



Ricardo  
Energy & Environment

## One-to-one Farm Advisory Service

January 2022 - March 2023 | Report for Scottish Government

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

Farm Advisory Service

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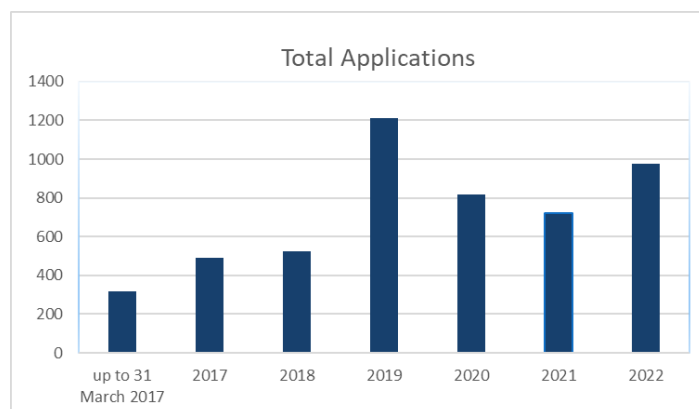
## Executive summary

This report covers the delivery period January 2022 to March 2023 for the One-to-One Farm Advisory Service. The service commenced delivery of one-to-one support to farmers and crofters on the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 number of applications received by the programme increased in 2023, compared to the previous delivery year. The pattern of demand is like previous years, with demand for specialist advice exceeding targets by 306% and demand for carbon audits 73% above target, but ILMPs lagging at 38% of the target and mentoring at 38%. It should be noted that the service closed to carbon audit applications after just 4 months, the service was averaging 98 applications per month but only had a budget for 250 for the whole year.

**Figure 1: Application numbers during the FAS contract period**



Feedback from all users of the service is gathered and has been analysed for this reporting period and is summarised below. It is fantastic to see that the high-performance levels we have seen in previous years continue to be reported by users of the service. It should be noted that FAS collect feedback from 100% of service users and that processes are in place to verify that feedback is received direct from the participant and not from their adviser so we can be assured that the feedback is a genuine reflection of users' experience.

### Feedback on ILMP

- 94% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 96% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.
- 92% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 83% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 99% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 99% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good
- 98% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good
- 77% of farmers state that they will implement all the actions recommended in their ILMP

### Feedback on Specialist Advice

- 95% 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.
- 95% of users rated the ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 93% of users rated the efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 99% of respondents would recommend the service to others.
- 98% would rate the adviser's working practices as excellent or good.
- 98% would rate the quality of the report as excellent or good.
- 79% state that they will implement all the actions in their advice plan.

### Feedback on Carbon Audits

- 92% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 95% of users rated the helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.

- 92% 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.
- 92% 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.
- 65% state that they will implement all the actions in their Carbon Audit mitigation plan.

**Feedback on Mentoring**

- 96% of users rated the ease of access to information as excellent or good.
- 100% rated helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.
- 100% rated ease of application process as excellent or good.
- 100% rate efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good.
- 100% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 96% would rate the mentor’s working practices as excellent or good.
- 92% would rate the quality of the support as excellent or good.
- 96% state that they will implement all the actions discussed with their mentor.

The feedback details how participants discovered the service. Since inception in 2026, the service continues to build on the number of farmers coming to the service as a result of farmer-farmer referrals which is a strong testament to the value with which they regard the support. The value of the FAS communications- case studies; articles and stakeholder communications is demonstrated by the growing proportion of participants mentioning these as being what prompted them to access the service.

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.

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
RANK	Impact	Impact	Impact	Impact
1.	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	Better planning/decision making	Improved soil and nutrient management	Better planning/decision making
2.	Better planning/decision making	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	More awareness about climate change and energy use	Livestock/crop improvements
3.	Livestock/crop improvements	Improved soil and nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements	Greater willingness to work with other farmers
4.	Financial benefits from reduced costs/overheads	Accessing grant support	Accessing grant support	More awareness of sources of advice

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. There is a variance in the benefits reported for example the mentoring scheme by its very nature is generating greater cooperation and willingness to work with other farmers in the future. Accessing grant funding is clearly a driver for the uptake of carbon audits, but whilst this is detailed as a benefit, it is great to see this is not the most highly rated benefit. Farmers are being incentivised to undertake a carbon audit to access grant support but through the process gaining benefits of improved soil and nutrient management; more awareness about climate change and energy; and livestock/crop improvements. This shows that this approach supports policy goals.



