



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs



Rural Payments
Agency

Guidance

SFI scheme information: expanded offer for 2024

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Applies to England

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You can now apply for SFI 2024 without needing to complete the expression of interest survey.

1. About the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) pays farmers and land managers to take up or maintain sustainable farming and land management practices that:

- protect and benefit the environment
- support food production
- improve productivity

These practices are referred to as ‘SFI actions’.

This SFI scheme information includes the scheme rules which apply to expanded SFI offer agreements. If you have an agreement for the SFI 2023 offer, you need to read the [SFI 2023 handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfi-handbook-for-the-sfi-2023-offer) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfi-handbook-for-the-sfi-2023-offer>).

You can apply for an SFI agreement if:

- you’re a farmer or land manager with ‘management control’ of the land you want to enter into an agreement
- your land is eligible for the SFI actions you select

The RPA has opened applications for the expanded SFI offer from summer 2024 in a controlled way, so everyone gets the right level of service and support.

Your SFI agreement will usually last for either 3 or 5 years. This will depend on the SFI actions in your agreement with the longest duration

(most actions will last for 3 years, but a few will last for 5 years).

1.1 SFI actions

The SFI actions in the expanded offer include:

- the actions from the SFI 2023 offer – some of these have been updated since they were launched in 2023 to reflect feedback from the farming industry
- new actions – such as no tillage farming, precision farming and spring-sown or summer-sown cover crops
- actions previously offered under Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier – these have been updated for SFI to reduce prescription wherever possible

You can select any combination of SFI actions if your land (or landscape feature) is eligible for them. Each action sets out which other actions you can do on the same area of land.

There are 2 types of actions in the expanded SFI offer:

- SFI actions which you can apply for without specialist advice or prior endorsement – this is most of the actions
- ‘endorsed’ SFI actions for certain priority habitats or species and heritage features, which require prior endorsement from Natural England or Historic England – read section 1.3 ‘SFI actions which require endorsement’

See Annex B for a [summary of the initial expanded SFI offer from summer 2024](#).

Each SFI action is set out in the ‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool, so you can search and filter to view actions. Section 7.1 ‘Search for actions using the ‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool’ tells you how to do this. There is also a [PDF containing all of the actions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024>).

Later in 2024, Defra will introduce:

- an educational access action, which will pay you to provide educational tours of your farm or woodland
- more endorsed SFI actions for farmland wildlife and habitats on grassland, heritage, wood pasture, orchards, coastal habitats and waterbodies

Details of these additional SFI actions will be published in summer 2024.

1.2 SFI actions which require endorsement

There are some SFI actions which require you to get written approval ('endorsement') to confirm your land is suitable for the action. This is because these actions are targeted at certain priority habitats or species and heritage features.

These actions are known as 'endorsed' SFI actions. Each affected action sets out:

- if it's an endorsed action
- how endorsement works for the action

You must get the required endorsement before you can include an endorsed SFI action in your SFI agreement. Read 'Getting endorsement' to find out how to do this.

Depending on the endorsed SFI action you select, endorsement is given by either:

- a Natural England adviser (or an adviser approved by Natural England to act on their behalf)
- a Historic England adviser

Endorsement is not the same as regulatory consents, permissions and licences, which you must get separately, where relevant. Read section 10 'Get all necessary regulatory consents, permissions and licences' for more information.

The initial expanded SFI offer from summer 2024 includes one endorsed SFI action (GRH6: Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland).

Later in 2024, Defra will introduce more endorsed SFI actions for farmland wildlife and habitats on grassland, heritage, wood pasture, orchards, coastal habitats and waterbodies. These will be published on the 'Find funding for land or farms' tool before they're available for applications.

Getting endorsement

To apply for an endorsed SFI action and get the required endorsement:

- select the relevant SFI action and the land you want to do the action on in your SFI application – you can only do this for GRH6 from summer 2024 (other endorsed actions will be added later in 2024)
- submit your application
- Natural England or Historic England, as relevant, will contact you about the endorsement process for the action – they may need to visit your land to confirm it's suitable for the selected endorsed SFI action

You will not receive an agreement offer until you have got the required endorsement. This will take longer than SFI actions that do not require endorsement. To avoid a delay in being offered an agreement, you can choose to apply separately for:

- an agreement with SFI actions which do not require endorsement
- an agreement with endorsed SFI actions

If Natural England or Historic England, as relevant, do not think your land is suitable for the selected endorsed SFI action:

- they will tell you they cannot give you the required endorsement
- the affected SFI action will not be included in your agreement offer

1.3 SFI actions with a limited area

There are some SFI actions that:

- take land out of production
- are intended to be done on a small proportion (up to 25%) of the farm, as part of a sustainable system – these actions are unlikely to deliver their intended aims if they're done on more than 25% of the farm

There are 10 actions which you must only do on a proportion of your farm. These actions are referred to as 'limited area' actions and include:

- CIPM2: Flower-rich grass margins, blocks, or in-field strips (IPM2 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- CAHL1: Pollen and nectar flower mix (AHL1 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- CAHL2: Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land (AHL2 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- CAHL3: Grassy field corners or blocks (AHL3 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- CIGL1: Take improved grassland field corners or blocks out of management (IGL1 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- CIGL2: Winter bird food on improved grassland (IGL2 in the SFI 2023 offer)
- WBD3: In-field grass strips
- AHW1: Bumblebird mix
- AHW9: Unharvested cereal headland
- AHW11: Cultivated areas for arable plants

Each action sets out if it's a 'limited area' SFI action.

You can select as many 'limited area' actions as you wish, but the total eligible area you enter into them must not be more than 25% of the total agricultural area of your farm.

If you enter more than one SFI agreement, this 25% limit applies to the total eligible area entered into 'limited area' actions across all your SFI agreements. This includes land you've entered into the 6 affected 'limited area' actions in an existing agreement for the SFI 2023 offer if you applied for it on or after 26 March 2024.

For example, if the total agricultural area of your farm is 100 hectares, you must only enter up to a total of 25 hectares of eligible land into any combination of one or more of these 'limited area' actions.

For the purpose of these ‘limited area’ actions:

- ‘farm’ means all the land parcels linked to your Single Business Identifier (SBI) at the point you apply for an SFI agreement – these parcels are shown on your digital maps
- ‘agricultural area’ means the area in each land parcel that’s registered with an arable, permanent grassland or permanent crops land cover

Defra will keep this 25% limited area action rule under review, including whether it should apply to the following actions in future:

- AHW3: Beetle banks
- AHW5: Nesting plots for lapwing
- AHW12: Manage woodland edges on arable land
- SCR1: Create scrub and open habitat mosaics

You can use the [SFI limited area actions calculator](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024>) to help calculate your eligible area limit for your next application.

1.4 Rotational SFI actions

Some SFI actions are ‘rotational’. This means that, after the first year of the action’s duration, you can choose to:

- move the action’s location around your land – usually for each subsequent year of the action’s duration
- do the action at the same location for each year of the action’s duration

Each SFI action in the ‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool sets out if it’s rotational.

If you select a rotational SFI action, you’ll tell the RPA its area and location for the first year of its duration in your application. This can be either:

- where it’s located at the point you apply

- where you will locate it, if it's an action you can start doing within 12 months of the action's start date

You can vary the coverage of rotational SFI actions, so they work with your crop rotation and for different sizes of land parcels. This means (for subsequent years of the action's duration) you can:

- increase the area entered into the action
- decrease the area, as long as it's no less than 50% of the area entered for the first year of the action's duration

You can tell the RPA about a change in location and area of rotational SFI actions towards the end of each year of the action's duration, except the final year. The RPA will issue further guidance on how to do this.

1.5 Static SFI actions

Some SFI actions are 'static'. This means you must do them at the same location each year of the action's duration. This is set out in each action.

1.6 Supplemental SFI actions

There are some 'supplemental' SFI actions which you can only do in combination with a 'base' action.

Each action sets out:

- if it's a base or supplemental action
- which base and supplemental actions can be done together

You can usually only apply for one supplemental action with a base action, unless indicated otherwise in the action.

If you enter land into a base action, you can apply for the relevant supplemental action either:

- at the same time, so they're in the same SFI agreement and start at the same time
- after the base action, so it's in a different SFI agreement – the supplemental action will last for its duration (which may be different to the base action)

If you have an existing agreement for the SFI 2023 offer which contains a base action (AHL2, LIG1 or LIG2), you'll be able to apply for eligible supplemental actions in a separate agreement for the expanded SFI offer. The RPA will publish further guidance on when you can do this.

See Annex C for a summary of what supplemental actions you can do with each base action.

2. When and how much you'll get paid

Your agreement document will set out:

- a summary of your payments – this includes the total annual payment value for your selected SFI actions, additional payments (where relevant) and the indicative SFI management payment (section 2.2 explains how your payment is calculated)
- your annual payment schedule – this sets out a summary of the total payments you'll receive for each year of your agreement and for the entire agreement period

Under an SFI agreement, your annual payment value is paid in quarterly instalments. You'll usually receive your first payment in the fourth month after your agreement's start date.

Unlike previous agri-environment schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship, you do not have to submit an annual revenue claim to get paid. Instead, you'll receive the first 3 instalments by an automated BACS transfer.

You must submit an annual declaration (a simple tick box form) before

you're paid the fourth instalment. Read section 12.1 'Submit your annual declaration' to find out what you must submit each year to get paid your fourth instalment.

2.1 Your payment statement

The RPA will usually email your payment statement to you a few days before you get paid. The payment statement tells you:

- how much you'll be paid
- the payment date
- how your payment has been calculated

2.2 How your payment is calculated

Your SFI agreement's total annual payment value is based on:

- what you've entered into your selected SFI actions – in hectares, metres, square metres (for traditional buildings) or the number of features (such as ponds), as relevant
- the additional payment per agreement if you've entered land into actions CSAM1 (assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter) or CMOR1 (assess moorland and produce a written record)
- SFI actions you've selected that apply to an SFI agreement, rather than a specific area of land ('agreement level' actions) – these are actions CIPM1 (integrated pest management assessment) and CNUM1 (nutrient management assessment)
- the SFI management payment relevant to the year of your agreement
- the additional common land payment for group agreements (if applicable)

You will not be paid under SFI for activities you're already required to do by law.

SFI management payment

The SFI management payment is paid to you for entering and managing your SFI agreement.

