



One-to-one Farm Advisory Service

2017/18 Business Plan for Scottish Government

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

Farm Advisory Service

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Executive summary

Aims of the Service

The service will help further develop a thriving sustainable agriculture sector in Scotland bringing positive outcomes to the economy, environment and public good.

Our vision is to deliver first-rate support to farmers, land managers and crofters, providing high quality advice that will improve Scotland's natural environment, reducing the impact of agriculture on climate change, whilst optimising business efficiency.

Outcomes

- A wider spectrum of farmers in Scotland will be aware of the service and encouraged to utilise the support available.
- Farmer advisors will be provided with training to deliver high quality and consistent advice to farmers.
- Farmers engaging with the programme will be better informed on the overall sustainability of their businesses and able to make well informed decisions for the future.
- New entrants to Scottish agriculture, are supported and able to access the advice they need to develop thriving farm and rural businesses.

Key deliverables

- The programme will deliver:
 - 300 Integrated Land Management Plans per annum
 - 100 Specialist Advice visits
 - 50 Carbon Audits
 - 60 New entrants will receive mentoring support
- The promotional campaigns will ensure there is wide awareness and clarity on the support available, with the service being specifically targeted to groups of farmers and crofters who need help the most and to support key policy objectives.
- Video and text case studies will promote awareness, understanding and uptake of the support available.
- Integrated Land Management Plans will incorporate a wider review of the business looking at the business and natural resources, soil and nutrient management, biodiversity and conservation, enterprise analysis, technical performance, cross compliance and greening. This more holistic review will ensure that the advice encompasses all elements of sustainability, economic performance, the environment and public good.
- The service will be integrated into the delivery of the one-to-many service, providing seamless referrals between components and ensuring customers can easily access the support they need
- The farmer will be treated as a valued customer and with a focus on providing a quality service throughout the user experience, including rapid responses to queries, quick decisions, and action coupled with quality assurance ensuring advisor reports are always high quality.
- We will track all customer interactions on a customer relationship management system (CRM) aligned to RDP reporting requirements.
- Transparency will be provided by robust management which will be supported by ISO accredited quality and reporting procedures.
- We will create a reputation of flexibility and accountability for the Service, by proactively engaging with stakeholders to ensure delivery is informed by the marketplace and is responsive to wider user needs.
- Training and continuous professional development of advisers will be provided and developed in response to identified needs.
- Rigorous quality assurance processes will be adopted to ensure that the reports received by customers are of a consistently high quality.

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1 Introduction

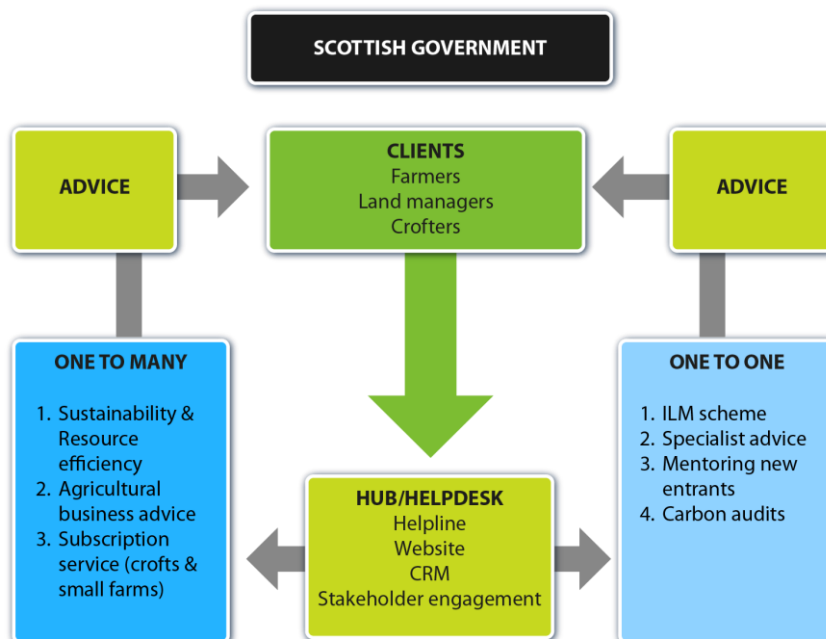
The Farm Advisory Service Scotland is a programme co-funded by the European Union and Scottish Government that will run till December 2020 with the aim of increasing the profitability and sustainability of farming and crofting enterprises across Scotland.

