



Ricardo
Energy & Environment

One-to-one Farm Advisory Service

January 2021 - December 2021 | Report for Scottish Government

Customer:**Scottish Government****Customer reference:**

Farm Advisory Service

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Date:

25 January 2022

Ricardo Energy & Environment reference:

Ref: ED13944- Issue Number 1

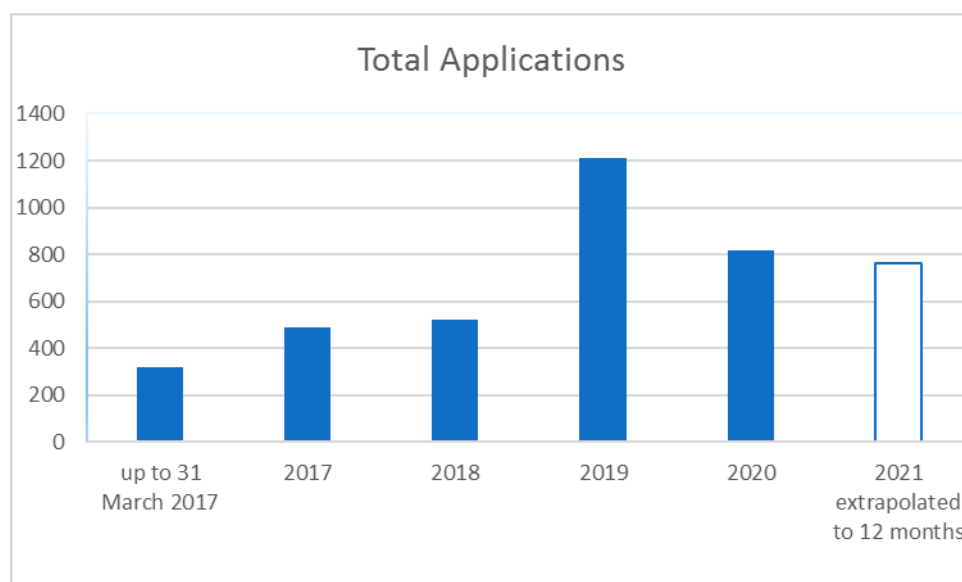
Executive summary

This report covers the delivery period January 2021 to December 2021 for the One-to-One Farm Advisory Service. The service commenced delivery of one-to-one support to farmers and crofters on the 20th September 2016. This comprises the delivery of Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP), Specialist Advice, Carbon Audits and Mentoring for new entrants.

Ricardo manage the delivery of the one-to-one service, providing a full grant management service; a quality management process to ensure high standard of reports; and training to FBAASS advisers delivering ILMPs. The FAS website, helpline and overall promotional campaign is delivered via the One-to-Many contract however Ricardo implement a promotional plan for the one-to-one programme, to ensure that the support is promoted through all available channels.

The rate of applications has held up well in 2021. The flow of applications was impacted by the fact that the service contract was due to end in December, which required the application window to close in October, though this was later extended it did cause a break in the flow of applications as advisers felt unable to take on more work within the ever shortening delivery window.

Figure 1: Application numbers during the FAS contract period



The pattern of demand is like previous years, with demand for specialist advice exceeding targets by 113% and demand for carbon audits 64% above target, but ILMPs lagging at 25% of the target and mentoring at 37%.

Feedback from all users of the service is gathered and has been analysed for this reporting period and is summarised below. The feedback during this period has been consistently above the scheme requirements with very significant majorities of participants rating all aspects of the service as good or excellent. This continued exceptional feedback is encouraging and shows the value of the service and the recognition of improvements year on year.

Feedback

ILMP

- 97% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 100% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.
- 97% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 95% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 98% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 95% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good (-3% on last year)
- 94% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good
- 71% of farmers state that they will implement all the actions recommended in their ILMP

Specialist Advice

- 97% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 99% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.
- 96% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 90% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 97% of respondents would recommend the service to others.
- 97% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good.
- 96% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good.
- 79% state that they will implement all the actions in their advice plan.

Carbon Audits

- 97% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 100% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.
- 97% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 95% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 94% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.
- 98% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good.
- 95% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good.
- 75% state that they will implement all the actions in their Carbon Audit mitigation plan.

Mentoring

- 100% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 97% rated helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good. 100% rated ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 93% rate efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 96% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 96% would rate the mentor's working practices as excellent or good.
- 96% would rate the quality of the support as excellent or good.
- 93% state that they will implement all the actions discussed with their mentor.

It is encouraging to see the proportion of farmers coming to the services as a result of a referral from a peer farmer, this is a real endorsement of the value of the support. It is still concerning that we do not see a good flow through of participants as a result of attending an event and this is an area, we will look to work with the one to many service to strengthen.

The feedback from participant on their perceptions of the benefits to the business of engaging with the service provide useful insight into the intended impact of the intervention vs the policy drivers for their provision. We can see that in many cases farmers are seeing benefits to their business performance but also identify the environmental improvements as key impacts. It is encouraging that farmers are seeing both the economic benefit and improvements in their environmental performance as key impact of engaging with the service.