For up to the first 50 hectares you enter into an SFI actions, you'll be paid:

- £40 per hectare for the first year of your agreement
- £20 per hectare for the following 2 years of your agreement

The RPA will calculate the area for the SFI management payment based on the following SFI actions in your agreement:

- actions which are done on a hectare (or square metres for traditional farm building actions HEF1 and HEF2)
- actions for boundary features, such as hedgerows, drystone walls, banks or ditches – the RPA will calculate a notional hectare based on the length (in metres) you enter into these actions

The SFI management payment will not include:

- agreement-level actions CIPM1 and CNUM1
- feature-based actions, such as action WBD1: Manage ponds

The SFI management payment will only be paid for one SFI agreement for each farm business (SBI). If you enter more than one agreement, it will be paid for up to 50 hectares entered into the live agreement which started first.

Defra will keep the SFI management payment under review.

Additional common land payment for group agreements

There is an additional payment for a group application (of 2 or more people) on common land or shared grazing of £7 per hectare per year.

2.3 Other relevant funding available

SFI does not include capital funding, but you can apply separately for capital items as one-off payments to help you do SFI actions. For example, to buy fencing to exclude livestock if that's required for the action.

[Apply for capital grants \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-stewardship-get-funding-to-protect-and-improve-the-land-you-manage#grants-for-2024\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-stewardship-get-funding-to-protect-and-improve-the-land-you-manage#grants-for-2024)

[Apply for grants under the Farming Investment Fund \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/farming-investment-fund-fif\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/farming-investment-fund-fif)

3. Check if you're eligible to apply

You can apply for an SFI agreement if:

- you're a farmer or land manager (if you're applying on common land you must also be a 'single entity' – [read Annex A: Applying for SFI on common land or shared grazing](#) to find out what this means)
- you have management control of the land you want to enter into SFI actions – read section 4: 'Check if you have management control of land' to find out what this means (or Annex A for management control of common land)

The requirement that you were eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in either 2022 or 2023 no longer applies to the expanded SFI offer. This means that groups that were not eligible for BPS are now eligible to apply for the expanded SFI offer. This includes groups such as new entrants, non-farming land managers and smallholders.

3.1 If you've received a Lump Sum Exit Scheme payment

If you've received a payment under the [Lump Sum Exit Scheme \(https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/lump-sum-exit-scheme\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/lump-sum-exit-scheme) to leave or retire from farming:

- as an individual – you're not eligible to apply for an SFI agreement, unless you repay the lump sum
- as a partnership or limited company - if only some partners or shareholders left the business, the remaining partners or shareholders can apply for an SFI agreement without repaying the lump sum

3.2 If you receive delinked payments

If you receive [delinked payments \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/delinked-payments-replacing-the-basic-payment-scheme\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/delinked-payments-replacing-the-basic-payment-scheme) (which replaced BPS payments from 2024), you can apply for an SFI agreement. This is because you will not be paid twice for a similar activity on the same area of land at the same time (known as 'double funding').

3.3 Eligibility of public bodies

A public body is a formally established organisation that is publicly funded to provide a public or government service.

Public bodies can apply for an SFI agreement, but only if they will not be paid under SFI to complete activities that are already:

- required by statutory duty, which means they're part of the public body's obligations
- paid for by other funding sources, as this would be double funding

Public bodies include:

- Crown bodies (including all government departments, executive agencies and trading funds)
- non-departmental public bodies
- local authorities
- national park authorities
- park corporations

See a list of all [departments, agencies and public bodies](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>).

Parish councils and former college farms are not considered public bodies. They're eligible to apply for an SFI agreement.

If you're a tenant on land owned by a public body, you can only enter that land into an SFI agreement if there is no double funding. Read section 4.2: Land you occupy under a tenancy.

4. Check if you have management control of land

You must have management control of the land parcels you enter into your SFI agreement for the entire duration of the SFI actions you select for that land.

This includes any landscape features, such as hedgerows or ponds. Each relevant SFI action explains how management control works for these features.

Actions with different durations

As there are SFI actions with different durations (usually 3 or 5 years), an action's duration may be shorter than the duration of your agreement (the 'agreement period'). This is because your agreement period will last for the action with the longest duration.

This means that, if:

- all your selected SFI actions have the same duration, and start and end on the same dates, you must have management control of the land for the duration of your agreement
- your selected SFI actions have different durations, or start and end on

different dates, you must have management control of the land for the duration of each action – this because your agreement period may be longer than the duration of an action

4.1 Who has management control

You'll have management control if you have sufficient control over how the land is managed to complete the SFI actions you've selected. For SFI, this means you're the person actively farming or managing the land. Usually, this means you're:

- an owner occupier who's either farming or managing the land themselves or employing a contractor
- a tenant with a Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995, or an Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 tenancy – read section 4.2 'Land you occupy under a tenancy agreement'
- a group farming or managing common land (including areas of shared grazing) – read Annex A to find out about management control of common land

You will not have management control if you're:

- a landlord, as you're not actively farming or managing the land
- a licensee, who only has access to the land under a licence arrangement – if you have wider land management responsibilities similar to a tenancy (such as Ministry of Defence licences), read section 4.2 about 'land you occupy under a tenancy agreement'

When you enter land into an SFI agreement, you declare that you'll have management control of it for the duration of your selected SFI actions. You must provide evidence of this if the RPA asks for it.

4.2 Land you occupy under a tenancy agreement

If you occupy land under an FBT or an Agricultural Holdings Act 1986

tenancy, you must make sure that by entering this land into an SFI agreement you do not breach the conditions of your tenancy.

If your tenancy will expire before the end date of your selected SFI actions, you must only enter this land into these actions if you expect to have management control of it for the entire duration of the actions.

This will usually be the case if, for example, you occupy land under an FBT granted for a term of:

- more than 2 years, that you expect to continue on a rolling year-by-year basis
- 2 years or less, that you expect your landlord to renew when the term expires

If you're not sure if your tenancy will continue (or be renewed), you need to check this with your landlord before you enter the land into an SFI agreement.

4.3 Unexpected loss of management control

You must tell the RPA in writing if you unexpectedly lose management control of your agreement land before either:

- your SFI agreement ends
- the relevant SFI action's end date

You must do this in writing as soon as possible. Preferably this should be within 8 weeks of you being able to do so.

If you lose management control of:

- all your agreement land, the RPA will end the agreement
- some of your agreement land, the RPA will remove the affected land from your agreement

In both cases, you may have to repay some or all the payments you've already received. Read section 13.2: What you must do if you cannot

comply with your agreement.

5. Check if your land is eligible for SFI actions

The land (including landscape features) you enter into your SFI agreement must be eligible for the SFI actions you select.

Your land or landscape feature will be eligible for the SFI actions you select if:

- the area or feature is in a land parcel that's entirely located within England
- the area is an eligible land type – this is set out in each action
- the area is registered on your digital maps with an eligible land cover and declared with a compatible land use code – this is set out in each action
- the feature, such as hedgerows, is eligible for each linear or feature based SFI action you select – this is set out in each action

You cannot enter land (or landscape features) into your SFI agreement if it's being used for another SFI action, CS or ES option, or SFI pilot standard that:

- requires activities which are not compatible with the SFI actions you select
- means you will be paid twice for a similar activity on the same area of land at the same time (known as 'double funding')

Read section 6 'Eligible land in other funding schemes' for more information.

5.1 Eligible land types for SFI

Land type describes the type of land in more detail. For example, different types of grassland, such as improved grassland and low input (semi-improved or unimproved grassland).

The land type must be eligible for your selected SFI actions at the start of your SFI agreement. If the land type changes because of the action you're doing, it will not affect eligibility. You'll continue to be paid for your selected actions.

Each SFI action sets out which land types are eligible. It's your responsibility to check the land type is eligible for each action you select.

The following are the definitions of how certain land types are defined for SFI.

Arable land

Arable land includes land that's been cultivated to produce arable crops, such as:

- combinable crops
- root crops
- crops grown for animal feed, such as forage rape
- field vegetables and cut flowers
- bulbs or soft fruit which are not 'permanent crops'

Arable land also includes:

- fallow land that's available for crop production
- temporary grassland – this is often part of an arable crop rotation and has usually been grassland for less than 5 consecutive years

You can manage arable land to create or restore species-rich grassland.

You can also manage temporary grassland as:

- improved grassland (as defined under improved permanent grassland)
- low input grassland (as defined under low input (semi-improved and unimproved) permanent grassland)

Permanent crops

Permanent crops are non-rotational crops that usually:

- occupy the land for 5 years or more
- provide repeated harvests (other than permanent grassland)

They can be:

- horticultural permanent crops, including commercial orchards, bush fruits, hops and vines
- non-horticultural permanent crops, including miscanthus, reed canary grass, nursery crops and short rotation coppice

Permanent grassland

Permanent grassland is land used to grow grass for 5 consecutive years or more that's not been included in an arable crop rotation. It can either be improved or low input.

Improved permanent grassland is permanent grassland that's been agriculturally 'improved' by at least one of the following activities:

- regularly reseeding, or reseeding within the last 15 years
- regularly applying fertiliser (typically at least 100 kilograms per hectare per year of nitrogen as an artificial compound fertiliser or animal manures and slurries)
- blanket herbicide application to treat weeds
- maintaining field drains
- taking conserved forage as silage, haylage or hay more than once a year

Improved grassland will usually have a high cover of ryegrasses and white clover, with a low cover of wildflowers and sedges.

Low input (semi-improved or unimproved) permanent grassland is permanent grassland that's been managed by doing at least one of the following activities:

- no reseeding for at least 15 years
- applying low or no amounts of artificial compound fertiliser or animal

manures and slurries

- applying localised or no herbicide to treat weeds
- leaving field drains unmaintained or maintaining them infrequently (hay meadows may be more actively drained)
- taking conserved forage as hay or haylage no more than once a year

Semi-improved low input grassland will usually have:

- been managed so it's had some agricultural 'improvement' – for example, by applying low amounts of fertiliser or localised herbicide to treat weeds
- a moderate cover (more than around 30%) of ryegrasses and white clover, with a high cover of wildflowers and sedges

Unimproved low input grassland will have had no agricultural 'improvement', usually for at least 15 years. For example, no application of fertiliser or herbicide. This includes the land type 'rough grazing' as set out in the relevant SFI actions (see also moorland).