The service is designed to help support the sector to achieve sustainable growth via the nine outcomes identified in the Future of Scottish Agriculture discussion document:

- Sustainable Growth in Profits;
- Operating as part of a profitable and strong Food & Drink sector;
- Resilient Agriculture;
- Skilled farmers becoming more profitable and greener through training and education;
- Innovative best practice utilising Scotland's world class research;
- World leading green farming;
- A rewarding career in agriculture for New Entrants;
- A recognised contribution to Scottish Society;
- Leading role in local and global agriculture

The service is delivered through two contracts, the One-to-Many contract managed by SAC Consulting and the One-to-One contract managed by Ricardo Energy and Environment. The delivery of the two is integrated by the hub, with a shared advice line and website, so customers engaging with the programme should not perceive any split and be seamlessly directed to the most relevant service to meet their needs.

Figure 1 Diagram to show the integration of the FAS

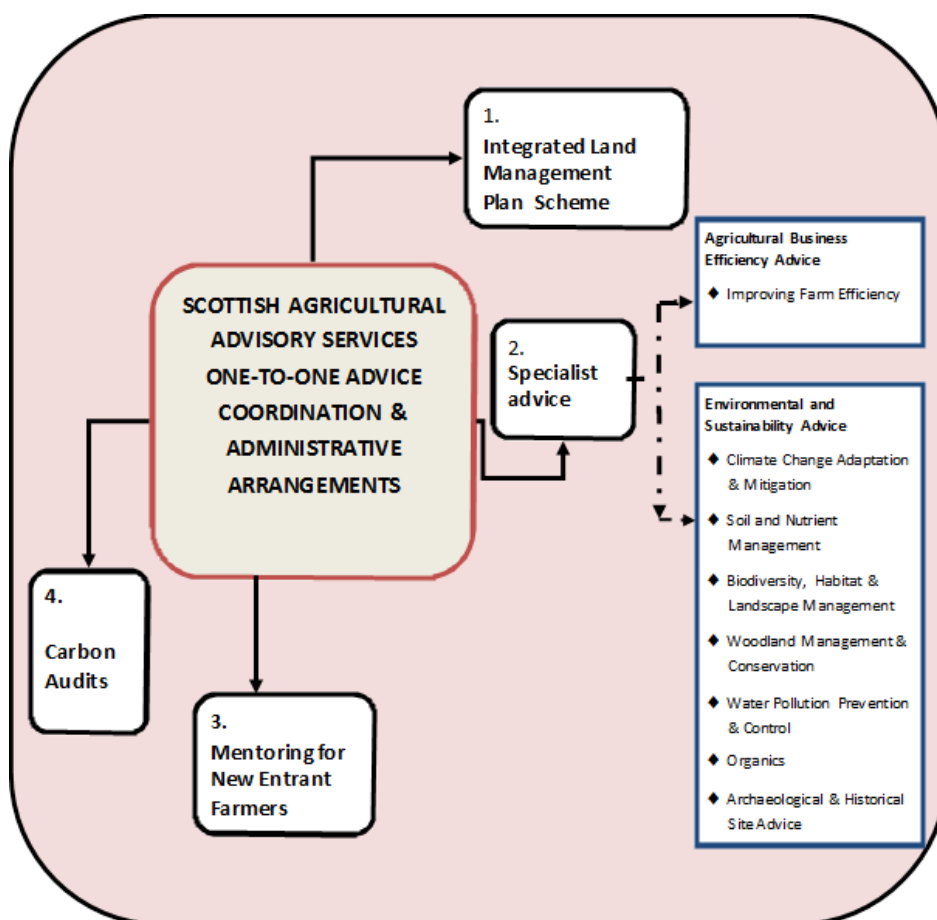


1.1 FAS One-to-One Delivery

The One-to-One contract aims to ensure crofters, farmers and new entrants have access to one-to-one consultancy support. These one-to-one visits will provide significant value to farmers/crofters as the advice is specific to their particular enterprise, locality and issues. The advisor will bring detailed local and enterprise knowledge and a fresh perspective. Through discussion with the farmer, the adviser can assess the 'vision' for the farm or croft, develop objectives and determine why certain management practices are followed and what options would be most suitable. The adviser is then able to talk these recommendations through with the farmer/crofter to establish an Action Plan. The service comprises three elements:

- ILMPs & specialist advice;
- Mentoring of new farmers; and
- Carbon audits.