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# 1 Service uptake

## 1.1 Applications received

Since the start of the service in 2016 there has been a general upward trend in the number of applications received, with 977 applications in 2022. When looking at these figures we should regard 2019 was an exceptional year as the Beef Efficiency Scheme caused a huge uptick in carbon audit applications and there was a slight dampening in 2021 as a result of covid impacting on a reduction in events and face-to-face interactions with businesses.

Figure 1 Graph to show application rate compared to previous years

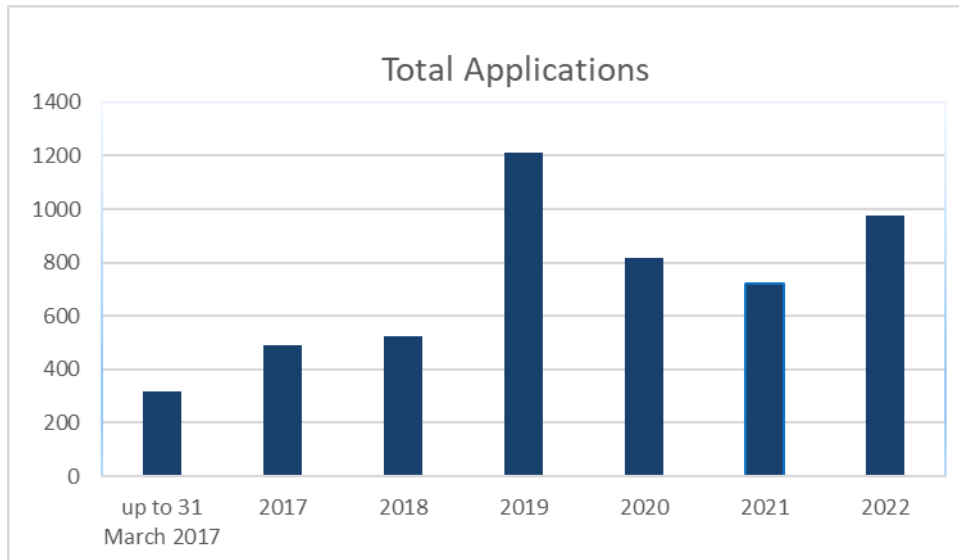


Table 1 Number of applications for each grant scheme

	Grant offers made												Total 2022/23	Target for year
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March		
ILMP	11	11	8	11	7	9	2	4	5	7	13	26	114	300
Specialist Advice	29	38	26	34	46	21	34	39	23	20	40	56	406	100
Carbon Audits	27	134	105	127	36	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	434	250
Mentoring	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	3	0	8	23	60
													977	710

Table 2: Grant withdrawals

	Withdrawals												Total 2022/23
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
ILMP	1	7	5	34	73	8	6	0	6	4	6	1	151
Specialist Advice	4	13	22	12	39	113	60	16	18	9	29	64	399
Carbon Audits	5	8	2	57	3	12	1	9	4	16	9	4	130
Mentoring	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
													680

Through experience we know that some businesses apply for support, but when circumstances change they may no longer need it, but often do not inform FAS. To ensure that FAS can provide robust foresight of the future budgetary requirements to Scottish Government, the grant managers undertake data cleansing. This involves contacting businesses who have not moved forward with their grant during the delivery window, to establish if the support is still required. FAS took a slightly more vigorous approach to this in 2022, in the past a grant would only be withdrawn if the business confirmed it was no longer required. There were many businesses that did not respond at all. Therefore, we took a different approach this year and asked businesses to respond within a timeframe and if they did not respond we then wrote a second time to confirm that unless we heard from them, we would close the current application. This resulted in more substantial withdrawals this year than in previous years but was a necessary step to have clarity on the real demand.