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1 Service uptake

1.1 Applications received

The rate of applications has held up well in 2021 despite continued covid-19 restrictions. The flow of applications was impacted by the fact that the service contract was due to end in December, which required the application window to close in October, though this was later extended it did cause a break in the flow of applications as advisers felt unable to take on more work within the ever shortening delivery window.

Figure 2 Graph to show application rate compared to previous years

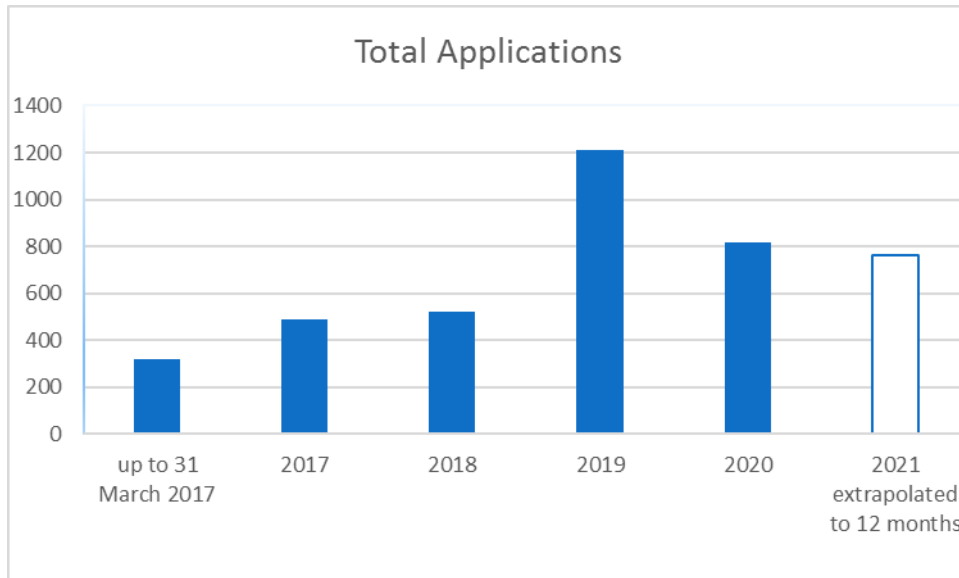


Table 1 Number of applications for each grant scheme

	Applications received												Total	Target for year
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December		
ILMP	13	9	4	9	5	5	8	8	-6	9	8	4	76	300
Specialist Advice	20	16	13	30	17	18	14	12	21	29	8	15	213	100
Carbon Audits	19	31	17	18	27	21	15	57	54	68	46	36	409	250
Mentoring	1	4	1	0	0	2	0	4	2	3	4	1	22	60

Throughout the year the grant managers undertake data cleansing, contacting businesses who have not moved forward with their grant during the delivery window, to establish if the support is still required. This results in some negative numbers in some months as we withdraw grants that are no longer required.

1.2 Reports Completed

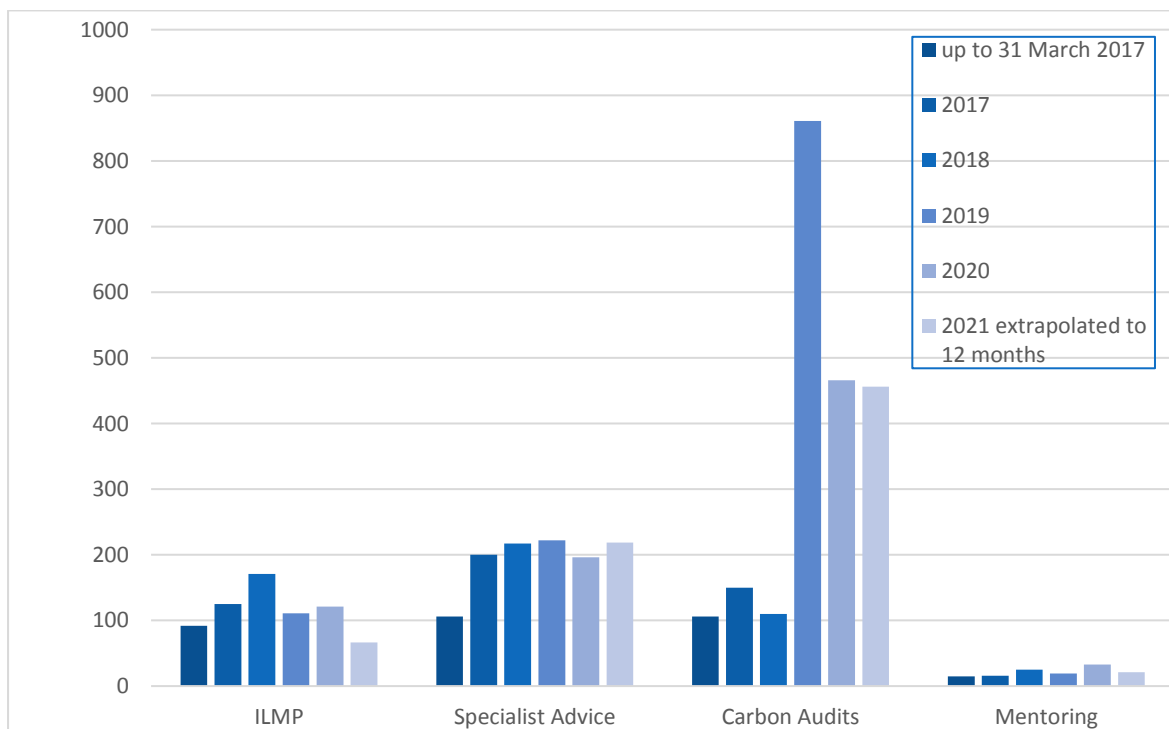
Table 2 Number of reports completed in January-December 2021