Figure 2 Diagram to show the components of One-to-one advice



The scheme outputs align to the EU rural development regulation priorities one through to five inclusive:

- Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture and forestry;
- Enhancing competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability;
- Promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry; and
- Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry.

1.2 Business Plan

The FAS programme was launched to farmers on the 20th September 2016. This business plan presents plans for the first full year of delivery of the Farm Advisory Service, the period from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018.

2 Resources, deliverables for year

Table 1 below summarises the various meetings and the other deliverables, the following sections of this plan clarify the purpose and responsibilities for each deliverable.

REPORTING	
	Monthly Reports (12)
	Annual Report (1)
MEETINGS	
	Bimonthly review meetings (x6)
	Steering Group meetings (x4)
TRAINING	
	Presentations and training (x4 topics)
	Training events (x4)
	Webinars (x3)
	E-newsletter (x6)
COMMUNICATIONS	
	Web development and updates (x8)
	Printed case studies (x4)
	Video case studies (x4)
	Press Articles (x8)
	Direct mail campaign (x2)
	Attendance at shows and events (x8)
ADVICE LINE SUPPORT	
	Training to scale Advice Line's capability (x2)
DATABASE	
	Maintenance and update of Service CRM
SCHEME DELIVERY	
	ILMP's delivered (x300)
	Specialist Advice delivered (x100)
	Carbon Audits delivered (x250)
	Mentoring delivered (x60)
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
	100 ILMPs peer reviewed
	300 ILMPs (100%) light touch reviewed
MONITORING & EVALUATION	
	Feedback collected from each advice recipient, analysed and reported

3 Reports

The Service Manager is the lead point of contact for the Service. The formal communication routes are:

- **Progress report** by phone call with the Anna Murray/Peter Begbie as required.
- **Short monthly reports** sent electronically to the Scottish Government's contract manager within seven days of the month end will be compiled by the service manager to detail the milestones achieved, metrics of delivery to date, plans for the next month, highlights and issues. Any issues will be updated on a joint sharepoint site.

In addition to the monthly report Ricardo will provide a schedule of costs for invoicing, including completion of the EU reporting spreadsheet.

- **Annual report** Sent electronically to the Scottish Government's contract manager within 31 days of the end of the calendar year and compiled by the service manager, with material provided by the stakeholder manager, quality and advice manager & communications manager. The report will summarise the types, topics and advice activities conducted over the year, number of participants nationally and regionally, collate feedback from the year and consider any trends. The report will review issues raised and resolved through the year and lessons learnt and their implications on plans for the year ahead will be considered

4 Meetings

- **Bimonthly Meetings.** Ricardo will attend bimonthly management meetings held at the Scottish Government offices and attended by the Service Manager and Service Director. The meetings will jointly review the delivery and performance, delivery against plans, scheme uptake, feedback and outcomes achieved. The management group will discuss any issues and agree remedy actions. Actions and issues will be updated on a FAS actions and issues log (sharepoint site).
- **Steering Group Meetings.** When required Ricardo will provide service related input at these meetings. The meetings will be held in Scottish Government offices, attended by Service Manager and Service Director/or Technical Director.

We understand that industry and government priorities will change over the lifetime of the project, the purpose of the communication activities detailed above is to ensure that there is ongoing dialogue so Scottish Government and Ricardo can agree and plan any changes to delivery that will be required.

5 Accreditation

Lantra will continue to manage the FBAASS accreditation of advisers and it will remain a requirement that advisers delivering Integrated Land Management Plans are FBAASS accredited.