## 1.2 Reports Completed

**Table 3 Number of reports completed**

	Completed												Total 2022/23	Target for year
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March		
ILMP	9	1	3	10	1	5	1	0	4	9	4	10	57	300
Specialist Advice	13	2	11	7	20	16	16	17	15	12	28	26	183	100
Carbon Audits	16	15	11	32	53	48	64	52	58	35	21	30	435	250
Mentoring	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	3	0	8	23	60
													698	710

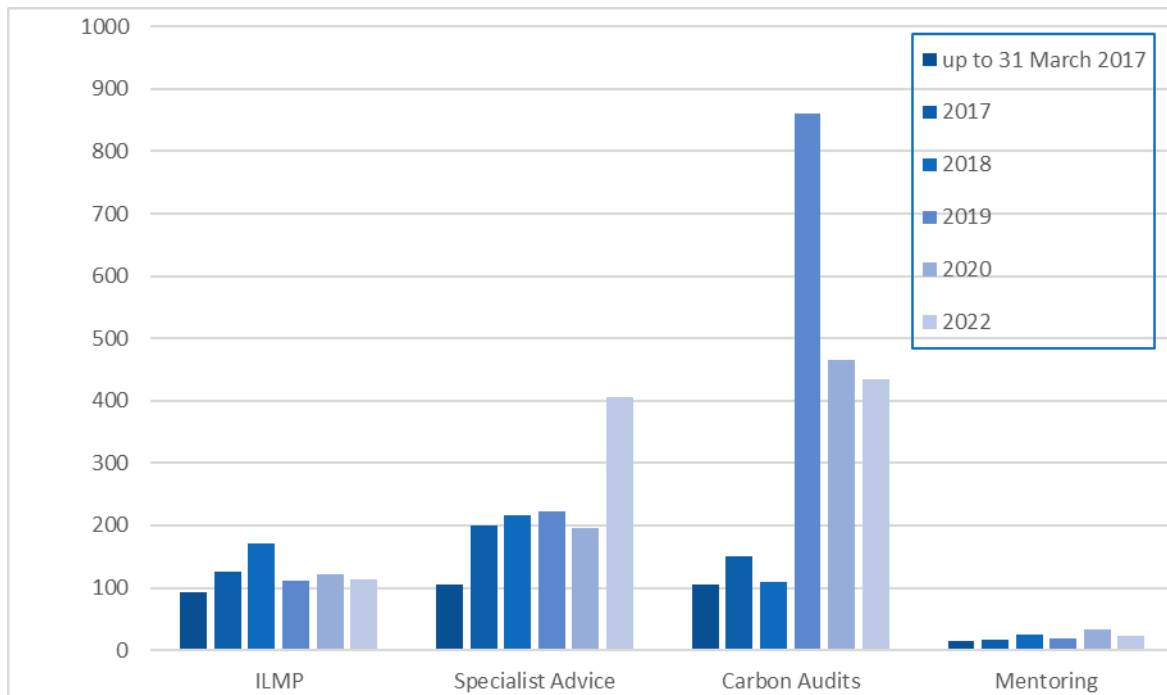
## 1.3 Patterns of demand across the FAS services

The pattern of demand is like previous years, with demand for specialist advice exceeding targets by 306% and demand for carbon audits 73% above target, but ILMPs lagging at 38% of the target and mentoring at 38%. It should be noted that:

- The accessibility rules were changed in April 2022 to enable businesses to access specialist advice without an ILMP. The feedback was that this additional steppingstone was often a barrier to businesses taking up the support that they knew they needed. It is clear that this has created an upsurge in demand for specialist advice.
- The service closed to carbon audit applications after just 4 months, the service was averaging 98 applications per month but only had a budget for 250 for the whole year. Therefore, the uptake of carbon audits is significantly damped by this intervention compared to what it would have been had no action been taken



