

EXECUTIVE NOTE TO
THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS (RURAL PRIORITIES)
(SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) REGULATIONS 2009
SSI 2009/233

The above Regulations (“the 2009 Regulations”) are made in exercise of powers conferred by section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. They amend the Rural Development Contracts (Rural Priorities) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008/100) (“the 2008 Regulations”) (as previously amended by the Rural Development Contracts (Rural Priorities) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2008 (SSI 2008 No. 233) and 2009 (SSI No. 2009 No. 1)).

The 2008 Regulations allow Scottish Ministers to pay European and national funds from the Scotland Rural Development Programme (“SRDP”) to beneficiaries of Rural Priorities. The instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of the 2009 Regulations is to implement changes made to the Scotland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Confirmation of the European Commission’s approval of the changes was received on 25 May 2009.

The changes to Schedule 2: amend some typographical errors; amend the option for the creation and management of water margins and buffer areas to reflect the current legislative position in nitrate vulnerable zones; and amend intervention rates and substitutes a revised table for standard cost rates for the establishment and maintenance of woodlands at Table C, in Schedule 2, Part 2.

Background

The European priorities for 2007-2013 are laid down in the Rural Development Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005). The SRDP including Rural Priorities is designed to deliver outcomes to achieve these priorities in Scotland.

Rural Priorities is a competitive scheme to ensure that contracts are awarded for the proposals which are best able to deliver the agreed regional priorities.

Regional priorities have been established to aid the delivery of the five key outcomes of the SRDP:

- business viability and competitiveness
- water quality
- adaptations to mitigate climate change
- biodiversity and landscapes
- thriving rural communities

Businesses, land managers and community groups can apply. There is a 2-stage application process. The initial stage ends with the submission of a simple Statement of Intent. The second stage involves applicants preparing a detailed Proposal, plus an

Outcome Plan setting out how they would contribute to one or more “regional priorities”. Both stages are supported by case officers who advise on eligibility, regional priorities, budgetary positions and the need for consents/approvals.

Proposals are accepted throughout the year, with periodic assessment rounds. Regional Proposal Assessment Committees (RPACs) will select which proposals to recommend for approval to Scottish Ministers

In addition, all applicants with area related options must submit a Single Application and complete details on the Single Application Field Data Sheet.

Consultation

The original SRDP was submitted to the European Commission following consultation with stakeholders. These latest changes reflect modifications to the SRDP now approved by the EC. They amend some typographical errors; reflect current NVZ legislation; and amend intervention and payment rates for the creation and maintenance of woodlands to reflect rates originally intended.

Financial Effects

The instrument uses funding which the Scottish Government and the European Commission have allocated to Rural Development Contracts under the SRDP.

We foresee no increase in costs to the Scottish Government, local government, or business. We have therefore not carried out a Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate
June 2009