	Applications received												Total	Target for year
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December		
ILMP	12	9	4	3	5	1	3	4	12	4	10	9	76	300
Specialist Advice	27	12	13	14	8	4	16	9	13	8	20	14	158	100
Carbon Audits	47	24	22	12	28	12	45	19	39	46	28	46	368	250
Mentoring	1	4	1	0	0	2	0	4	2	3	4	1	22	60

1.3 Patterns of demand across the FAS services

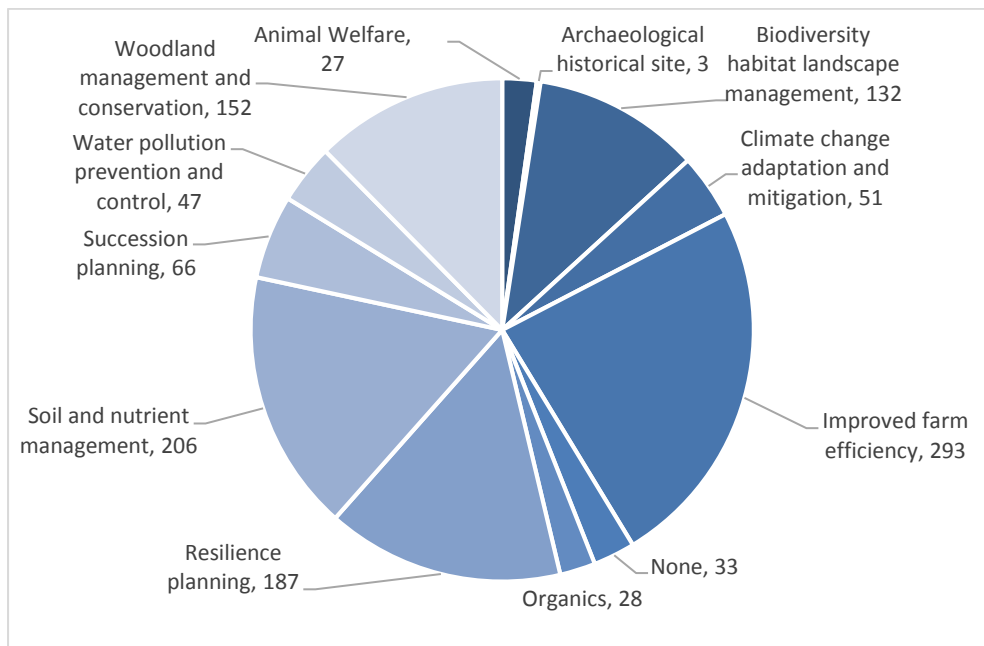
The pattern of demand is like previous years, with demand for specialist advice exceeding targets by 113% and demand for carbon audits 64% above target, but ILMPs lagging at 25% of the target and mentoring at 37%.

Figure 3 Graph to show applications for each service



Applications in January-December 2021 period.

1.4 Specialist Advice uptake across the service to date



There is a good spread of demand across the specialist advice topics. The top topics demanded are: Improved farm efficiency; soil and nutrient management; resilience planning; woodland management and conservation; and biodiversity, habitat and landscape management. By removing the need for a prior ILMP we have seen a considerable stimulation of demand for woodland advice, resilience planning and succession planning. In looking to a new service it would be sensible to identify if there were benefits to amending the rules for specialist advice and allowing access to all without a prior ILMP.

2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Farming Advisory Service requires all users of the grant schemes to complete an evaluation of the service prior to payment of the grant. Whilst this report provides a high-level summary for April 2021-December 2021 detailed analysis of the feedback from each grant scheme has been provided as separate reports included as appendices to this report.

- Appendix 1 Jan-Dec 2021 FAS one-to-one review of ILMP Feedback
- Appendix 2 Jan-Dec 2021 FAS one-to-one review of Specialist Advice Feedback
- Appendix 3 Jan-Dec 2021 FAS one-to-one review of Mentoring Feedback
- Appendix 4 Jan-Dec 2021 FAS one-to-one review of Carbon Audit Feedback

2.1 Administration

2.1.1 How users heard about the grant?

Recommendations and promotion of the services (ILMP, specialist advice and carbon audits) came primarily through contact with an adviser. It is important that we continue to work with the adviser network to ensure that advisers are able and willing to promote the scheme to farmers they engage with. It is notable that:

- The role of advertisement and the FAS website in bringing participants to the scheme has substantially grown over the last 4 years.
- There is a substantial increase in farmer-to-farmer referrals to the service which is a great testament to the value of the support delivered.
- The uptake as a result of attending a farming event is comparatively small, one would anticipate a greater funnel through of FAS event attendees to the one-to-one service.