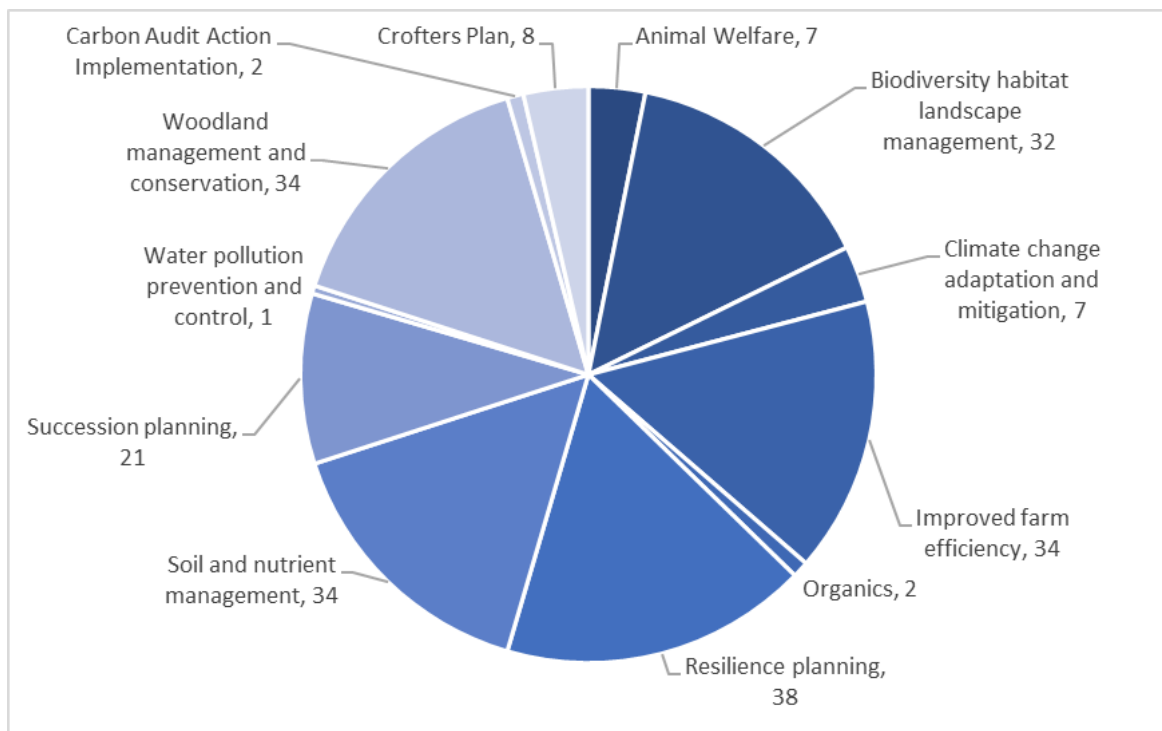
**Figure 2: Graph to show applications for each service**



## 1.4 Specialist Advice reports complete

Specialist advice is available on a range of topics. There was some concern at the start of the service that the budget would be skewed to delivering farm efficiency support, this has not been the case.

**Figure 3 Graph to show the categories of specialist advice reports delivered in this period**



There is a good spread of demand across the specialist advice topics. The top topics demanded are:

- Resilience Planning

- Woodland management and conservation
- Soil and nutrient management
- Improved farm efficiency
- Biodiversity, habitat and landscape management.

It should be noted that it is often difficult to assign a report to just one of these topics, for example nutrient management and water pollution prevention typically are looking at the management of slurry and better use of organic fertilisers on farm, therefore have a significant cross over.

## 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 Jan 2022-March 2023 detailed analysis of the feedback from each grant scheme has been provided as separate reports included as appendices to this report.

- Appendix 1 Jan 2022-March 2023 FAS ILMP Feedback
- Appendix 2 Jan 2022-March 2023 FAS Specialist Advice Feedback
- Appendix 3 Jan 2022-March 2023 FAS of Mentoring Feedback
- Appendix 4 Jan 2022-March 2023 FAS Carbon Audit Feedback

### 2.1 Administration

#### 2.1.1 How users heard about the grant?

As with previous years the primary source of referral is 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:

- We still see year on year an increase in uptake as a result of FAS marketing and communications activities. The role of advertisement; social media and the FAS website in bringing participants to the scheme has substantially grown year on year.
- There is also a year-on-year 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.
- There are very low numbers of referrals from other Scottish Government sources; this accounts for 0% of ILMP referrals, though this is higher for mentoring where 11% of participants mention this as their first source of information.

### 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 4 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	94%	95%	92%	96%
Helpfulness at initial contact point as excellent or good.	96%	99%	95%	100%
Ease of application process as excellent or good.	92%	95%	92%	100%

Efficiency of scheme administration as excellent or good	82%	93%	90%	100%
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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 for 15 of the 16 metrics but has dropped back for one element of the ILMP. When looking to identify where the problems lay, the commentary focuses on delays with adviser reports, this is not always within the control of the Ricardo administration and can be due to reasonable delays with the advisers, some of the feedback mentions covid related delays.