Lantra are tasked with ensuring the advisor panel is sufficiently robust with approximately 100 advisers and a relatively even ratio of adviser from SAC to other organisations. In addition, Lantra will review the geographical coverage of advisers and ascertain that this is appropriate. Word of mouth/adviser recommendation is an important marketing tool for the programme, it is important that we do not disadvantage farmers in certain geographies simply by having insufficient advisers in the region. Should these reviews identify a need to recruit more advisers Lantra and Ricardo will work together to fill the gap.

The accreditation process will shift in this year. In previous years' advisers have been required to provide examples of their work for review on an annual basis. With the on-going peer review process Ricardo/Lantra will already have reviewed the advisers' work and so we do not require a resubmission. This will only be necessary in cases where an adviser is new to FBAASS or has not delivered an ILMP in the previous year.

The CPD requirements of advisers will still stand and advisers will be required to have gained 20 CPD points during the year.

6 Training

Ricardo will continue to provide training to advisers with the aim of building capacity in Scotland and ensuring that advisers delivering ILMP have up to date knowledge and a holistic knowledge across the required topics. The training will be delivered through a range of mechanisms, utilising the on-line training site, via face-to-face adviser workshops, via webinars and bimonthly newsletters.

6.1 Defining content

The focus of training will be defined by a mix of:

- a) Feedback from advisers on where they feel they need further information.
- b) Feedback from the peer review of reports which details areas in which advisers are commonly weak.
- c) Feedback from Scottish Government and Stakeholders on areas in which they require advisers to be better informed.

At present, feedback from advisers is that they would like training and an agreed consistent approach to benchmarking, and feedback from stakeholders is that it would be beneficial if advisers in Scotland were better able to inform farmers on the rules, risks and benefits of applying organic waste to land. These will be addressed in the coming year.

6.2 Development of online training (4 topics)

The online training course provides several benefits

- a) it is consistently available so advisers can revisit and refresh themselves at any time.
- b) it provides flexibility should a new adviser join the panel, or we identify a skills gap and need to recruit new panel members, the same training is consistently available, and once established can be delivered to new advisers with minimal costs.
- c) New training components may be launched at any time should we identify new needs subject to changing policy, without the high costs of convening a conference.

Training presentations will be developed by engaging the most relevant technical experts and working closely with policy leads and regulatory authorities to coordinate messaging and approach. Once

technical content is agreed, our communications experts will design PowerPoint presentations. The PowerPoint presentations will then be developed further into on-line training that must be completed by advisers delivering Integrated Land Management Plans.

All training material will be signed-off by Scottish Government or an agreed expert before dissemination.

6.3 Face to Face Training workshops

In July a series of 4 regional workshops will be delivered, these will provide a forum both for training the advisers but also for advisers to provide feedback on their experiences and on how we can better support their delivery to farmers. Training will:

- Focus on areas identified by the peer review group as being weak in ILMP reports
- Deliver a session on benchmarking; and
- Provide an update on forthcoming changes in policy/advisory requirements.

Training events will be open and free of charge to all advisors. Following feedback from the training events in November 2016, it is planned that these will be held in Abington (South Lanarkshire), Stirling, Aberdeen and Inverness.

6.4 Webinars

Three webinars will be delivered to advisers over the course of the year, these offer advisers the chance to receive training without incurring the cost/time of travel. The recorded webinars also provide an ongoing training resource so advisers can revisit the training at a later date. Current proposals are for webinars to cover Carbon Auditing and Benchmarking, but this will be reviewed and considered in light of feedback from peer review of reports.

6.5 E-newsletter

Ricardo will launch an e-newsletter for FBAASS Advisers. This newsletter will be issued on a bimonthly basis utilising a system called Dotmailer. The newsletter will provide a current update on delivery through the scheme, feedback and news, and updates on any changes in policy or guidance of which advisers should be aware. The intention of the newsletter is to try to build a sense of team and common purpose and to keep delivery of the scheme at the forefront of advisers' minds.

7 Communications

Ricardo will use a range of mediums including social media to generate awareness of the website/advice Line and for each scheme. The Marketing and Communications will inform the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- Raising awareness of the advice available and publicising the routes to access the service.
- As a direct call to action, publicising through direct mail where appropriate or through stakeholder groups.

