Committee meet, with confirmation of awards thereafter
RDC LMOs – closing date	15 May 08	16	Aligned with SAF
RDC RP – Proposals system available	19 May 08	17	after SAF, and allows for staff familiarisation & estate days with system demos.
Skills Development – open for applications	From May 08		If SSI in force by April.
RDC RP - first payments for Plan preparation	From Jun 08	19	
RDC RP - First RPAC meetings	From July 08	23	allows for submission & assessment of Proposals
RDC RP - First contracts issued	From late Jul 08	26	Allows contract preparation, necessary checks & formal approval as required
LEADER – 2 nd round approved	Jul/Aug 08		
RDC RP - first payments for Capital projects	From Aug 08	28	For 'actual cost' cases; 'standard cost' cases depend on Inspection schedules.
Forestry Challenge Funds – Assessment round	From 1 Sep 08	32	
LEADER – funds to LAGs & project claims	From Apr 09		May also be smaller interim funding in 08-09 financial year
RDC RP - first payments for Multi-annual land based	From Oct 09		Payment for these projects requires submission and processing of SAF 09

Note: all implementation dates are subject to formal approval of the Programme & domestic legislation as shown

Business and land registration

Businesses will need to register their land if they are intending to submit an application under any land-based element of the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-13, for example Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities or Land Managers Options and Challenge Funds.

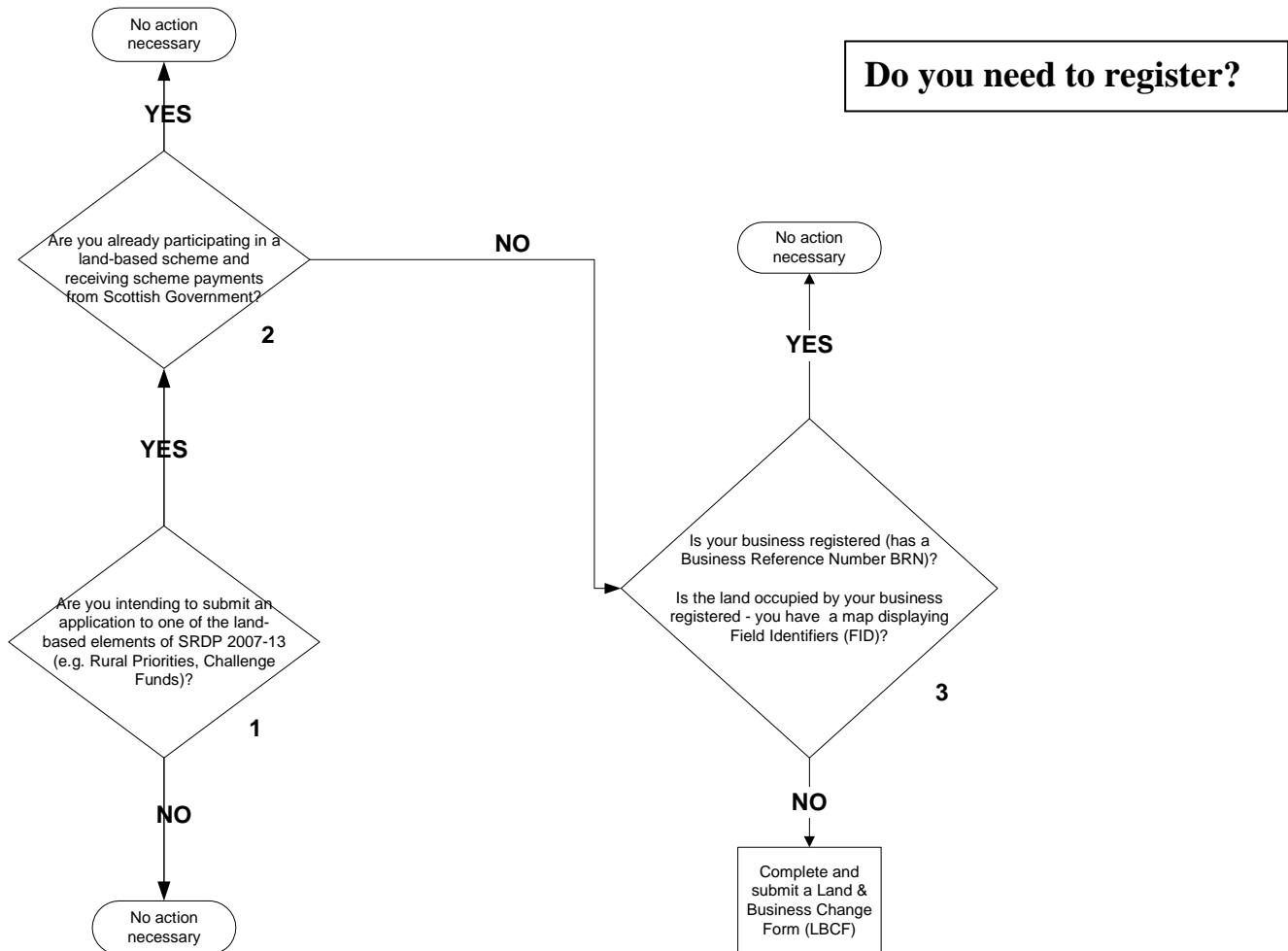
Rural Development Contracts - Rural Priorities Statements of Intent will be submitted through Rural Payments On-line. Rural Payments On-line will be accessed through a secure ‘gateway’ (Government Gateway). New users of Rural Payments On-line will need to register and enroll to obtain a Government Gateway user ID. When registering, the applicant will be asked for a logon number (provided by the Helpdesk on: 0845 601 7597) and a Business Reference Number (BRN) or, for a submissions agent, an Agent Identifier.