Species-rich permanent grassland is permanent grassland that has:

- minimal cover of white clover and perennial rye grass – this will usually be less than around 10% of the area
- a species-rich sward – this usually means there are more than 15 plant species per square metre, including grasses
- a high cover of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, creeping buttercup, and injurious weeds – this will usually be more than around 30% of the area

Moorland

Moorland includes permanent grassland and certain non-agricultural features, such as scrub, scree, bracken and bog, which are above the moorland line. You can find out which land is above the moorland line on the [MAGIC website \(https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?chosenLayers=moorIndex,backdropDIndex,backdropIndex,europeIndex,vmlBWIndex,25kBWIndex,50kBWIndex,250kBWIndex,miniscaleBWIndex,baseIndex&box=-1037291:0:1837291:1400000&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?chosenLayers=moorIndex,backdropDIndex,backdropIndex,europeIndex,vmlBWIndex,25kBWIndex,50kBWIndex,250kBWIndex,miniscaleBWIndex,baseIndex&box=-1037291:0:1837291:1400000&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false).

The vegetation of moorland areas is usually:

- semi-natural moorland habitats including heathland, blanket bog, rough acid grasslands, rushy flushes, swamps, mires and bracken
- upland calcareous grassland

Much upland moorland is either registered common land or shared grazing.

5.2 Eligible land covers and compatible land uses

Land cover is registered by the RPA on your digital maps. It describes the physical nature of the land. There are 3 agricultural land covers:

- arable land
- permanent grassland
- permanent crops

There are also a number of non-agricultural land covers, such as woodland and farm buildings.

Land use describes what you're using the land for. For example, you're using arable land to grow arable crops, temporary grassland or leaving it fallow. Each land use has a [land use code](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-payments-land-use-codes-2024) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-payments-land-use-codes-2024>) which you declare in the Rural Payments service. This is not registered on your digital maps.

For each land parcel you want to enter into an area based SFI action, you need to check that its area is:

- registered on your digital maps with a land cover that's eligible for the action – read the guidance on [how to check the registered land cover on your digital maps](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-maps-in-the-rural-payments-service-check-and-change-mapping-updates) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-maps-in-the-rural-payments-service-check-and-change-mapping-updates>)
- declared with a land use code that's compatible with the registered eligible land cover (a 'compatible land use code')

The eligible land covers and compatible land use codes are set out in each action.

See Annex D: 'Registered land covers and compatible land use codes' for more information.

5.3 Available area calculation

If you select area based SFI actions when you apply for an SFI agreement, the application service will automatically calculate what area in each land parcel may be eligible for the action. This is called the 'available area'.

The available area is calculated for each action you select by taking the land parcel's total area and subtracting (where relevant) any area which has been:

- declared with a land use code that is not eligible for the action
- entered into another SFI action, CS option, static ES option, or SFI pilot standard that is not compatible with the action or means there would be double funding

The application service cannot automatically subtract any area entered into a rotational ES option that is not compatible or means there would be double funding. Instead, you need to enter this area and the RPA will manually subtract it when they process your application. They will contact you before they do this.

5.4 Organic land

If your organic land is an eligible land type and registered as 'in conversion' or 'fully organic' with an [Organic Control Body](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/organic-food-uk-approved-control-bodies) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/organic-food-uk-approved-control-bodies>) (OCB) you can enter it into:

- SFI actions which are not specifically for organic land, such as CSAM3 (herbal leys) and other actions which are not organic-specific
- organic-specific SFI actions, including OFA1 (overwinter stubble) and

OFA6 (undersown cereal crop)

There are also organic-specific SFI actions that pay you to:

- convert your land to organic status
- manage your organic land once it's converted to 'fully organic' status

These organic-specific conversion and management actions set out which organic land is eligible.

5.5 Land that's a site of special scientific interest (SSSI)

You can enter land that's an SSSI into SFI actions if it's eligible. Each action sets this out.

If you apply for SFI actions on land that's an SSSI, you must get SSSI consent from Natural England. You must do this before you do the affected actions on this land, unless the SFI action is exempt.

Read section 10.3: 'SSSI consent' to find out how to get SSSI consent and which SFI actions are exempt.

5.6 Land with historic or archaeological features

You can enter land with historic or archaeological features into SFI actions if it's eligible. Each action sets this out.

Historic or archaeological features include:

- non-designated historic or archaeological features (also known as 'SHINE' features)
- registered parks or gardens
- registered battlefields

- scheduled monuments

If land with historic or archaeological features is ineligible for an SFI action, this only affects the area where the feature is located in a land parcel. You can apply for the SFI action on the remaining area in the land parcel if it's eligible for the action.

Request an SFI Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (SFI HEFER)

If you apply for SFI actions on land with historic or archaeological features, you must [request an SFI HEFER \(https://hefer-data.org.uk/\)](https://hefer-data.org.uk/) from Historic England. You must do this before you do your selected SFI actions on this land. You will need to register if you have not requested a HEFER before.

You cannot use a HEFER you've already got for an SFI or CS agreement.

The SFI HEFER will tell you about:

- any known historic or archaeological features on your land
- how these features affect the SFI actions

You will receive an email when your SFI HEFER is available to download. This should be within 2 days from when you request it.

If your SFI HEFER identifies a scheduled monument, you may need to get consent from Historic England before you do your selected SFI actions on that land. Read section 10.1 'scheduled monument consent' to find out when you must get scheduled monument consent and how to get it.

Soil sampling on eligible land with historic or archaeological features

If an SFI action requires you to take soil samples, where possible, avoid doing this on any area of land with an historic or archaeological feature identified on your SFI HEFER.

If you need to take soil samples on an area of land with a SHINE feature, or that's a registered park or garden, or registered battlefield, you should only:

- take enough samples to meet the requirements of the SFI action
- sample to a depth of no more than 7.5 centimetres (cm) on permanent grassland or around 20 to 25cm on arable land (including temporary grassland)

You must not take soil samples on any area of land that's a scheduled monument, unless you have consent to do so from Historic England. Read section 10.1 to find out how to get scheduled monument consent.

Other activities you should avoid doing on eligible land with historic or archaeological features

When you do your selected SFI actions, avoid causing damage to historic or archaeological features. Activities you should avoid include:

- growing deep rooted species
- allowing areas of scrub to develop

5.7 Land that's conditionally exempt from Inheritance Tax

Land may not be eligible for SFI actions if both of the following apply:

- it's conditionally [exempt from Inheritance Tax](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-relief-for-national-heritage-assets) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-relief-for-national-heritage-assets>) or designated as the object of a Maintenance Fund
- what's required by the SFI action is already a requirement of the conditional exemption or Maintenance Fund obligations

6. Eligible land in other funding schemes

You can enter land that's used for other funding schemes into SFI actions in your SFI agreement if:

- you and your land are eligible for both
- the activities you're paid for under each scheme are compatible
- you will not be paid twice for a similar activity on the same area of land at the same time (known as 'double funding')

If an action in the expanded SFI offer cannot be done on the same area of land as the other funding scheme, you may be able to do it on a different area in the same land parcel if:

- it's an eligible land type for the action
- it's an action you can do on part of the available area in a land parcel
- the area entered into the action does not overlap with the area used for the other funding scheme

6.1 SFI 2023 offer

You can enter land that's in an existing SFI agreement for the 2023 offer into the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

Each SFI action in the expanded offer sets out which SFI actions from the 2023 offer you can do on the same area of land.

6.2 SFI pilot

You can enter land that's in an existing SFI pilot agreement into SFI actions in the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

Each SFI action sets out which SFI pilot standards you can do on the same area of land.

6.3 Countryside Stewardship (CS)

You can enter land that's in an existing CS Mid Tier, Wildlife Offers or Higher Tier agreement into SFI actions in the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

Each SFI action sets out which CS options you can do on the same area of land.

You can enter land that's in an existing CS capital grants agreement into an SFI agreement because they pay for different things.

6.4 Environmental Stewardship (ES)

You can enter land that's in an existing ES Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement into SFI actions in the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

Each SFI action sets out which ES options you can do on the same area of land.

6.5 Landscape Recovery

You can enter land that's used for a [Landscape Recovery scheme project \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-landscape-recovery-funding\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-landscape-recovery-funding) into SFI actions in the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

6.6 Farming in Protected Landscapes

You can enter land that's used for [Farming in Protected Landscapes \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes)

funding into SFI actions in the expanded SFI offer if it complies with the conditions set out in section 6.

6.7 Private sector schemes

You can enter land that's used for a private sector scheme into SFI actions for the expanded SFI offer.

Private sector schemes include arrangements, such as:

- carbon trading
- payments of natural flood management

Defra will review its policy on the eligibility of land in private sector schemes for SFI each year.

7. Select your SFI actions

You can select any number of actions that your land (including landscape features) is eligible for.

7.1 Search for actions using the finder tool

Use the [‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool \(https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms\)](https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms) to search for actions.

Each SFI action is identified by a unique action code, for example ‘SOH2: Multi-species spring-sown cover crop’. If you do not know the code, you can search by either:

Land types:

- arable
- coastal
- farmyard
- grassland
- lowland heath
- moorland and upland
- scrub
- waterbodies
- wetland
- woodland

Areas of interest:

- agroforestry
- air quality
- boundaries
- crops
- equipment and machinery
- flood risk
- forestry
- hedgerows
- historic environment
- horticulture
- integrated pest management
- land features and archaeological features
- livestock management
- nutrient, manure and slurry management
- organic
- peat
- pollinators and wildlife
- precision farming
- priority habitats
- public access and education
- soil

- trees
- vegetation control
- water availability and storage
- water quality

Each action tells you:

- the action's duration
- how much you'll be paid
- the action's aim
- where you can do the action – including the eligible land type and cover
- if you can do the action on eligible land that's an SSSI - you must get SSSI consent before you do the action, unless it's exempt
- if you can do the action on eligible land with an historic or archaeological feature – you must get an SFI HEFER and scheduled monument consent, if relevant, from Historic England before you do the action
- if you can enter the total or part of the available area in a land parcel
- whether the action is rotational or static
- what to do
- when to do the action
- what evidence to keep
- other SFI actions, CS or ES options, and SFI pilot standards you can do on the same area in a land parcel as the action
- advice to help you do the action

It may be useful to write down the SFI action codes, so you have them to hand when you apply.

8. What to do before you apply for an SFI agreement

Before you apply for an SFI agreement, you need to complete the

following steps.

8.1 Read the rules you must follow

Read the rules you must follow when you enter an SFI agreement to make sure you understand what you're agreeing to do.