Communications will focus on increasing uptake. This will be achieved by meeting the farmer/crofter's demands and increasing their economic (cost saving or compliance) and environmental return. This in turn will be made possible through efficient targeting techniques. We will work closely with the one-to-many service to identify opportunities to promote the one-to-one service utilising all channels possible including newsletters, event feedback forms and wider joint promotional activity.

In promoting the service, Ricardo will seek to work with key stakeholder groups.

7.1 Website

The hosting and development of the website sits within the One-to-many contract. Ricardo will develop the content for the One-to-one contract but are not able to control, the visualisation of this content or the functionality of the website.

Ricardo will provide ongoing review of the web content to ensure it is kept up to date and will develop content in the form of video case studies (see later section) and new guidance documents.

7.2 Printed case studies

As the businesses come through the schemes Ricardo will identify businesses which would provide a good focus for a case study. Typically, this would be businesses which are particularly high profile or those who have achieved significant benefits through their engagement with the scheme. Case studies will be drafted by Ricardo's in-house copy writer and reviewed by a professional copy editor. Prior to any publication the business will review the material and only with their authorisation will the case study be published.

100 copies of each case study will be printed on high quality paper, to be made available through shows and events. Further print runs will be commissioned in response to demand.

7.3 Video case studies

Businesses which are the focus of printed case studies will also be asked if they are willing to participate in a filmed version of the case study. If businesses are willing, Ricardo will work with the business to agree the format and script, a professional film maker will then film and edit.

Case studies will be made available on the FAS website and circulated to stakeholders for potential inclusion on their own.

7.4 Press articles

The Ricardo Public Relations team will work with agricultural and national press to agree the placement of press articles. We will place articles in publications such as: Farmers Weekly (ABC Audited Circulation 59,328); Scottish Farmer (ABC Audited Circulation 16,633), Farmers Guardian (ABC Audited Circulation 38,501). Press releases will also be set to a circulation list of wider industry weekly and monthly publications. Each case study (detailed above) will be the subject of a press release. Articles will then be tailored to meet the specific needs of each publication.

7.5 Direct mail campaign

Targeted and bespoke direct mail can be a very potent means of encouraging uptake of schemes. During this year Ricardo plan to deliver 2 campaigns of direct mail, of approx. 4,000 each. The direct mail campaigns will be targeted to specific groups of farmers who have been identified as having a greater need of the support available. For example, this may be farmers who have been non-compliant at a cross compliance inspection (a potential indicator of a business that is struggling), farmers of a certain size, or we could focus on farmers/crofters by location to specifically address issues in for vulnerable species or key habitats.

Ricardo will agree the targeting strategy with Scottish Government and will look to the Steering Group for input on this targeting strategy. Depending on the target audience Ricardo may need to work with Scottish Government's data team to select new data lists. The current data that Ricardo hold enables targeting by geography, but does not give information on sector or farm size.

7.6 Attendance at shows

Ricardo will provide speakers or representatives at shows and conferences where there are good opportunities to engage with target audiences or stakeholders. It is anticipated that we will attend 8 such events during the year, but will provide flexibility to attend more if there are good opportunities and if this activity is demonstrated to have good impact and provide value for money.

8 Advice Line

The Service (one-to-one and one-to-many) will continue to operate with a single advice line number (0300 323 0161) and email address (advice@fas.scot). This has worked well and provides customers with a one-stop-shop for farm advice.

The advice line offers a tiered service, providing direct escalated access to a range of experts with the necessary technical knowledge to answer questions across all subject areas covered by FAS.

All technical queries are responded to by Ricardo's *Tier 1* operative. The operative will answer queries where they can or provide signposting if appropriate. However, if the enquiry is of a complex nature, the call will be escalated to a technical advisor (as identified by a skills matrix). This process ensures that seamless, complete technical support is provided in a fast and cost-effective manner. Calls are recorded in the CRM database for reporting and QA purposes.