## 2.3 Finding an adviser or mentor

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

7% of ILMP participants state this was not easy, but do not provide commentary on why this is. FAS are aware there is a shortage of advisers covering the islands and the Mull of Kintyre, in these locations there is not the range of options of who can deliver an ILMP that we can offer in less remote locations and often businesses can have to wait for advisers to visit the island leading to delays.

**Table 5 Feedback on finding an adviser or mentor**

	ILMP	Specialist Advice	Carbon Audits	Mentoring
	% rating	% rating	% rating	% rating
Very Easy	69%	67%	77%	52%
Easy	24%	32%	22%	37%
Not Easy	7%	2%	1%	1%

## 2.4 Recommend to others

- 100% of users of the mentoring would recommend the service to others.
- 99% of users of the ILMP would recommend the service to others.
- 98% of users of the Specialist Advice would recommend the service to others.
- 92% of users of the carbon audit would recommend the service to others.

The feedback against this metric has improved from previous highs. 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.

**Table 6 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)?	99%	98%	98%	96%
How would you rate the quality of the report/support you received?	98%	98%	95%	92%

## 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. There is a variance in the benefits reported for example the mentoring scheme by its very nature is generating greater cooperation and willingness to work with other farmers in the future. Accessing grant funding is clearly a driver for the uptake of carbon audits, but whilst this is detailed as a benefit, it is great to see this is not the most highly rated benefit. Farmers are being incentivised to undertake a carbon audit to access grant support but through the process gaining benefits of improved soil and nutrient management; more awareness about climate change and energy; and livestock/crop improvements. This shows that this approach supports policy goals.

**Table 7 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	Better planning/decision making	Improved soil and nutrient management	Better planning/decision making
2.	Better planning/decision making	Financial benefit from improved profit margin	More awareness about climate change and energy use	Livestock/crop improvements
3.	Livestock/crop improvements	Improved soil and nutrient management	Livestock/crop improvements	Greater willingness to work with other farmers

4.	Financial benefits from reduced costs/overheads	Accessing grant support	Accessing grant support	More awareness of sources of advice
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## 2.7 Implementing the actions

- 79% of users of the Specialist Advice would implement all the actions recommended
- 96% of users of the Mentoring would implement all the actions recommended
- 77% of users of the ILMP would implement all the actions recommended
- 65% 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. It is not surprising that less businesses state they will implement all the actions detailed in their carbon audit as the report provides a range of actions for the business, some of which will be quite new to the business and many are not directly related to business performance and may require additional investment and technical support to implement fully, whereas specialist advice for example will be addressing an area in which the business themselves are likely to have already identified an need or desire to act.

**Table 8 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
<b>Mentoring</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Carbon Audits</b>	85	39	22	75
<b>ILMP</b>	7	7	0	3
<b>Specialist Advice</b>	31	7	0	11

Cost is the most frequently mentioned reason for not implementing actions. This is stated 47% of the time. The clarity/understanding of Carbon Audit actions also stands out with 75% of respondents suggesting actions are not necessary for their business. While further detail is not available on the reasons behind these responses the nature of CA actions not being directly related to a specific point of interest or focused on business financial performance is likely to influence this. In addition, many farmers may still be unaware of the importance and impact of taking action to reduce GHG emissions.