Agents (Submission or Payment) need to be authorised to act on behalf of the business and this is done using an Agent’s Authorisation form (AA1) which can be obtained, together with guidance, from any RPID area office or FCS conservancy office and on-line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture/grants/Schemes/18148/11952>

Applicants should use the Land & Business Change form to register their businesses and land with the Scottish Government’s Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS). Until a new version of that form is released (around mid March), applicants should use the current form available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/172952/0048241.pdf>

A business, once registered, is given a BRN. Where land has been registered, Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID) will provide the business with a map with each registered ‘field’ labelled with a Field Identifier (FID).



What does it mean?

SRDP

Scotland Rural Development Programme

RDC-RP

Rural Development Contracts: Rural Priorities

RPAC

Regional Proposal Assessment Committee

SoI

Statement of Intent (for Rural Priorities)

RDC-LMO

Rural Development Contracts: Land Managers' Options

CCAGS

Crofting Counties Agricultural Grants Scheme

LFASS

Less Favoured Area Support Scheme

FPMC

Food Processing, Marketing And Co-operation Scheme

LEADER

Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de L'Economie Rurale (tr. links between actions for the development of the rural economy)

WIAT

Woodlands In And Around Towns

GAEC

Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition

SGRPID

Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate

FCS

Forestry Commission Scotland

SNH

Scottish Natural Heritage

SEPA

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

AXIS

A key theme of the European Commission Regulation (EC 1698/2005) on support for rural development.

There are 3 axes:

- Axis 1 - improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation;
- Axis 2 - improving the environment and the countryside by supporting land management;
- Axis 3 - improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity.

Each key axis consists of a group of measures with specific goals.

Where's the news?

This will be the final Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) newsletter sent by email. All future newsletters will only be available on The Scottish Government website. There will be two ways for you to receive and view future newsletters:

1. You will be able to access the most recent SRDP newsletter from the "Latest" section on the front page of the SRDP website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/srdp>
2. You can subscribe to the Rural Issues email newsletter which will contain articles about the SRDP and will provide links to all future SRDP newsletters. You can subscribe to this through the "subscribe to news" section on The Scottish Government website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Agriculture>

Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities capacity-building events – 2008 Programme

Staff training in the assessment of Statements of Intent – 25 March to 11 April 2008

Staff training in the assessment of Proposals – 12 May to 30 May 2008

Workshops for Case Officers and Co-ordinators covering post-approval processes (claims & inspections) – end April into May 2008

Workshops for RPAC members and their Secretariats covering the assessment process – June 2008

Local training for Case Officers on regional priorities, individual packages and options – June to October 2008

Open Days for applicants and beneficiaries – dates to be confirmed

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