The service has worked well to date. The Ricardo team are comfortable dealing with the calls and our task now is to ensure the staff are kept as up to date as possible and well briefed on any changes. To ensure this is the case:

- Advice Line staff will attend training with SAC in April 2017 to ensure the team are fully briefed on the One-to-Many delivery plans for 2017 so that they are able to ensure they provide the optimum referrals service.
- Should there be a flux in calls in a certain area Ricardo will liaise with SAC and ensure advice line staff receive training, FAQs, or other guidance to enable them to best deal with calls without the need to refer on to a specialist.

9 Database

Ricardo will continue to maintain a database:

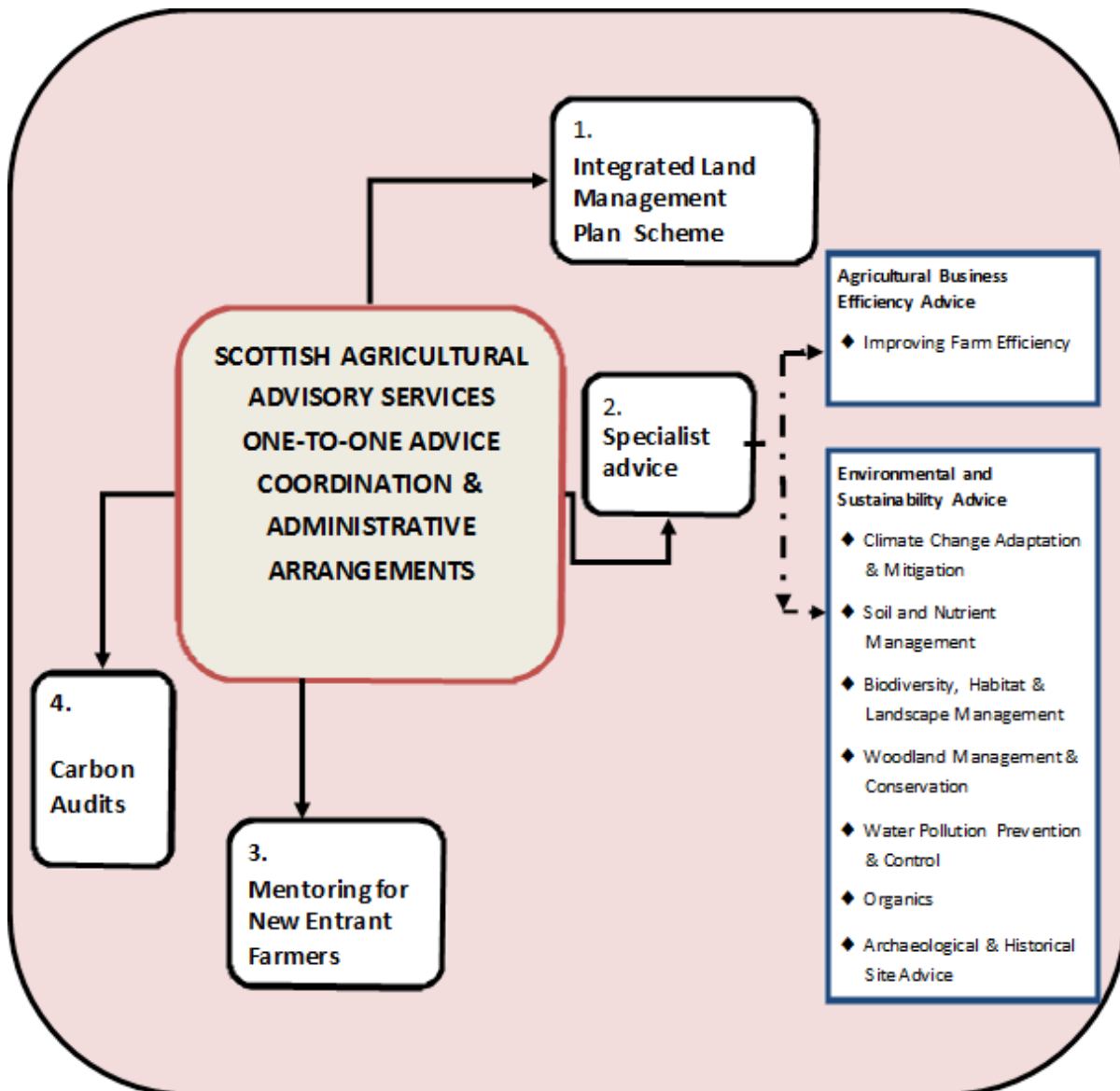
- To track customer information so we can clearly understand who has engaged, how they have accessed the service and what support they have received (Advice Line, visit, etc)
- To manage the progression of each scheme. The management process and the CRM database will be designed to ensure that each check is complete before payment may move on to the next step.
- For each scheme there are specific checks that must be completed at each stage of the process. For example:
 - On receipt of the application we will check the eligibility of the farmer/crofter to receive the funds. That they have a BRN number and that funding is within state aid limits, not in excess of: one ILMP, 2 Specialist Advice visits, four days of mentoring or one Carbon Audit per year
 - Check that the proposed funding of an ILMP is not in excess of €1,500 or more than 80% of the overall cost of the advice (taking into account current exchange rates)
- Check that we have received a signed acceptance of the offer before the visit goes ahead.
- We will use our database to forecast claim data. Our portal will be specifically designed to meet the detailed data requirements. We will build in reports to identify data that is incomplete
- All technical queries will be responded to by the helpdesk will be recorded in the database for reporting and QA purposes