## 3 Training

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

### 3.1 Workshop content and resources

- **Natural Capital and the Nature Scot Assessment template**, training delivered by George Chanarin, Cumulus Consulting and attended by 55 advisers. The 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 provided advisers with a run through of the Natural Capital Assessment template and how it can benefit Scottish land managers. The advisers were really engaged with the subject and had lots of questions. Ricardo sent follow up communications to the full team in February to share supporting material and guidance notes.
- **National Test Pilot (NTP) Carbon Audit training**; the session was delivered by Alan Elder (Scottish Government) to provide the FBAASS advisers with information on the requirements of the NTP carbon audit, the claims process and how this interacts with FAS.
- **Woodland Creation - what you need to know**. This session was delivered by Scottish Forestry, to cover: Why woodland creation is important locally and for Scotland; an update on current funding; support available to farmers; forestry grant boost for crofters and those in the Clyde Climate Forest area  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/bj\\_5p1UTJbpv9FJz3J-lm3MVab6cef\\_hVIYvAJ\\_MKCSmVtjwyjBUZaY859TL82g3.QdZlq4iQYIPe8yzb](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/bj_5p1UTJbpv9FJz3J-lm3MVab6cef_hVIYvAJ_MKCSmVtjwyjBUZaY859TL82g3.QdZlq4iQYIPe8yzb)  
Passcode: 1zLa#U9n
- **The economic outlook for Scottish farmers**. This session was delivered by Kev Bevan, Agricultural Economist covering: the cross-cutting forces affecting output and input markets; and how these forces drive prices in the main Scottish sectors and the cost of inputs.  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/LpmGqjThR0Df4whXwW9BMedgoiUDVPIXcIV\\_y4SWd8MDp\\_4yrIkHlpMYlqsUM2fDB.DYtvXIIJEvmR1ot8](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/LpmGqjThR0Df4whXwW9BMedgoiUDVPIXcIV_y4SWd8MDp_4yrIkHlpMYlqsUM2fDB.DYtvXIIJEvmR1ot8) Passcode: QRB^N9j2

The final two training events were delivered by Zoom Webinar, this did not require advisers to book a place ahead of the meeting. The attendance at these events was a bit disappointing. The woodland training had 31 attendees, which is considerably lower than seen in previous years, the event on the 28<sup>th</sup> had 61. It may be that the system did not require delegates to pre-book spaces and this created less feeling of obligation to attend. FAS will reintroduce the need for prior booking in future training delivery

## 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 reaccrredit 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 March 2023, there were 107 full advisers and 43 associates, and 18% increase on the previous year (from 90 full advisers and 37 associates). The FBAASS pool has grown over each of the last 3 years. There is interest, particularly from advisers wishing to deliver resilience plans and carbon



audits for farmers. There are 44 advisory organisations providing FBAASS fully accredited advisers. SAC Consulting is the largest pool of these advisers, accounting for 46% of the fully accredited advisers.

There is a shortage of advisers based on the Scottish Islands, though many of the advisory organisations do cover these areas, it can mean a wait for some island businesses for the advisers to make the journey. Lantra are aware of this issue and are making efforts to recruit advisers in these locations, but it is not always feasible. The map below shows the geographical spread of fully accredited FBAASS advisers (based on their main office location).

**Figure 4 Geographical location of FBAASS advisers (based on company home office)**



## 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; Ali McKnight and Tamsin Morris. Tamsin joined the group in spring 2023 to strengthen the groups’ expertise in ecology and environmental land management.

The reviewers provide feedback on areas for improvement (if required) and score reports against the following matrix.

**Table 9 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 quality of the reports coming through is very high with large numbers of reports scoring in the 9/10 bracket on first review. Where a report does not meet the standards or needs strengthening in specific areas 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 Direct Mail to farmers and crofters in Scotland



The FAS direct mail to farmers was issued by the mailing house on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February and delivered to just over 36,000 farm businesses in February/early March. The mailing received a great response,

and large volumes of enquiries to the service many of whom state that they were not previously aware this support was available to them. In order to ensure that the demand could be met, and enquirers received a full response without the need to transfer calls Ricardo ran a training session for SAC helpline staff.

The number of applications to the programme increased from 60 in the previous two months (Dec/Jan) to 148 (Feb/March) – and 146% increase. The issue of the mailing has however resulted in many returns, it has become apparent that the BRN database shared via Scottish Government is not up to date and that when businesses close, they are not being removed from this database. Should this exercise be repeated in the future we will investigate if there is a better database to use.

Figure 5 Direct mail to registered businesses

### 6.2 Website

The website has continued to be reviewed and updated throughout the year to ensure that the information reflects the current status of the service and best communicates the support available to farmers and crofters.

### 6.3 Case studies

In the FAS case studies we try 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.