You can find these rules in:

- the SFI actions you select – these are shown in the [‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool](https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms>), with the action's requirements identified by a ‘must’
- the [SFI agreement terms and conditions](https://government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024/sfi-agreement-terms-and-conditions-expanded-offer-for-2024) ([/government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024/sfi-agreement-terms-and-conditions-expanded-offer-for-2024](https://government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024/sfi-agreement-terms-and-conditions-expanded-offer-for-2024))

You also need to read the sections of this SFI scheme information which explain the scheme rules set out in the SFI agreement terms and conditions. These sections include:

- section 1 (about the SFI offer) – the information on SFI actions
- section 2 (when and how much you'll get paid)
- section 4 (check if you have management control of land)
- section 5 (check if your land is eligible for the SFI actions)
- section 10 (get all necessary regulatory consents, permissions and licences in place)
- section 11 (about your SFI agreement)
- section 12 (managing your SFI agreement)
- section 13 (complying with your SFI agreement)
- annex A (applying for SFI on common land or shared grazing), if applicable

8.2 Get registered with the RPA

If you and your land are not already registered with the RPA, you need to:

- [register your business \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-payments-service-registering-and-updating-your-details\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-payments-service-registering-and-updating-your-details) – to receive an SBI and a Customer Registration Number (CRN)
- register all the agricultural and non-agricultural land parcels you want to include in your SFI application – these will then show on your digital maps

8.3 Check your registered contact details are up to date

Check your registered contact details, including your business email address, are up to date in the [Rural Payments service \(https://www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk/\)](https://www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk/). The RPA will use these details to contact you about your SFI application and agreement.

8.4 Check you have the correct permission to apply for SFI

You need the correct permission to apply for an SFI agreement for your business (SBI). Sign in to the [Rural Payments service \(https://www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk/\)](https://www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk/):

From 'Business overview' select 'Give people permission to act for this business'. You need to have one of the following permissions:

- 'Business Details: Full'
- 'BPS: Submit'
- 'CS: Submit'

If you do not have one of these permissions, you need to ask someone with 'Business Details: Full' permission for the business to give you the correct permission.

8.4.1 How to give permission to someone acting on your behalf

If you want someone else to apply on your behalf, such as an agent, you need to:

- check they're registered with the RPA in the Rural Payments service
- give them one of the required permissions to apply for an SFI agreement

8.5 Check your registered land details are up to date

Check the registered land details on your digital maps are up to date, so they show:

- all the land parcels you want to include in your SFI application
- the correct total area (in hectares) for each land parcel
- the correct land covers for each land parcel (such as arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops or relevant non-agricultural cover)

If these land details are not up to date, this may prevent you from applying for the SFI actions you select. Read the guidance on [how to check your digital maps](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-maps-in-the-rural-payments-service-check-and-change-mapping-updates) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-maps-in-the-rural-payments-service-check-and-change-mapping-updates>).

If you need to update your digital maps, read the guidance on:

- [how to update your digital maps online](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-changes-to-your-rural-land-maps) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-changes-to-your-rural-land-maps>)
- [update your maps using form RLE1](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tell-the-rural-payments-agency-about-land-changes-and-entitlement-transfers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tell-the-rural-payments-agency-about-land-changes-and-entitlement-transfers>)

You do not need to check the registered hedgerows on your digital maps. These are not used in your SFI application.

9. How to apply online

To apply for an SFI agreement, sign into the Rural Payments service.

From Business Overview, select 'Apply for the Expanded Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Offer' link and then select 'Apply for a new agreement'.

Follow the screen guidance to complete your application.

You can save your application and come back to it later.

You need to complete each section before moving onto the next.

Watch the 'how to apply online' video to help you through the application process.

How to watch this YouTube video

There's a YouTube video on this page. You can't access it because of your cookie settings.

You can [change your cookie settings \(/help/cookies\)](/help/cookies) or watch the video on YouTube instead:

[How to apply online \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWFUyVJ2Quo\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWFUyVJ2Quo)

If you have difficulty applying online, you can telephone RPA for help on [03000 200 301](tel:03000200301) (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, except bank holidays).

There's no limit to how many SFI agreements you can have under an SBI. This means you can apply for another SFI agreement once you've submitted your first application.

If your application is eligible, you'll be offered an SFI agreement through the Rural Payments service. The RPA will tell you when

your SFI agreement offer is ready for you to check.

10. Get all necessary regulatory consents, permissions and licences in place

You must comply with all statutory legal requirements that apply to you and your land, even if they conflict with your SFI agreement's requirements. Read the guidance on [‘Rules for farmers and land managers’](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rules-for-farmers-and-land-managers>) for more information.

You must also get any required regulatory consents, permissions and licences before you do your selected SFI actions. This section covers the main ones you may need to get. However, it's your responsibility to check if you need consent, permission or a licence and get it, if required, before you do the affected SFI actions.

10.1 Scheduled monument consent

A ‘scheduled monument’ is a monument which has been scheduled for its national archaeological or historical interest. This means it's protected by law against:

- ground disturbance
- unlicensed metal detecting

If your land has a scheduled monument, this will be identified in your SFI HEFER (read section 5.6 ‘Land with historic or archaeological features’).

If your selected SFI actions require activities which will disturb the ground on land with a scheduled monument, you must [get scheduled monument consent from Historic England](https://www.gov.uk/find-licences/scheduled-monument-consent-england-scotland-wales) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-licences/scheduled-monument-consent-england-scotland-wales>). You must do this before you do

the affected SFI actions.

If you will be taking soil samples on land with a scheduled monument, you must [get consent for soil sampling from Historic England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consent-for-soil-sampling-on-scheduled-monuments-sustainable-farming-incentive) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consent-for-soil-sampling-on-scheduled-monuments-sustainable-farming-incentive>). You must do this before you take soil samples.

For guidance on activities which may affect scheduled monuments, read Historic England's '[Scheduled monuments – a guide for owners and occupiers](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/scheduled-monuments-guide-for-owners-and-occupiers/)' (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/scheduled-monuments-guide-for-owners-and-occupiers/>).

10.2 Planning permission

You may need [planning permission](https://www.gov.uk/planning-permissions-for-farms#:~:text=Farms%20are%20covered%20by%20the,from%20farming%20to%20something%20else) (<https://www.gov.uk/planning-permissions-for-farms#:~:text=Farms%20are%20covered%20by%20the,from%20farming%20to%20something%20else>) if your selected SFI actions:

- change how you use your land from farming to something else
- will be done on land or buildings which are designated as a [conservation area](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/services/help/faq/planning/about-the-planning-system/what-is-a-conservation-area) (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/services/help/faq/planning/about-the-planning-system/what-is-a-conservation-area>)
- will be done on a listed building – you may also need to apply for [listed building consent](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/responsibilities/other-permissions-you-may-require/listed-buildings) (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/responsibilities/other-permissions-you-may-require/listed-buildings>)

It's your responsibility to:

- check with your [local planning authority](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/find-your-local-planning-authority) (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/find-your-local-planning-authority>) or national park authority if you need planning permission
- get planning permission, if it's required, before you do the affected SFI actions

Read the guidance on [when planning permission is required](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required>) for more information.

10.3 SSSI consent

An SSSI is a statutory conservation designation made by Natural England. You can find out if your land is an SSSI on the [MAGIC website](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?chosenLayers=sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,backdropDIndex,backdropIndex,europeIndex,vmlBWIndex,25kBWIndex,50kBWIndex,250kBWIndex,miniscaleBWIndex,baseIndex&box=-187122:5095:1034155:705095&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false) (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?chosenLayers=sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,backdropDIndex,backdropIndex,europeIndex,vmlBWIndex,25kBWIndex,50kBWIndex,250kBWIndex,miniscaleBWIndex,baseIndex&box=-187122:5095:1034155:705095&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false>).

If you apply for SFI actions on land that's an SSSI, you must [give notice to Natural England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/request-permission-for-works-or-an-activity-on-an-sssi) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/request-permission-for-works-or-an-activity-on-an-sssi>) to get SSSI consent (an 'SSSI notice'), unless:

- the action is exempt
- you already have SSSI consent

Exempt SFI actions

The exempt SFI actions (which you can do on SSSI land without getting consent) are:

- CSAM1: Assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter
- CMOR1: Assess moorland and produce a written record
- CIPM1: Assess integrated pest management and produce a plan
- CNUM1: Assess nutrient management and produce a review report

Existing SSSI consent

If you already have SSSI consent, you must check that it applies to:

- the area of land entered into the affected SFI actions

- the activities you'll do to complete those actions
- the duration (3 or 5 years) of those actions

Getting SSSI consent to do the SFI actions for moorland and CLIG3 (Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs)

Before you apply for certain SFI actions for moorland or CLIG3 (Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs) on SSSI land, it's advisable that you either:

- speak to Natural England about the activities you're proposing to do to complete the action
- get other expert advice on managing your SSSI land

This will allow you to:

- make sure the activities (including grazing and shepherding, where relevant) are appropriate for the relevant type of SSSI habitat and its condition
- get an indication of the activities Natural England is likely to give you SSSI consent for

In addition to CLIG3, this applies to the following SFI actions for moorland:

- UPL1: Moderate livestock grazing on moorland
- UPL2: Low livestock grazing on moorland
- UPL3: Limited livestock grazing on moorland
- UPL4: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 30% GLU)
- UPL5: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 70% GLU)
- UPL6: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (100% GLU)
- UPL7: Shepherding livestock on moorland (no required stock removal period)
- UPL8: Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 4 months)
- UPL9: Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 6 months)
- UPL10: Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 8 months)

months)

When you complete the form to give SSSI notice to Natural England, you need to provide detailed information covering the relevant action's 3-year duration. For UPL1 to UPL10 (inclusive), this needs to include:

- detailed stocking information – this can be a completed stocking calendar (including stock types and minimum and maximum stock numbers) or detailed stocking levels
- the location of any mineral licks
- how you will complete shepherding activities (where relevant)

For CLIG3, the information you provide with your SSSI notice needs to include (where relevant):

- nutrient applications – please note Natural England will not usually give SSSI consent for these
- stock types and numbers, including the timing of grazing activities
- timing of cutting management
- scrub management or control activities
- supplementary feeding methods and locations
- weed control methods

If you want to change your stocking levels or management activities during the relevant action's 3-year duration, [check if you need to get additional SSSI consent](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest#check-if-you-need-consent) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest#check-if-you-need-consent>). If SSSI consent is:

- required, you must get it from Natural England before you make any changes
- not required, you need to tell Natural England about the changes 'for information only' by emailing protectedsites@naturalengland.org.uk

When the RPA will offer you an agreement

The RPA will offer you an SFI agreement when Natural England confirms that either:

- your SSSI consent notice has been received
- you already have SSSI consent

If you accept your SFI agreement offer:

- your agreement can start before you receive SSSI consent from Natural England
- you must not do the affected SFI actions until you receive SSSI consent – if you do, it will be a breach of your agreement

10.4 Wildlife licences for protected species

You must get an ‘individual’ [wildlife licence](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wildlife-licences) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wildlife-licences>) from Natural England if the activities required by your selected SFI actions:

- will disturb or affect protected wildlife species or disturb their habitats, for example cleaning out a pond
- are not covered by a ‘general’ or ‘class’ wildlife licence

It’s your responsibility to check this and get a wildlife licence before you do the affected SFI actions.