2.2 Feedback on the administration

This section of the feedback form is intended to provide insight on the quality of the administration process delivered by Ricardo.

Table 3 Feedback on the administration of the service.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	% rating excellent or good	% rating excellent or good	% rating excellent or good	% rating excellent or good
The ease of access to information as excellent or good	97%	97%	94%	100%
Helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.	100%	99%	96%	97%
Ease of application process as excellent or good.	97%	96%	92%	100%

Efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good	95%	90%	92%	93%
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Feedback on the administration of all schemes is highly positive. The key performance indicator (KPI) for this service is for the quality of advice to be rated as good or better by at least 85% of participants. This has been fully exceeded.

2.3 Finding an adviser or mentor

Generally, there seem to have been little problem finding suitable advisers and mentors.

7% of mentees stated that it was not easy to find a mentor (this equates to 2 farmers-who had very specific needs that were difficult to find a perfect match for but was fulfilled through utilising a combination of mentors).

Table 4 Feedback on finding an adviser or mentor

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>	<i>% rating</i>
Very Easy	67%	66%	77%	62%
Easy	30%	31%	22%	31%
Not Easy	2%	3%	1%	7%

2.4 Recommend to others

- 96% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 98% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 97% of users of the Specialist Advice would recommend the service to others.
- 94% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.

This metric is a great barometer for the performance of the programme. The % who would recommend are extremely high. It was apparent from information provided in the feedback form that there is also an increasing number of farmers coming to the programme as a result of farmer-to-farmer referral.

2.5 Adviser/Mentor performance

The feedback on all grants is excellent. The key performance indicator (KPI) for this service is for the quality of advice to be rated as good or better by at least 85% of participants, this has been fully exceeded. It is pleasing to see that the advisers and the team delivering quality assurance of reports managed to maintain such a high level of performance despite having to work through unprecedented times and within the covid-19 rules.

Table 5 Feedback on adviser or mentor performance

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>	<i>% rating excellent or good</i>
Working practices (helpfulness, understanding, expertise)?	95%	97%	98%	96%
How would you rate the quality of the report/support you received?	94%	96%	95%	96%

2.6 Impact of the Support

The feedback on participant's perceptions of the benefits to the business of engaging with the service provide useful insight into the intended impact of the intervention vs the policy drivers for their provision. We can see that in many cases farmers are seeing benefits to their business performance but also identify the environmental improvements as key impacts. It is encouraging that farmers are seeing both the economic benefit and improvements in their environmental performance as key impact of engaging with the service.

Table 6 Benefits of engaging with the service

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
RANK	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Impact</i>
1.	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	Financial benefit with improved profit margin	More awareness about climate change and energy use	Better planning/decision making
2.	Better planning/decision making	Better planning/decision making	Improved soil and nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements
3.	Livestock/crop improvements	Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads	More awareness about environmental issues and opportunities	More awareness of sources of advice
4.	Improved soil and nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements	Livestock/crop improvements	Improved soil or nutrient management

2.7 Implementing the actions

- 79% of users of the Specialist Advice would implement all the actions recommended
- 93% of users of the Mentoring would implement all the actions recommended
- 71% of users of the ILMP would implement all the actions recommended
- 75% of users of the Carbon Audit would implement all the actions recommended

These statistics report on the number of businesses that will implement all of the actions. It is very clear from the commentary provided in the feedback forms that a large proportion of those who will not implement all do plan to implement some, or most, or are waiting on other events before being able to act.

In follow up to this question, the feedback form does not ask what actions will be implemented, but which will not (see appendix reports for these details) and asks for reasons that any actions were not implemented. Cost is the most cited reason.

Table 7 Reasons for not implementing all of the actions recommended:

	Too costly	Insufficient time to implement action	I do not understand why this was recommended	I do not think this is necessary for my business
Mentoring	0	0	0	0
Carbon Audits	17	11	5	13 ¹
ILMP	4	1	0	4
Specialist Advice	10	3	2	4

¹ The carbon audit report is tasked with identifying a range of actions, we do not anticipate a business will take up all the actions.

3 Training

The one-to-one programme provided training to advisers via on-line Teams meetings and ongoing communication through the advisers' newsletter.

The training was very well attended. Though the face-to-face meetings are valuable for building relationships, the feedback is that on-line meetings better suit the advisers needs. On-line meetings have the added advantage of giving significant flexibility to respond to developing situations and areas of focus, we can add more training sessions as and when required without the need for significant lead times.