- A new video promoting the Resilience Planning Specialist Advice. This video introduces Hamish Dykes who farms in the Scottish Borders. He shares how useful specialist advice has been in confirming the decisions he's taken are right for his business and the importance of continuing to get external advice, no matter how experienced you are.
- Catherine Collins, at Croft 11, Clovullin near Fort William, shares how mentoring has given her the right start to crofting and helped her integrate into the community. Catherine tells how her long-term interest in creating species rich meadows has finally come to fruition and how mentoring helped her create a strategy for developing her own meadow and connected her with the right people in the crofting community. This podcast highlights how helpful mentoring can be for people new to crofting who don't have an agricultural background. <https://www.fas.scot/publication/case-study-catherine-collins/>

## 6.4 Promotional flier

A new FAS services flier was produced. The flier seeks to explain how easy it is to access professional support via FAS and the breadth of services available

**Run a farm or croft?**

**You are entitled to claim up to £3,700 of professional support for your business.**

**SR DP Farm Advisory Service**

**Specialist advice**  
**Fully funded up to £2,000 for you to take up specialist advice**  
Farmers can choose to benefit up to two specialist advice plans covering a range of topics including:

- Animal Welfare
- Archaeological and historic site advice
- Biodiversity, habitat and landscape management
- Carbon audit action plan (New)
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Crofter's plan (New)
- Farm Business Efficiency
- Organics
- Resilience planning
- Soil and nutrient management
- Succession planning
- Water pollution prevention and control

**Integrated Land Management Plans (ILMP)**  
**The government funds up to £1,200 per plan**  
Undertake an independent and confidential assessment of your business with the help of an experienced farm business adviser of your choice.

**Carbon Audits**  
**Fully funded up to £500 per audit, per annum**  
Request a fully funded carbon audit of your farm or croft to see where performance improvements and savings can be made, identify the efficiency with which resources are used and benchmark your business's performance so that you can compare it with that of similar enterprises.

\* Terms and conditions apply. See [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot) for full details.

[www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot) | 0300 323 0161 | [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot)

## 6.5 Social media feed

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

## 6.6 Articles

The one-to-one service has provided articles on a fortnightly basis for inclusion in the Scottish Farmer FAS insert, these are also shared for wider distribution via stakeholders' own communications in the FAS stakeholder pack. Topics of articles published in this reporting period are:

- How an ILMP can help improve production efficiency
- Apply for a carbon audit to improve the technical performance of your business
- One-to-one support for new entrants
- Let a farming mentor help you to manage your business
- Woodland and livestock
- Co-benefits of natural capital
- Energy and fertiliser prices- how fas can help
- Mental health in Scottish farming
- ILMP to support a change in direction
- Examples of how mentoring can help
- Farmers and crofters in Scotland are feeling the effects of climate change
- ILMP to support new entrants
- Animal welfare specialist advice



- Mentoring; sharing the experience of a recent new entrant
- The rising costs for farmers and crofters
- Succession planning; why plan and the support available
- The importance of biodiversity and the support for your business
- New entrant experience of the ILMP
- Working in partnership with nature, support for water pollution prevention and control

## Email footer

**Run a farm or croft?**

**SRDP Farm Advisory Service**

**Claim up to £3,700 in funding for expert advice for your business.**

Apply for an **Integrated Land Management Plan** for an independent & confidential plan for your business.  
**£1,200 available per plan**

Request a fully funded **Carbon Audit** to identify performance improvements & greenhouse gas savings.  
**£500 per audit, per annum**

Get up to **£2,000** for **Specialist Advice** on a range of topics:

- Resilience planning
- Archaeological and historic site advice
- Woodland management
- Carbon audit action plan
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Farm business efficiency
- Succession planning
- Soil and nutrient management
- Animal welfare
- Crofter's plan
- Organics
- Water pollution.

Regardless of farm size or business stage, FAS can help you to take your business forward.

www.fas.scot | 0300 323 0161 | one2one@ricardo.com

A new FAS services email footer was created for the use of the team when responding to queries, this has been shared with SAC for use in event/webinar follow ups.