10.5 Consent to do work on protected trees

Protected trees include:

- specific trees, groups of trees or woodland protected by a tree preservation order (TPO)
- trees growing in a conservation area

If your selected SFI actions require you to do activities on protected trees, you must [get consent from your local planning authority](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/planning/planning-applications/consent-types/consent-under-tree-preservation-orders) (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/planning/planning-applications/consent-types/consent-under-tree-preservation-orders>) or national park authority. You must do this before you do the affected SFI actions.

10.6 Felling licences to remove trees

Check if you need to apply for a [felling licence](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-licence-when-you-need-to-apply>) before you do SFI actions which require activities to remove trees or woodland

10.7 Permission to change uncultivated, semi-natural or rural land

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) Regulations protect:

- ‘uncultivated land’ or ‘semi-natural areas’ from activities which increase agricultural productivity (known as an ‘uncultivated land project’)
- rural land holdings from restructuring activities which may have a negative environmental impact (known as a ‘restructuring project’), such as altering a field boundary or moving earth

‘Uncultivated land’ is land that has not been cultivated in the last 15 years by:

- physical means, such as ploughing and harrowing
- chemical means, such as applying fertilisers

‘Semi-natural areas’ include land that:

- is a [priority habitat](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?&startTopic=GreyRasters&chosenLayers=baseIndex,coastmarshIndex,dunesIndex,cvsIndex,mcsIndex,mudflatIndex,lagoonIndex,calamgrassIndex,bapcfigmarshIndex,goodgrassIndex,baplcgrassIndex,bapldacidgrassIndex,baplowmeadIndex,bappmg_rushpastIndex,bapucgrassIndex,bapuhmeadIndex,baplowheathIndex,mountheathIndex,bapupheathIndex,limestonepavIndex,bapbbogIndex,bapfensIndex,baplrbogIndex,bapreedbedIndex,uplandswampIndex,pondsandlakeIndex,priorhablakeIndex,bapdecIndex,orchardIndex,bapwoodIndex,fragheathIndex,grassmoorIndex,bapundertergrassIndex&box=-1028750:-366800:3108275:1601700&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false) (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?&startTopic=GreyRasters&chosenLayers=baseIndex,coastmarshIndex,dunesIndex,cvsIndex,mcsIndex,mudflatIndex,lagoonIndex,calamgrassIndex,bapcfigmarshIndex,goodgrassIndex,baplcgrassIndex,bapldacidgrassIndex,baplowmeadIndex,bappmg_rushpastIndex,bapucgrassIndex,bapuhmeadIndex,baplowheathIndex,mountheathIndex,bapupheathIndex,limestonepavIndex,bapbbogIndex,bapfensIndex,baplrbogIndex,bapreedbedIndex,uplandswampIndex,pondsandlakeIndex,priorhablakeIndex,bapdecIndex,orchardIndex,bapwoodIndex,fragheathIndex,grassmoorIndex,bapundertergrassIndex&box=-1028750:-366800:3108275:1601700&useDefaultbackgroundMapping=false)
- contains an historic or archaeological feature, including scheduled

monuments

- is a 'protected landscape' – this includes [national landscapes](https://national-landscapes.org.uk/national-landscapes) (<https://national-landscapes.org.uk/national-landscapes>) (which were known as areas of outstanding national beauty), [national parks](https://www.nationalparks.uk/) (<https://www.nationalparks.uk/>) and the Broads
- contains scrub or bracken over certain thresholds – you can find these thresholds in the guidance on [land types for EIA screening decisions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-uncultivated-semi-natural-and-rural-land-when-you-need-permission/check-if-you-need-a-screening-decision%22%20/%20%22check-your-land-type) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-uncultivated-semi-natural-and-rural-land-when-you-need-permission/check-if-you-need-a-screening-decision%22%20/%20%22check-your-land-type>).

You must [check if you need Natural England's permission](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-uncultivated-semi-natural-and-rural-land-when-you-need-permission/check-if-you-need-a-screening-decision) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changing-uncultivated-semi-natural-and-rural-land-when-you-need-permission/check-if-you-need-a-screening-decision>) (an EIA 'screening decision') if your selected SFI actions require activities which will:

- increase the productivity of 2 hectares or more of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas – such as ploughing, applying fertilisers, sowing seed, converting grassland to arable, and clearing scrub or vegetation
- add, remove, move or change the nature of a field boundary that's 4 kilometres (km) or more in length (2km or more in sensitive areas, such as a national park) – this includes installing fencing to protect a habitat you're creating
- add, remove or distribute 10,000 cubic metres or more of earth or other material over an area of 100 hectares or more (5,000 cubic metres or more over 50 hectares or more in sensitive areas)

It's your responsibility to get an EIA screening decision from Natural England, if required, before you do the affected SFI actions.

10.8 Forestry environmental impact assessments

Check if you need to apply for a forestry environmental impact assessment (EIA) from the Forestry Commission.

For example, you may need a forestry EIA if your selected SFI actions require activities which:

- convert agricultural land to woodland by planting trees or allowing natural regeneration (self-sowing) of trees which could create woodland cover
- remove woodland cover to convert the land to agricultural use

It's your responsibility to check this and [apply for a forestry EIA](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessments-for-woodland) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessments-for-woodland>), if relevant, before you do the affected SFI actions.

10.9 Permission to do work on or around a watercourse

If your selected SFI actions require you to do work on or near a watercourse, you may need a permit or consent. This includes carrying out drainage works on land which may affect the flow of a watercourse.

For work on a '[main river](https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386)' (<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386>), check if you need to apply for a [flood risk activity permit](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits>) (FRAP) from the Environment Agency.

For work on or near a watercourse that is not a main river (an 'ordinary watercourse', such as small rivers, streams and ditches), check if you need 'ordinary watercourse consent' from either:

- [your local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council) (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>)
- [internal drainage board](https://www.ada.org.uk/member_type/idbs/) (https://www.ada.org.uk/member_type/idbs/)

Check if you need [permission to do work on or around a watercourse](https://www.gov.uk/permission-work-on-river-flood-sea-defence) (<https://www.gov.uk/permission-work-on-river-flood-sea-defence>).

It's your responsibility to get permission, where required, before you do the affected SFI actions.

11. About your SFI agreement

Your SFI agreement is the legally binding agreement between you and Defra. It comprises:

- your agreement document – you can view this in the Rural Payments service
- the [SFI agreement terms and conditions](https://government/publications/sustainable-farming-incentive-scheme-expanded-offer-for-2024/sfi-agreement-terms-and-conditions-expanded-offer-for-2024)
- the SFI actions you have selected

11.1 What you're agreeing to do

When you enter an SFI agreement, you're agreeing to:

- complete the SFI actions you have selected, as referenced in your agreement document and set out in the ['Find funding for land or farms'](https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms) tool at your agreement's start date (unless an SFI action is changed subsequently – read section 12.5 'When the RPA may change your agreement' for more details)
- comply with your agreement's terms and conditions
- obtain, maintain and comply with any required permits, licences, permissions, consents, approvals, certificates and authorisations (whether statutory or otherwise)

11.2 Agreement start and end date

Your agreement will:

- start on the first day of the calendar month after you have accepted your offer
- end on the last day of the month of the longest action in your agreement (3 or 5 years) unless it's terminated earlier

Your agreement document will show the start and end dates for:

- your agreement (the ‘agreement period’)
- each SFI action that’s in your agreement

12. Managing your SFI agreement

12.1 Submit your annual declaration

Towards the end of each agreement year, you must submit an annual declaration to confirm you have complied, or expect to have complied, with your agreement’s obligations for that year.

You must do this by the date specified by the RPA (the ‘due date’), which will be within the last 2 months of the relevant agreement year.

Your annual declaration is a simple tick box form. You’ll submit it online using the Rural Payments service. The RPA will tell you when it’s ready to complete.

If you do not submit your annual declaration by the due date, the RPA may:

- delay the fourth instalment of your payment
- regard it as a breach of your agreement

If something happens which means you cannot comply with your agreement’s obligations for the relevant agreement year:

- you will not be able to submit your annual declaration, as you cannot confirm that you have complied, or expect to have complied, with your agreement’s obligations for that year
- you must tell the RPA about what’s happened in writing as soon as possible - read section 13.2: ‘What you must do if you cannot comply with your agreement’

12.2 Add actions or land to your agreement

You can apply for a separate SFI agreement for more SFI actions and land. You can do this at any time.

If you've selected rotational SFI actions, you can add land to these actions in your agreement. Read section 1.4 'Rotational SFI actions' for more information.

12.3 Remove actions or land from your agreement or end it early

During the agreement period, you will not usually be able to remove SFI actions or land from your agreement or end it early.

If you want to remove an action or land from your agreement, or end it early, you must [email or write to the RPA](#) as soon as possible to request this and explain the reason why. Preferably, this should be within 8 weeks of you being able to do so.

The RPA will consider your request and may allow it if there's been a change of circumstances. The RPA will tell you what they decide.

If the RPA approves your request:

- your agreement will be amended or ended early
- you may have to repay some or all of the payments you've already received

Read section 13.2 on 'what you must do if you cannot comply with your agreement'.

12.4 What happens if you transfer land in your agreement to another person

You will not usually be able to transfer your agreement to another person if, for example, you transfer land in your agreement because:

- you sell it to someone else
- your tenancy on the land ends, and there's a new tenant

Instead, you must [email or write to the RPA](#) about this as soon as possible. As you'll no longer have management control of the land you've transferred, the RPA will need to remove it from your agreement.

You may have to repay some, or all the payments you've already received during the agreement year in which you transfer the land if you:

- have not completed your selected SFI actions
- submitted your annual declaration for that year

Unlike previous schemes, the RPA will not apply additional financial 'penalties'.

Once the RPA has removed the land from your agreement, the new occupier can apply for an SFI agreement on that land.

Read section 13.2 'What you must do if you cannot comply with your agreement'.