3.1 Workshop content and resources

- 15th September 9.30-10am- an update on the current Forestry Grant Scheme and the associated loan scheme. The session was delivered by Lyn White from Scottish Forestry and attended by 44 Advisers.
- 15th September 10am-11am, Woodland Carbon Code, an introduction to the carbon code - what it is, how it works and how farmers and landowners can get involved. The session allowed plenty of time for questions. Delivered by Andrew Baker, UK Woodland Carbon Code Markets Advisor from Scottish Forestry and attended by 56 Advisers.
- 28th October 10-11am, Keesje Avis (Ricardo) former Clark to 'Farming for 1.5 degrees provided a training session to discuss the challenge of climate change targets for agriculture and the key areas of mitigation we should look to. Keesje provided a detailed look at what NetZero really meant and what categories of emissions did and did not account towards Agriculture's targets. Feedback from advisers was really positive and there was a good number of questions at the end of the session which testified to the advisers' engagement with the subject.
- 21st October 10-11am Ian Pearce, FAS peer reviewer ran an interactive session looking at good practice in ILMP report writing. Ian focused on report objectives, ensuring that the objectives stated are within the scope of the report and can be delivered by the adviser through this single intervention. It was clear that many advisers benefited from this training and the explanation and practical examples.
- 26th January, 10am-11am Natural Capital and the Nature Scot Assessment template, delivered by George Chanarin, Cumulus Consulting. This information session introduced the concept of Natural Capital, what it means for land managers and how it can enhance land management. George Chanarin introduced the Nature Scot Project, the aims, the progress so far, and provide advisers with a run through of the Natural Capital Assessment template and how it can benefit Scottish land managers.

4 Adviser FBAASS accreditation

Ricardo work closely with Lantra who manage the FBAASS accreditation of advisers. It is a requirement of advisers delivering ILMPs and Carbon Audits to be FBAASS accredited. Lantra work independently to manage this accreditation process and reaccredit advisers on an annual basis. In accrediting advisers Lantra consider evidence of ILMP reports that they have reviewed during the previous delivery year. If an adviser is new to the programme or has not delivered an ILMP within the year then they are required to provide further examples of their work for evaluation. In addition to evidence of work, Lantra also stipulate that each adviser must demonstrate continued learning and 20 CPD points during the year.

Lantra are tasked with ensuring the advisor panel is sufficiently robust with approximately 90 advisers and an appropriate ratio of advisers from SAC to other organisations.

4.1 Re-accreditations

At the close of December 2021, there were 90 full advisers and 37 associates, the FBAASS pool of advisers increased by 9% during the year (23% over the last 2 years). There is growing interest,

particularly from advisers wishing to deliver resilience plans and carbon audits for farmers. 48% of the fully accredited advisers, and 81% of the associate advisers are from SAC Consulting.

5 Review of reports

Quality assurance is undertaken to quality check each advisor and create a clear benchmark for the standard which all advisors should achieve – this relates to both technical competences, style and use of language.

Our accreditation process is integrated into our quality assurance process. We conduct a ‘peer’ review of all ILMP reports by a panel managed by Lanta. The panel comprises: Jim Seaton; Euan Hart; John Eccles; Ian Pearce; and Ali McKnight. Ali joined the group in 2021 to strengthen the groups’ expertise in agri-environment and agroecology.

The reviewers provide feedback on areas for improvement (if required) and score reports against the following matrix. This matrix was updated in 2021 following a group decision that this provided more clarity:

Table 8 Report scoring protocol

Technical Score	Description
10	Technical advice provided appears to fully meet client requirements
9	Technical advice provided appears to substantially meet client requirements
8	Minor omission in terms of technical advice which does not substantively affect the business.
7	Minor omission in terms of technical advice which affects the business and should have been identified and explored within the report.
6	Significant omission in terms of technical advice which affects the business and should have been identified and explored within the report.
5	Major omissions in technical advice in one part of the report which could have a significant effect on the business.
4	Inappropriate advice in one part or throughout the report which is clearly identifiable from the evidence presented in the report.
3	Serious technical errors in most of the report
2	Serious technical errors in all areas of the report
1	Insufficient technical information in to allow any assessment (report generic not tailored to the client)

The peer review group have been pleased with the overall quality of reports reviewed, with many considered excellent. Ricardo work with the advisers to ensure that comments from the peer review are addressed and it is only once these have been addressed that reports are issued to customers.

5.1 Standards setting

The Quality Review Group met on a quarterly basis throughout the year for a standard setting day. The group jointly review ILMP reports to ensure consistency in scoring between the group. Jim Seaton, the head reviewer also provides a secondary review of reports on occasions when a reviewer has significant concerns.

6 Communications

6.1 Website

Ricardo FAS have continued to review the accessibility of the website to ensure that farmers coming to the website anew have good visibility of the range of services available. This has resulted in the trial of siting the advice and grant's button more prominently alongside the other topic areas. The advice and grants page have also been modified to bring information on one-to-one advice to the top of the page alongside the advice line as users were previously required to scroll down to access this information. New case studies and articles are added on a monthly basis to keep the content fresh.

6.2 Case studies

We have produced eight case studies during the delivery period. In the case studies we have tried to achieve a balance of promotion across the schemes and how the support has been used and benefitted a range of holding types, from small crofts to large estates, mainland/island, new entrant and those with long experience, women and men.