## 6.7 Stakeholder pack

The FAS stakeholder pack containing links to all FAS press resources, case studies, press releases, articles and flyers. 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 228. Links below provide detail of the content of each pack:

- The January 2022 stakeholder pack launched the year with a 'new year, new look at your business' theme. The pack focused on promoting the business planning and resilience support available and the latest 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. <https://www.fas.scot/downloads/fas-stakeholder-pack-january-2022>
- The spring 2022 stakeholder pack highlights details of Scottish Government's recent expansion to grant funding that makes it easier for farming and crofting businesses to access expert support and

advice on business resilience planning to improve performance. The latest expansion in accessibility is intended to streamline routes to support, ensuring businesses can now directly access the support they need at a time that suits them, in the simplest way possible. This pack also includes information on the value of mentoring for new entrants in need of practical help and guidance.

- The summer 2022 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#) shares examples of how farmers and crofters have benefited from mentoring support and the difference this has made to their fledgling enterprises. There is information on support for new entrants and updates to specialist advice options, which now covers crofter's plans and carbon audit action planning. Also featured is case study content on resilience planning and the importance of making the most of accessible funding.
- The autumn 2022 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#). In this edition, we share ways farmers and crofters can use grant-funded advice through FAS to bring down business costs.. All support options can be combined and tailored in different ways to address the unique needs of each business, meaning they are suitable for new entrants and experienced farmers and crofters alike.
- The January 2023 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#), shares ways farmers and crofters can use grant-funded advice through FAS to bring down business costs. One option is the new carbon audit action plan specialist advice option, which delivers tangible ways to reduce carbon footprints, often tackling energy consumption and fertiliser efficiency in the process.
- The spring 2023 edition of the [Farm Advisory Service \(FAS\) stakeholder pack](#), shares ways farmers and crofters can use grant-funded advice through FAS to meet the specific needs of their businesses. Specialist advice options can be tailored and combined to meet the individual needs of each farmer and crofter, from experienced farmers to new entrants.

## 6.8 Stakeholder Meeting

A FAS stakeholder group meeting was delivered in partnership with the one-to-many contract in February 2022. The event was held on-line with attendees splitting into breakout rooms in order to learn more about specific aspects of the support delivered by the service.

## 6.9 FBAASS Advisers Newsletters

A FAS newsletter is 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.

## 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. 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 willingness 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 Changes to FAS delivery as of 4th April 2022

- **Specialist advice funding was made available without the need for prior ILMP**

Access to specialist advice support no longer requires applicants to apply for, or have completed, an ILMP, prior to accessing funding. Farming and crofting businesses can now apply directly for up to £1,000 of funding for specialist advice on a range of topics, including new areas covering:

- Carbon audit action implementation planning – follow up support for businesses who have received a carbon audit and need further advice and support to implement their action plan.
- Crofter's plan – a thorough and impartial review of businesses by an experienced crofting adviser, resulting in a flexible, tailored advice plan specific to the needs of the crofting business. A crofter's plan may cover the following elements:
  - Environmental sustainability; opportunities, and risks
  - Business finances
  - Identification of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the crofting business
  - Croft legislative status

- **Free ILMPs for new entrants**

As part of the changes to funding, new entrants (businesses operating for 5 years or less), can now apply for up to £1,200 of government funding to cover the full costs of an ILMP. The participating business will only need to pay the VAT element.

- **Reset of applications window**

Restrictions on the number of ILMPs and specialist advice reports a single business can undertake will reset. This means farming and crofting businesses who have already completed an ILMP and 2 follow on specialist advice reports, can now apply (from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022) for the same level of support for a second time round. i.e., apply for a new ILMP and up to a maximum of 2 specialist advice reports.

### 8.2 Development of stakeholder survey

To ensure the stakeholder pack provides the information needed by stakeholders in the most useful format and to better understand the needs of this audience FAS issued a short survey in the April Stakeholder pack.

### 8.3 Carbon Audit quality assurance training

The announcements regarding NTP requirement for a carbon audit led to a surge of FAS Carbon Audit applications with 181 applications in May 2022, this means that within the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 months of the contract, FAS has committed 82% of the carbon audit budget. Ricardo brought in and trained 7 additional consultants to support the team to ensure that we could continue to provide the same responsiveness and turnaround of applications despite the huge increase in carbon audit applications. These individuals are a flexible resource for the service meaning we can call upon their support when needed, but they will be deployed elsewhere when demand is low, therefore keeping the costs to the service as low as possible.

## 8.4 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.

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Ricardo administered 16 pay-runs, delivered on a rolling 4 weekly cycle.





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