12.5 When the RPA may change your agreement

The RPA will not usually change your SFI agreement during the agreement period.

However, it is possible that they may offer you an agreement 'upgrade', for example, if they change:

- your agreement's terms and conditions
- the SFI actions which are in your agreement

If the RPA considers the agreement upgrade is a change that's beneficial to you, such as a payment rate increase, they will:

- publish details on GOV.UK
- write to you with details of the agreement upgrade, including the date it will apply from

If you want to reject a beneficial change and continue with your existing agreement, you must [email or write to the RPA](#) within 8 weeks of their notification. If you do not, the change will apply from the date the RPA tells you.

If the RPA offers you an agreement upgrade that they do not consider beneficial to you:

- they will write to you with details of the agreement upgrade
- you can either accept the upgrade or continue with your existing agreement

There may also be exceptional circumstances which mean the RPA has to change your agreement. For example, changes in the law, disease outbreaks or food security emergencies. In this case:

- they will notify you in writing, giving as much notice as possible
- the change will apply from the date specified by the RPA in their notice
- if the change is not acceptable to you, you can end your agreement by telling the RPA in writing by the deadline they'll specify in their notice – you will not be required to repay payments you've already received

12.6 Temporary adjustments to the SFI actions in your agreement

The RPA may identify factors which may temporarily affect your ability to complete the SFI actions in your agreement. This could include, for example, adverse weather conditions, such as flooding or drought.

If this happens, the RPA may make a temporary adjustment to the SFI actions for a period of time specified by them. To do this they will publish details on GOV.UK, giving you as much notice as possible. These details will include:

- what the temporary adjustment is – including which SFI actions it affects
- the start and end dates for the temporary adjustment
- the evidence you must keep if you choose to comply with the temporary adjustment

After the temporary adjustment's end date, you must complete your selected SFI actions as if the temporary adjustment no longer applies.

You do not have to comply with the temporary adjustment. If you choose to comply with it, you must:

- keep evidence to show how you've complied with it
- complete and retain a copy of the prescribed form the RPA publishes on GOV.UK

You must supply this evidence if the RPA asks for it.

13. Complying with your SFI agreement

The RPA will support and advise you if you cannot comply with your agreement to help you resolve the problem, where possible.

During the period of your SFI agreement, the RPA may check:

- you're complying with your agreement's terms and conditions
- you've completed what's required in each of your selected SFI actions in a way that could reasonably be expected to achieve their aims

13.1 How the RPA will check you're complying with your agreement

The RPA will check you're complying with your agreement's obligations through a combination of:

- physical or virtual site visits
- remote monitoring
- desk-based administrative checks

The RPA may ask you to supply supporting evidence to show, for example, that:

- you have management control of your land
- you've completed what's required in each SFI action you've selected in a way that could reasonably be expected to achieve its aim – each action sets out what evidence you must keep

Your agreement's terms and conditions explain that you must:

- provide this evidence if the RPA requests it
- keep this evidence for at least 7 years from your agreement's end date, or its termination date if that's earlier

Site visits

If the RPA selects your farm or land for a site visit, they'll:

- try to arrange a suitable date and time with you in advance
- let you know what to expect during the visit

If it's not possible to arrange a suitable date and time, the RPA will write to you by email or post explaining the purpose, date and time of the visit. This will be at least 48 hours before the site visit, unless the RPA has reason to suspect there's been a serious breach of your agreement, fraud or any other related offence.

Remote monitoring

The RPA uses aerial photography and satellite imagery to carry out remote monitoring of land cover, vegetation condition and soil erosion risk. This aims to:

- reduce the need for physical site visits
- make sure the SFI actions are being done in a way that could reasonably be expected to achieve their aims

- identify potential issues so the RPA can give targeted support

Desk-based administrative checks

The RPA carries out desk-based administrative checks to make sure you're meeting your SFI agreement's obligations. This can include checking the nature and quality of any supporting evidence they ask you to supply, such as receipts and farm records.

13.2 What you must do if you cannot comply with your agreement

You must tell the RPA in writing as soon as possible if something happens within or outside your control which might reasonably be expected to affect your ability to comply with your SFI agreement's obligations. This is called a 'change of circumstances'.

A change of circumstances includes something that may affect:

- your eligibility to get paid
- how much you're paid
- your ability to complete your selected SFI actions
- your ability to comply with your agreement's terms and conditions

Preferably, you should tell the RPA about a change of circumstances within 8 weeks of you being able to do so.

You can notify the RPA about a change of circumstances by email or post. When you [email or write to the RPA](#), you should include:

- your SBI
- your SFI agreement reference number, which you can find on your agreement document
- as many details as possible about the change of circumstances, including specific details about any SFI actions you cannot complete

RPA will look at each change of circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Depending on what's happened, they may:

- amend your agreement, for example, by removing land or SFI actions
- reduce your payments
- ask you to repay some or all of the payments you've already received
- end your agreement early (before your agreement's end date)

RPA will tell you what their decision is. If you do not agree with it, you can use the [complaints procedure](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency/about/complaints-procedure) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency/about/complaints-procedure>) to ask the RPA to reconsider it. You must do this within 60 calendar days of the date you're notified of the decision.

13.3 How you could breach your agreement

You could breach your SFI agreement if you have:

- not notified the RPA of a change of circumstances
- given false or misleading information
- used the payments received under your agreement for a purpose that's not in accordance with the agreement
- used the payments received under your agreement for activities that breach any law you're required to comply with
- failed to comply with the terms of your agreement
- breached a requirement you're subject to under the Agriculture (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2021, as amended
- failed to provide required information, records or evidence
- prevented an authorised person from carrying out a virtual or physical site visit of the land in your agreement
- refused a reasonable request by an authorised person to provide assistance to carry out a virtual or physical site visit of the land in your agreement
- obstructed a virtual or physical site visit of the land in your agreement
- failed to prevent or report actual or anticipated fraud or corruption in

relation to the payments you receive under your agreement

This includes a breach caused by your employees or someone acting on your behalf, unless it relates to a change of circumstances or actual or anticipated fraud or corruption.

13.4 If the RPA suspects there's been a breach

When the RPA checks if you're complying with your SFI agreement, they may reasonably suspect there's been a breach.

If this is the case, the RPA will:

- carry out a proportionate investigation to determine whether there has been a breach - unlike previous schemes, they will not usually withhold your payments while investigating
- discuss their investigation with you, where possible, so you understand what they have found
- consider any 'good reasons' for the suspected breach (read section 13.6 'Good reasons for a breach' for more information)

The RPA may also ask you to provide more information or evidence.

Once the RPA has completed their investigation, they'll write to tell you:

- the outcome
- how you can respond to the outcome if you do not agree with it – including the deadline for submitting your response in writing

The RPA will consider your response before making a formal decision (known as a 'determination') about whether you have breached your agreement.

13.5 RPA confirms there's been a breach

If the RPA decides that you have breached your SFI agreement, they will:

- explain the reasons for their determination in writing
- decide what action, if any, they will take – there are no set actions that they'll take for particular breaches of your agreement

What the RPA does about the breach will depend on the individual circumstances of your case. They will consider factors such as:

- how serious the breach was
- if you had a 'good reason' for the breach – read section 13.6: 'Good reasons for a breach'
- why the breach happened and any consequences it may have
- what impact the breach has on achieving the aims of the SFI actions in your agreement, and whether that impact will be short or longer term
- if you can take action to make sure you are complying with your agreement
- any past conduct and whether a similar breach has happened before
- if you intentionally breached your agreement
- whether the breach constitutes an offence and has caused widespread or irreparable damage
- if you have not co-operated with the RPA checking you're complying with your agreement
- if you notified the RPA about a change of circumstances (if applicable)

The RPA may decide that no action is needed because:

- of the nature of the breach
- you've supplied evidence to them of a 'good reason' for the breach

If the RPA decides action is needed, they may:

- issue you with a warning letter
- temporarily or permanently amend, remove or replace a condition subject to which your agreement's payments are made to you
- temporarily or permanently amend, remove or replace your selected SFI actions or timescales
- allow you to rectify the breach

- delay, reduce, recover or withhold payments or require you to repay some or all the payments you've already received

The RPA may decide that there's a serious breach of your SFI agreement because it:

- was intentional
- was due to negligence or recklessness
- has happened more than once, without good reason

In this case, they may:

- end your SFI agreement before its end date
- prevent you from receiving payments under any other financial assistance scheme for up to 2 years

Where there is evidence of fraud or illegality, they will follow the relevant legal process.

If you do not agree with the RPA's determination that there's been a breach, you can use the [complaints procedure](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency/about/complaints-procedure) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency/about/complaints-procedure>) to ask the RPA to reconsider it. You must do this within 60 calendar days of the date you're notified of the determination.

13.6 Good reasons for a breach

There may be circumstances (a 'good reason') which mean you breach your SFI agreement's obligations because of events outside of your control.

Good reasons for a breach include, but are not limited to:

- natural events, such as prolonged adverse weather conditions, flooding, or animal or plant disease
- if you are seriously ill
- the death of the agreement holder

- if there is unforeseen loss of management control of the land in your agreement, for example when a tenancy is terminated, or because of the compulsory purchase of land by a third party
- financial circumstances, such as bankruptcy
- evidenced supply chain problems, such as a lack of laboratory soil testing capacity
- criminal damage by a third party, such as arson or vandalism

If there's a 'good reason' for the breach of your agreement, you (or someone authorised to act on your behalf) must write to the RPA to explain:

- what has happened, including details of the events outside your control which meant you breached your agreement
- whether you can take action to make sure you are complying with your agreement

You must email or write to the RPA immediately if the good reason is because you've breached your agreement by:

- preventing the RPA from carrying out a site visit
- refusing to provide assistance with a site visit
- otherwise obstructing a virtual or physical site visit of the land in your agreement

In all other cases, you must email or write to the RPA within 8 weeks from the date that either:

- you are able to
- the RPA notifies you of their determination that you've breached your agreement

The RPA will:

- consider your individual circumstances – they may ask you to supply further evidence
- decide what action, if any, they will take – they will tell you about their decision

If you knew about the issue when you entered your agreement, it's

unlikely the RPA will consider it to be a good reason for a breach.

The RPA will also take 'good reasons' into account when they investigate a suspected breach of your agreement. Read section 13.4: 'If the RPA suspect there's been a breach'.