All case studies developed have been hosted on the FAS website and YouTube channel and have been promoted to stakeholders, via the stakeholder pack and the FAS newsletter.

- Andrew Farquharson, Partner at Finzean Estate Partnership in Banchory, shares his experience of applying for a carbon audit to identify efficiencies for the beef and cropping business. In the recording, Andrew gives his thoughts on the process of applying for support, what he got out of the subsequent report and his aspirations for the future of the business. Of which include reducing the carbon footprint of the farm and estate, and creating a viable and efficient business to hand over to the next generation. <https://audioboom.com/posts/7746408-applying-for-a-carbon-audit>
- Mark Foxwell, Sutherland crofter. Mark describes how FAS's expert help with an Integrated Land Management Plan (ILMP), specialist advice, mentoring and a carbon audit are helping him and his wife make worthwhile improvements to their business and invest in future profitability. <https://audioboom.com/posts/7779868-living-off-the-land-expert-help-to-support-self-sufficient-croft>
- Video case study promoting the mentoring service and the support that new entrant Cameron Wilson received from experienced beef farmer James Andrew. <https://audioboom.com/posts/7683237-in-conversation-with-new-entrant-sheep-farmer-cammy-wilson>
- Rowan Marshall, Peter Marshall Farms in Perthshire discusses the advantages of undertaking a carbon audit: <https://www.fas.scot/publication/improving-efficiency-to-stay-competitive/>
- Colin Strang Steel, Threepwood Farm, The Scottish Borders, talking about how he used the support to improve the biodiversity of his mixed farm: <https://www.fas.scot/publication/understanding-the-land/>
- John Imrie of Hillhead farm discussing how specialist advice on animal welfare improved his wellbeing and how important it is to him to make farming attractive to the next generation. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/animal-welfare-and-farmer-wellbeing/>
- Podcast featuring Ben Graham, Managing Partner at Kirkland in Dumfries and Galloway. Ben talks about his reasons for applying for an ILMP and how this fits into the long-term plan for the business and the importance of farmers always being prepared to change <https://www.fas.scot/publication/taking-stock-the-long-term-benefits-of-an-integrated-land-management-plan/>

6.3 Articles

Monthly articles promoting the One-to-one service have been published in the FAS newsletter and press releases are circulated to press contacts.

23 February 2021

Scottish Government lifts restrictions on succession planning funding

<https://www.fas.scot/news/scottish-government-lifts-restrictions-on-succession-planning-funding/>

23 February 2021

Optimise the ability of your farming business to align with evolving Scottish agri policy

<https://www.fas.scot/news/optimise-the-ability-of-your-farming-business-to-align-with-evolving-scottish-agri-policy/>

19 March 2021

How a carbon audit can help your farming business stay competitive

<https://www.fas.scot/news/how-a-carbon-audit-can-help-your-farming-business-stay-competitive/>

April 2021

Get a helping hand to kick start your farming or crofting business

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-June-2021/>

21 May 2021 (woodland planning article to forestry contacts)

Improve your farm's efficiency with woodland management and conservation support

<https://fas-scot.com/t/DA4-7AHQ7-C0627F7C2A69C6DFRIZIHQ2A96F9E68C0DD590/cr.aspx>

28 May 2021

How woodland creation could help protect the future of your dairy business

<https://www.fas.scot/news/how-woodland-creation-could-help-protect-the-future-of-your-dairy-business/>

16 June 2021

Get a helping hand to kick start your farming or crofting business

<https://www.fas.scot/news/get-a-helping-hand-to-kick-start-your-farming-or-crofting-business/>

2 July 2021 (succession planning article to business audience)

Enable your firm to claim Government funding through delivery of succession planning advice

<https://fas-scot.com/t/DA4-7FDVS-C0627F7C2A69C6DFRIZIHQ2A96F9E68C0DD590/cr.aspx>

22 July 2021

Grant funding to help Scottish agri businesses reduce emissions and improve sustainability

<https://www.fas.scot/news/grant-funding-to-help-scottish-agri-businesses-reduce-emissions-and-improve-sustainability/>

August 2021

Advice funding for succession planning can help agri businesses to cover some legal and financial costs

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/one-to-one-advice-and-funding-stakeholder-pack-autumn-2021/>

August 2021

ILMP- set your business in the right direction with an Integrated Land Management Plan

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/one-to-one-advice-and-funding-stakeholder-pack-autumn-2021/>

September 2021

Funding for succession planning advice can help agri businesses to cover some legal and financial cost

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/one-to-one-advice-and-funding-stakeholder-pack-autumn-2021/>

October 2021

Embedding sustainability and resilience in the Scottish agricultural sector – COP26 and beyond

<https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-january-2022/>

6.4 FAS GIF

Ricardo created a FAS one-to-one gif advert which was hosted on the home page of Scottish Farmer for the 1st quarter of 2021. The animation cycles through the 3 images shown below. Data provided by Scottish Farmer indicated that there had been significant traffic to the FAS website through this route, but we have not been able to verify the extent of this from the SFAS web analytics that are available.

1



2



**Contact FAS to
find out how
you could benefit**

3



6.5 Adverts

Half page advertising was utilised to promote the FAS in June in the Turriff Advertiser, Strathspey and Badenoch Herald, Ross-shire Journal, Northern Times, Northern Scot, John O’Groat Journal, Inverurie Advertiser , Huntly Express, Ellon Advertiser.

One-to-one advice and grant support for farmers and crofters

Helping farming businesses to be successful in a competitive environment



Regardless of land size or business stage, the **Farm Advisory Service (FAS)** can help farmers and crofters across Scotland to increase the profitability and sustainability of their business through Government funding for one-to-one advice, worth up to a total of **£3,700**.

Benefit from:

- expert advice tailored to the specific needs of your business;
- subsidised access to specialist support;
- an understanding of how you are performing compared with similar crofts;
- one-to-one mentoring guidance from an experienced crofter or farmer in your chosen sector.

To apply for support or for more information, contact

www.fas.scot | 0300 323 0161 | advice@fas.scot

6.6 Social media feed

Ricardo provide Will Searle SAC with a monthly schedule of twitter and social media feeds; this provides one-to-one content for two tweets per week. Will, issues these via the FAS account.

6.7 Stakeholder pack

The FAS stakeholder pack containing links to all FAS press resources, case studies, press releases, articles and flyers was first developed in December 2017 a new pack is issued on a quarterly basis. The premise of the stakeholder pack is to provide information in order that stakeholders can pick and choose relevant material for inclusion in their own publications. The stakeholder pack is sent to a growing list of stakeholders, currently 223. Links below provide detail of the content of each pack:

- The March pack included articles to highlight the recent changes to succession planning specialist advice, the support available for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the wider benefits of a carbon audit. <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-March-2021/>
- The June Stakeholder Pack was released on the 30th June, in this pack, we highlight the importance of woodland creation on farms and crofts to help mitigate the impacts of climate change. We also feature the mentoring service that is available to new farmers and those who have set up their business within the last 5 years. This pack launches a new podcast from Rowan Marshall, co-owner of a family business, who benefitted from a carbon audit. It gives an insight into his experience of the application process and how the carbon audit was needed to support the future of the business <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-June-2021/>
- The stakeholder pack was issued at the end of October. This edition focuses on the support FAS provides to businesses looking to address their climate impacts. The pack was launched just ahead of COP26 to tie in with event to maximise interest and to help stakeholders farmers and crofters understand the support available to them as they raise questions about climate change on the back

of the increased global attention on the event and on Scotland <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/one-to-one-advice-and-funding-stakeholder-pack-autumn-2021>

- This stakeholder pack was held back to enable its release with the new year. The focus is looking at the year ahead and using FAS resources to better business resilience and future planning so that your agri business is equip to cope with whatever 2022 has in store. In this pack we provide information on grant funding to identify business strengths and areas for development, accessing technical advice on specialist topics and the long-term benefits of Integrated Land Management Plans <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-january-2022>

Ricardo will be surveying stakeholders in 2022 to identify if/how they use the stakeholder pack and if we can provide further value.

6.8 Stakeholder Meetings

The stakeholder meetings are an opportunity for FAS to discuss delivery plans and provides a forum for information sharing, building collaboration between groups and ensuring that the various streams of advice delivery are complimentary and well-coordinated. There was one stakeholder meeting held during the delivery period. 4th March, as an on-line meeting, Ricardo and SAC presented findings of the annual report and analysis and delivery plans for January to December 2021.

6.9 FBAASS Advisers Newsletters

A FAS newsletter to distributed to FBAASS advisers to ensure they are kept up to date on the programme and are informed of any new developments. The newsletter is released approximately bi-monthly, but this is dependent on need. Our experience is that advisers do not have time to read communications, therefore we try to collate information and keep newsletters punchy to try to ensure that they receive due attention.

- February 2021 advisers newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/DA4-6REHM-CAPFJ077D8/cr.aspx?v=1>
- May 2021 Adviser update on integrating trees on your land <https://fas-scot.com/t/DA4-7AHQ7-D124E2352483B2B7Z4AUU9918D6A6A9F9D867/cr.aspx>
- June 2021 <https://fas-scot.com/t/DA4-7DO31-D124E2352483B2B7Z4AUU9918D6A6A9F9D867/cr.aspx>
- An adviser newsletter was issued to all FBAASS deliverers on the 23rd September, this informed advisers on the service extension, new delivery and payment claim deadlines. It also provided notification of forthcoming training dates.
- December 2021 adviser newsletter <https://fas-scot.com/t/DA4-7O0YN-C0627F7C2A69C6DFRIZIHQ2A96F9E68C0DD590/cr.aspx>

7 RSABI support

FAS work closely with RSABI to ensure that farmers and crofters in need are able to access professional support swiftly. RSABI act as a gatekeeper and refer farmers to FAS who they have identified needing specialist advice often as a matter of urgency. It was agreed by Scottish Government that in these limited circumstances farmers will be allowed access directly to specialist advice without the need for a prior/or corresponding ILMP. The specialist advice will receive funding up to a limit of £1,000. This service is well used, and the advisers brought in to deliver this support show great willing to prioritise this work and get out to the businesses as quickly as possible. The advice is not always what the business wants to hear, and in these cases RSABI are able to broker discussions and help support the business throughout.