14. Contact the RPA

If you have a general question about SFI, contact RPA by:

- email: ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk - use 'SFI' in the subject header and include your SBI
- telephone: [03000 200 301](tel:03000200301) - Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5pm, except bank holidays
- post: PO Box 325, Worksop, S95 1DG

If you need to raise a specific query about your application, follow the guidance on [how to contact RPA about SFI](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contact-the-rpa-about-sfi) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contact-the-rpa-about-sfi>).

Annex A: Applying for SFI on common land or shared grazing

You must enter common land (including shared grazing) into a separate SFI agreement.

To apply for an SFI agreement on common land, you need to contact the RPA. They will help you to prepare to apply, so you're ready for when the online application service is available for common land later in 2024.

If you want to apply for the expanded SFI offer on land that is not common land, you can enter that into a separate SFI agreement. You can do this from when applications open from summer 2024.

How common land is defined

For SFI, common land is defined as:

- land registered as common land in a register of common land kept under Part 1 of the Commons Act 2006
- land to which Part 1 of that Act does not apply and which is subject to rights of common within the meaning of that Act

‘Shared grazing’ means communal pasture that is not registered as common land where graziers have a legal entitlement to graze. For example, a pasture used jointly by tenants.

Any reference to common land in this section includes shared grazing.

Check you’re eligible to apply as a ‘single entity’

To apply for an SFI agreement on common land, you must be a ‘single entity’. This can be either as a:

- a person who is the sole beneficiary - usually a landowner who owns the whole common and has sole use and rights to the common
- a group of 2 or more people

If the single entity is a group, it must have a formal, legally enforceable internal arrangement between the members that sets out:

- each person’s responsibilities
- the payments they expect to receive
- that each person agrees that the RPA or Defra may recover payments from them personally if there’s a breach of the SFI agreement

Each individual member of the group who will benefit from, or contribute to, the delivery of the SFI agreement must:

- sign the internal arrangement
- be registered with the RPA in the Rural Payments service, so they have

their own SBI

In addition, the group must:

- identify a main business contact (the nominated representative) with the RPA who will be responsible for administering the SFI agreement on behalf of the group
- have a single bank account registered with the RPA

You do not have to submit a copy of your formal internal arrangement to the RPA when you apply for an SFI agreement. However, you must supply this evidence if the RPA asks for it.

There should not be more than one single entity overseeing another environmental land management scheme agreement for the same area of land on the common. This includes CS, Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) (part of ES) and SFI.

The single entity must have sufficient management control of the common land to comply with the SFI agreement's obligations for the entire agreement period. Read 'Check the single entity has management control of the common land'.

Using an existing single entity for a group

A group may have an existing single entity to administer:

- an existing CS, HLS or SFI agreement on the common
- general management of the common

In this case, the existing single entity should be able to extend its scope to meet the requirements for a common land SFI agreement. It should apply for an SFI agreement using its existing SBI.

Setting up a new single entity for a group

If a group needs to set up a new single entity, it needs to do this before it applies for a common land SFI agreement.

The new single entity will need to register on the Rural Payments service to get a new SBI. It needs to use this SBI to apply for the SFI agreement,

even if individual members have their own SBIs.

When setting up the new single entity, the group may want to consider:

- how to deal with membership changes
- how to distribute payments among members
- what permissions are given to members who are not the nominated representative in the Rural Payments service, so they can view relevant documents
- how to resolve disputes within the group

You may find it helpful to read the [CS guidance about setting up a commons association or an internal agreement for common land and shared grazing \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual-for-agreements-starting-on-1-january-2022/annex-6-common-land-and-shared-grazing-additional-requirements\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual-for-agreements-starting-on-1-january-2022/annex-6-common-land-and-shared-grazing-additional-requirements). Where this guidance uses the word ‘must’ or ‘should’, that requirement applies to a CS agreement, not an SFI agreement.

Additional payment on common land for a single entity that’s a group

To help with a group’s costs of administering a common land SFI agreement, there’s an annual additional payment of £7 per hectare of eligible common land.

Defra will keep this payment under review.

Check if the single entity has management control of the common land

To enter common land into an SFI agreement, the single entity must have sufficient management control of the land for the entire agreement period.

If the single entity is a group, it should have sufficient management control if its members have sufficient control over how the common land is managed to complete the SFI actions selected.

To demonstrate a group has sufficient management control, it must:

- take all reasonable steps to contact and consult everyone with a legal interest in the management of the common land
- obtain the consent of the landowner if it's required – the group will also need to consider whether the landowner needs to be part of the single entity

People with a legal interest in the management of the common land include:

- all known common rights holders, whether they're actively using their rights or not
- the landowner
- tenants
- anyone who has an easement or other rights and covenants over the land, including sporting tenants

You may find it helpful to read the CS guidance for more information about [consulting other people with a legal interest in managing the common](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual-for-agreements-starting-on-1-january-2022/annex-6-common-land-and-shared-grazing-additional-requirements) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual-for-agreements-starting-on-1-january-2022/annex-6-common-land-and-shared-grazing-additional-requirements>). Where this guidance uses the word 'must' or 'should', that requirement applies to a CS agreement, not an SFI agreement.

When a single entity enters common land into an SFI agreement, it declares that it will have management control of that land for the entire agreement period. The single entity must provide evidence of this if the RPA asks for it.

Check the common land is eligible

The common land must be eligible for an SFI agreement. Read section 5 'Check if your land is eligible for the SFI actions'.

If the common land is eligible, the SFI agreement can include:

- a whole common
- more than one whole common, if they're managed as a single unit
- part of a common, if it's a defined area that's managed as a separate, single unit and the SFI actions selected will not impact land management practices on the remaining part of the common

Annex B: Summary of the initial expanded SFI offer from summer 2024

The following information includes the SFI actions in the initial expanded SFI offer from summer 2024.

It includes one ‘endorsed’ SFI action (GRH6: Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland).

Later in 2024, Defra will introduce:

- more endorsed SFI actions for farmland wildlife and habitats on grassland, heritage, wood pasture, orchards, coastal habitats and waterbodies – read section 1.2 ‘SFI actions which require endorsement’ for more information
- an educational access action, which will pay you to provide educational tours of your farm or woodland

These additional endorsed SFI actions and the educational access action will be published on the ‘Find funding for land or farms’ tool before they’re available for applications.

Code	SFI actions for agroforestry	Annual payment	Action’s duration
AGF1	Maintain very low density in-field agroforestry on less sensitive land	£248 per hectare	3 years
AGF2	Maintain low density in-field agroforestry on less sensitive land	£385 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for boundary features	Annual payment	Action's duration
CHRW1	Assess and record hedgerow condition	£5 per 100 metres for one side	3 years
CHRW2	Manage hedgerows	£13 per 100 metres for one side	3 years
CHRW3	Maintain or establish hedgerow trees	£10 per 100 metres for both sides	3 years
BND1	Maintain dry stone walls	£27 per 100 metres for both sides	3 years
BND2	Maintain earth banks or stone-faced hedgebanks	£11 per 100 metres for one side	3 years

Code	SFI actions for buffer strips	Annual payment	Action's duration
CAHL4	4m to 12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land	£515 per hectare	3 years
CIGL3	4m to 12m grass buffer strip on improved grassland	£235 per hectare	3 years
BFS1	12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land	£707 per hectare	3 years
BFS2	Buffer in-field ponds on arable land	£681 per hectare	3 years
BFS3	Buffer in-field ponds on improved grassland	£311 per hectare	3 years

BFS4	Protect in-field trees on arable land	£553 per hectare	3 years
BFS5	Protect in-field trees on intensive grassland	£295 per hectare	3 years
BFS6	6m to 12m habitat strip next to watercourses	£742 per hectare	5 years

Code	SFI actions for farmland wildlife on arable and horticultural land	Annual payment	Action's duration
CAHL1	Pollen and nectar flower mix	£739 per hectare	3 years
CAHL2	Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land	£853 per hectare	3 years
CAHL3	Grassy field corners or blocks	£590 per hectare	3 years
AHW1	Bumblebird mix	£747 per hectare	3 years
AHW2	Supplementary winter bird food (*maximum 1 tonne for every 2 hectares of CAHL2)	£732 per tonne*	3 years
AHW3	Beetle banks	£764 per hectare	3 years
AHW4	Skylark plots (*minimum 2 plots)	£11 per plot*	3 years
AHW5	Nesting plots for lapwing	£765 per hectare	3 years
AHW6	Basic overwinter stubble	£58 per hectare	3 years

AHW7	Enhanced overwinter stubble	£589 per hectare	3 years
AHW8	Whole crop spring cereals and overwinter stubble	£596 per hectare	3 years
AHW9	Unharvested cereal headland	£1,072 per hectare	3 years
AHW10	Low input harvested cereal crop	£354 per hectare	3 years
AHW11	Cultivated areas for arable plants	£660 per hectare	3 years
AHW12	Manage woodland edges on arable land	£428 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for farmland wildlife and habitats on grassland	Annual payment	Action's duration
CIGL1	Take grassland field corners or blocks out of management	£333 per hectare	3 years
CIGL2	Winter bird food on improved grassland	£515 per hectare	3 years
CLIG3	Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs	£151 per hectare	3 years
GRH1	Manage rough grazing for birds	£121 per hectare	3 years
GRH6	Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland (endorsed)	£646 per hectare	5 years
GRH7	Supplement: Haymaking	£157 per hectare	3 years

GRH8	Supplement: Haymaking (late cut)	£187 per hectare	3 years
GRH10	Supplement: Lenient grazing	£28 per hectare	3 years
GRH11	Supplement: Cattle grazing (non-moorland)	£59 per hectare	5 years
SCR1	Create scrub and open habitat mosaics	£588 per hectare	5 years
SCR2	Manage scrub and open habitat mosaics	£350 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for heritage	Annual payment	Action's duration
HEF1	Maintain weatherproof traditional farm or forestry buildings	£5 per square metre	3 years
HEF2	Maintain weatherproof traditional farm or forestry buildings in remote areas	£8 per square metre	3 years
HEF5	Control scrub on historic and archaeological features	£215 per hectare	5 years
HEF6	Manage historic and archaeological features on grassland	£55 per hectare	5 years
HEF8	Maintain designed or engineered waterbodies	£2,512 per hectare	5 years

Code	SFI actions for integrated pest management	Annual payment	Action's duration
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CIPM1	Assess integrated pest management and produce a plan	£1,129 for the assessment and plan	3 years
CIPM2	Flower-rich grass margins, blocks or in-field strips	£798 per hectare	3 years
CIPM3	Companion crop on arable and horticultural land	£55 per hectare	3 years
CIPM4	No use of insecticide on arable crops and permanent crops	£45 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for moorland	Annual payment	Action's duration
CMOR1	Assess moorland and produce a written record	£10.60 per hectare and £272 per agreement	3 years
UPL1	Moderate livestock grazing on moorland	£20 per hectare	3 years
UPL2	Low livestock grazing on moorland	£53 per hectare	3 years
UPL3	Limited livestock grazing on moorland	£66 per hectare	3 years
UPL4	Supplement: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland (minimum 30% GLU)	£7 per hectare	3 years
UPL5	Supplement: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland (minimum 70% GLU)	£18 per hectare	3 years
UPL6	Supplement: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland (100% GLU)	£23 per hectare	3 years

UPL7	Shepherding livestock on moorland (no required stock removal period)	£33 per hectare	3 years
UPL8	Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 4 months)	£43 per hectare	3 years
UPL9	Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 6 months)	£45 per hectare	3 years
UPL10	Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock for at least 8 months)	£48 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for nutrient management	Annual payment	Action's duration
CNUM1	Assess nutrient management and produce a review report	£652 for the assessment and report	3 years
CNUM2	Legumes on improved grassland	£102 per hectare	3 years
CNUM3	Legume fallow	£593 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for organic farming	Annual payment	Action's duration
OFC1	Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland (*maximum of 2 consecutive years)	£187 per hectare	1 year*
OFC2	Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland (*maximum of 2 consecutive years)	£96 per hectare	1 year*

OFC3	Organic conversion – rotational land (*maximum of 2 consecutive years)	£298 per hectare	1 year*
OFC4	Organic conversion – horticultural land (*maximum of 2 consecutive years)	£874 per hectare	1 year*
OFC5	Organic conversion – top fruit (*maximum of 3 consecutive years)	£1,920 per hectare	1 year*
OFM1	Organic land management – improved permanent grassland	£20 per hectare	3 years
OFM2	Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland	£41 per hectare	3 years
OFM3	Organic land management – enclosed rough grazing	£97 per hectare	3 years
OFM4	Organic land management – rotational land	£132 per hectare	3 years
OFM5	Organic land management – horticultural land	£707 per hectare	3 years
OFM6	Organic land management – top fruit	£1,920 per hectare	3 years
OFA1	Overwinter stubble (organic land)	£264 per hectare	3 years
OFA3	Supplementary winter bird food (organic land) (*maximum 1 tonne for every 2 hectares of CALH2)	£935 per tonne*	3 years
OFA6	Undersown cereal crop (organic land)	£380 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for precision farming	Annual	Action's
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		payment	duration
PRF1	Variable rate application of nutrients	£27 per hectare	3 years
PRF2	Camera or remote sensor guided herbicide spraying	£43 per hectare	3 years
PRF3	Non-mechanical robotic weeding	£101 per hectare	3 years
PRF4	Mechanical robotic weeding	£150 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for species recovery and management	Annual payment	Action's duration
SPM2	Supplement: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats (50-80%)	£92 per hectare	3 years
SPM3	Supplement: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats (more than 80%)	£146 per hectare	3 years
SPM4	Supplement: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats (50-80%)	£7 per hectare	3 years
SPM5	Supplement: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats (more than 80%)	£11 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for soil health	Annual payment	Action's duration
CSAM1	Assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter	£6 per hectare and an additional payment of £97 per agreement	3 years
CSAM2	Multi-species winter cover crop	£129 per hectare	3 years

CSAM3	Herbal leys	£382 per hectare	3 years
SOH1	No-till farming	£73 per hectare	3 years
SOH2	Multi-species spring-sown cover crop	£163 per hectare	3 years
SOH3	Multi-species summer-sown cover crop	£163 per hectare	3 years
SOH4	Winter cover following maize crops	£203 per hectare	3 years

Code	SFI actions for waterbodies	Annual payment	Action's duration
WBD1	Manage ponds (*maximum of 3 ponds per hectare)	£257 per pond*	3 years
WBD2	Manage ditches	£4 per 100m for both sides	3 years
WBD3	In-field grass strips	£765 per hectare	3 years
WBD4	Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input	£489 per hectare	5 years
WBD5	Manage intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse	£311 per hectare	5 years
WBD6	Remove livestock from intensive grassland during the autumn and winter (outside SDAs)	£115 per hectare	3 years
WBD7	Remove livestock from grassland during the autumn and winter (SDAs)	£115 per hectare	3 years

WBD8	Manage grassland to reduce nutrient levels in groundwater	£396 per hectare	3 years
WBD9	Supplement: Nil fertiliser	£156 per hectare	5 years

Additional payments	Annual payment	Action's duration
Additional common land payment (*if a group of 2 or more people apply for an SFI agreement on common land)	£7 per hectare*	Not applicable
SFI management payment (*up to the first 50 hectares entered into the relevant SFI actions, per SBI)	£40 per hectare* for the first agreement year, £20 per ha* for each subsequent agreement year	Not applicable

Annex C: What supplemental actions you can do with each base action

The following information sets out:

- each base action in the expanded SFI offer
- which supplemental actions can be done with each base action

Unless identified otherwise, you can only do:

- one supplemental action with the base action
- your selected supplemental action on the same area of land as the base action

Base action	Supplemental actions you can do with the base action
AGF2 (maintain low density agroforestry on less sensitive land)	SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%) SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
AGF2 (maintain low density agroforestry on less sensitive land)	SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%) SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
CAHL2: Winter bird food (AHL2 in the SFI 2023 offer)	AHW2: Supplementary bird food* OFA3: Supplementary bird food (organic)* (*can be done on different area to base action)
CLIG3: Manage grassland with very low nutrient inputs (LIG1 or LIG2 in the SFI23 offer)	GRH7: Hay making supplement* (GRH11 can also be done on same area as GRH7) GRH8: Hay making supplement (late cut)* (GRH11 can also be done on same area as GRH8) GRH10: Lenient grazing supplement GRH11: Cattle grazing supplement (non-moorland)* (GRH7 or GRH8 can also be done on same area as GRH11) SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%) SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%) (*same or less than area in base action)

GRH1: Manage rough grazing for birds

GRH11: Cattle grazing supplement (non-moorland)*

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

(*same or less than area in base action)

GRH6: Manage priority habitat species-rich grassland

GRH7: Hay making supplement* (GRH11 can also be done on same area as GRH7)

GRH8: Hay making supplement (late cut)* (GRH11 can be also done on same area as GRH8)

GRH11: Cattle grazing supplement (non-moorland)* (GRH7 or GHR8 can also be done on same area as GRH11)

SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

(*same or less than area in base action)

OFC1: Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland

SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

OFC2: Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland

SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats

supplement (more than 80%)

OFM1: Organic land management – improved permanent grassland	SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)
	SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
OFM2: Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland	SPM2: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (50-80%)
	SPM3: Keep native breeds on grazed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
OFM3: Organic land management – enclosed rough grazing	SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)
	SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
SCR2: Manage scrub and open habitat mosaics	SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)
	SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
UPL1: Moderate livestock grazing on moorland	UPL4: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 30% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL4)
	UPL5: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 70% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL5)
	UPL6: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (100% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL6)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM4)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM5)

UPL2: Low livestock grazing on moorland

UPL4: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 30% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL4)

UPL5: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 70% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL5)

UPL6: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (100% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL6)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM4)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM5)

UPL3: Limited livestock grazing on moorland

UPL4: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (minimum 30% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL4)

UPL5: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland

supplement (minimum 70% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL5)

UPL6: Keep cattle and ponies on moorland supplement (100% GLU) (SPM4 or SPM5 can also be done on same area as UPL6)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM4)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%) (UPL4 or UPL5 or UPL6 can also be done on the same area as SPM5)

UPL7: Shepherding livestock on moorland (no required stock removal)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

UPL8: Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock 4 months)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

UPL9: Shepherding livestock on moorland (remove stock 6 months)

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)

SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)

UPL10: Shepherding livestock on moorland

SPM4: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (50-80%)

(remove stock 8 months)	SPM5: Keep native breeds on extensively managed habitats supplement (more than 80%)
WBD4: Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input	WBD9: Nil fertiliser supplement
WBD5: Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse	WBD9: Nil fertiliser supplement

Annex D: Land covers the RPA registers and compatible land use codes

Table 1 and 2 explain the:

- agricultural and non-agricultural land covers registered by the RPA on your digital maps – there may be more than one land cover in each land parcel
- land use codes which are compatible with each registered land cover

Read section 5.2 ‘Eligible land covers and compatible land uses’ for more information.

Table 1: Agricultural land covers

Registered agricultural land covers	Compatible land use codes
Arable land	Land use codes for arable crops

Arable land	Land use codes for leguminous and nitrogen-fixing crops
Arable land	TG01 (temporary grassland)
Arable land	FA01 (fallow)
Permanent grassland	PG01
Permanent crops	Land use codes for permanent crops

Table 2: Non-agricultural land covers

Registered non-agricultural land covers	Compatible land use codes
Airstrip or airports	MT05
Bog	IW07
Cliffs	CF01
Drain, ditch, dyke	WF01
Drain, ditch, dyke on a boundary	IW11
Farm building	AB01
Farmyards	AB09
Fen marsh and swamp	IW06
Gallop	NT01
General utility	UT06

Glasshouse	AB06
Golf course	RL04
Hard standing	HS01
Heath land and bracken – ungrazeable	HE02
Heap	HE03
Intertidal habitats	MW04
Metalled track	MT01
Mineral extraction site	MS04
Non-agricultural area	NA02
Non-utilised Bank	PL01
Notional – rock	NF01
Notional - bracken	NF02
Notional - scrub	NF03
Notional - trees	NF04
Notional - water	NF05
Notional – natural	NF06
Notional - manmade	NF07
Notional - mixed	NF08
Peat production	CM01
Pond	WF03
Railway	MT04

Real estate services	ES01
Reed beds	MW03
Residential gardens	WO17
Residential dwelling, house	NR01
River/Stream on a boundary	IW01
Rivers and Streams type 2	IW02
Rivers and Streams type 3	IW03
Roads	MT03
Salt marsh – ungrazeable	MW01
Sand dunes	CF03
Saline habitats	MW05
Scree	RO02
Scrub - ungrazeable	WO25
Shelter on bare soil	AB03
Shingle	IW05
Solar panels	UT01
Sports and recreation	RL03
Storage area	SA02
Structure	ST05
Tidal areas	MW02
Track – natural surface	NT03

Turf production	CM02
Uncropped	PL02
Vegetated shingle	CF02
Water treatment works	UT07
Woodland	WO12

OGL

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