8 Other Initiatives

8.1 Change to grant rates

In January, Scottish Government agreed that in addition to enabling access to succession planning specialist advice without a prior ILMP, the grant rate for all specialist advice could be harmonised to provide up to £1,000 of support across all the specialist advice topics. This provides a simpler offer for farmers, but also reflects the current importance of encouraging businesses to focus on their own business efficiency.

8.2 FAS Crofters Pack

Ricardo produced an information pack for crofters to outline the support that is available and to profile how support has been used by others in this sector. Ricardo liaised with SAC to ensure relevant information from the one-to-many contract was included. The pack was circulated to the Crofting Commission and Scottish Crofter's Federation

8.3 Succession planning introduction to accountancy and legal firms

Ricardo provided a focused email campaign to introduce contacts within agricultural accountancy and legal firms to the one-to-one support and in particular the succession planning specialist advice. The aim being to ensure that these specialists are informed and equipped to recommend the service to their clients.

8.4 Woodland support update issued

Ricardo produced an electronic news update regarding one-to-one support for woodland management and creation, this was circulated to all woodland advisers on the FAS specialists' skills matrix.

8.5 Carbon Audit Training

The demand for Carbon Audits has exceeded anticipated levels. To ensure that Ricardo has resilience in the team and the ability to flex to meet peaks in demand, we have provided additional training and guidance to a further four Ricardo consultants who are now working with us under close supervision to quality assure reports.

8.6 Carbon Audit Evaluation

Following queries from Defra and with the agreement of Gordon Jackson, Ricardo undertook some analysis of the carbon audit data looking to answer the following questions:

- Do farms in the scheme improve between the first and second assessment?
- What links are there between improvements and implementing all measures?
- What is the perception of the scheme? Does this change between year one and year two?

The analysis showed that 64% of farm businesses saw an improvement in their carbon footprint between their 1st and 2nd Carbon Audit and that on average the reduction in carbon footprint was 16%.

If a business had improved its performance, it was 3.5 times more likely to have implemented all the actions recommended in their first carbon audit report than those who did not improve. The carbon audit provides a range of actions for the business (typically about 5-6, from quick and low cost modifications to farm practice to more extensive system changes), we do not know to what extent a farm who states they have not implemented all the actions has responded. Some farms may have improved because they have implemented all but one action, but there is no way of knowing how many actions they have implemented using the data that is currently available.

In the first audit more than 50% of farmers stated that they perceived the following benefits from their carbon audit.

- More awareness about climate change and energy use
- Livestock/crop performance improvements
- Improved soil or nutrient management.

By the second audit there was a significant strengthening of perceptions that the carbon audit had helped the business to achieve:

- Financial benefit from reduced costs/overheads
- Improved soil nutrient management

It is important to note that the sample size for this analysis is not large as we were specifically looking to identify businesses who had received more than one carbon audit through the programme and completed a feedback form, however it does give a useful snapshot of the potential impacts of carbon audits on carbon footprint and farmer behaviour.

8.7 Follow up of advice participants

Ricardo continue to follow up with applicants who have outstanding paperwork preventing their grant from moving forward, typically businesses who have not returned their acceptance of offer, or the declaration/feedback form. This exercise helps to ensure that the Service database is up to date and we have good clarity on the demand and any issues with adviser delivery.

8.8 Follow up with farmers

Laura Harpham (Ricardo) has been providing personalised follow up to all ILMP recipients 3 months after delivery of the report. Laura is identifying what recommendations for further support were made to the business and offering assistance to help identify and apply for relevant follow up support. Ricardo's initial approach was to deliver this follow up as a personal email with Laura familiarising herself with the business and providing a tailored communication. The pilot has revealed that this is not a cost efficient model. Whilst the email did trigger businesses to get back in contact, we consider that the same level of response could have been elicited with a mail merge approach. No businesses wished to discuss their needs in person. Within the current funding model Ricardo will continue with a mail merge approach. However, we would recommend that Scottish Government consider a mechanism for funding the farm adviser who the business worked with in the first instance to revisit the business and discuss the implementation of their report recommendations and agree next steps.

9 Payment Mechanisms

9.1 Approach to payment

Ricardo administer the payments directly to advisers on the Scottish Government's behalf. Ricardo operate a separate bank account with funds being drawn down into the dedicated bank account in accordance with financial profiling. We have developed this process to ensure the following:

- No monies are awarded without evidence of the work being completed or support being provided (evidence saved onto the CRM).
- All monies to be paid in arrears.
- The monies are ring-fenced and separated from Ricardo's own accounts.

9.1.1 Overview of payment transfers

In the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021 Ricardo administered 15 pay-runs, delivered on a rolling 4 weekly cycle.



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