10 Scheme Delivery

The One-to-One FAS service comprises three elements:

- ILMPs & specialist advice;
- Mentoring of new farmers; and
- Carbon audits.

Figure 3 Diagram to show the components of One-to-one advice



11 Integrated Land Management Plans & Specialist Advice

Integrated Land Management Plans have replaced Whole Farm Reviews (WFRs). On the basis of recommendations made by the Advisory Services Advisory Group. The ILMPs incorporate a greater degree of public good and provide a more holistic review, increasing the prominence of efficiency, climate change and other environmental objectives. These elements are synergistic with the principles of sustainable farming systems where the economic, environmental and social priorities are assessed, ensuring the long term security of farm businesses and their role in the rural community.

Accredited advisors assist farmers/crofters to develop ILMPs which will allow them the flexibility to include only those services relevant to the business. The plan will include where relevant sections on business, technical, environment, animal welfare, climate change and woodlands. Aspects such as cross compliance and environmental aspects will be compulsory.

The ILMP has 5 main elements

1. The ILMP would outline a holistic long-term strategic vision for the holding and would be supported by a number of short-term objectives
2. A map based plan showing land based assets, features, issues and opportunities from an environmental and habitats perspective
3. An analysis of threats and opportunities
4. An action plan, a summary of recommendations with a set timescale for achievement.

The range of business enterprises considered would be

- Agriculture
- Forestry Woodland and Trees
- Sporting
- Conservation and Environment
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Commercial including tourism
- General Public Access
- Other Building, dwelling houses and development sites
- General Business, including marketing and social media, staff training and skills development

The programme will deliver 300 ILMPs per annum, each plan will require on average 2 days of advice. At a cost of £1,200 per advice/plan then that would amount to £360k per year.

The ILMP will signpost opportunities for the farmers/crofters to gain more in-depth advice via the Specialist Advice. It is estimated that 100 ILMP per year will be backed up by specialist plans at £1,000 each (£100k per year)

Specialist advice will be split into advice which:

a) Improves farm business efficiency and effectiveness and

b) Delivers public benefit, areas such as

- Climate change and adaptation
- Biodiversity, habitat and landscape management
- Woodland management and conservation

- Water pollutions prevention and control
- Archaeological and historical site advice
- Soil management and nutrient management planning
- Organics

Public good advice will have a higher intervention rate

11.1 Application guidance

The application process is going well, however Ricardo will continue to review the application guidance and will make amendments if feedback suggests this is necessary

11.2 Development of adviser guidance

Ricardo will develop an online training module for advisers delivering the plans. This includes guidance on:

- Processes;
- Communication;
- Branding;
- The behavioural expectations of an adviser.
- The timeline for delivering visits and submitting reports;
- The expectations of the report in terms of content, focus and quality;
- Documentation required to complete the visit and trigger payment.

12 Carbon Audits

Carbon Audits are undertaken using the Agricultural Resource Efficiency Calculator (AgRE Calc).

All FBAASS advisers have now received training on how to use the Carbon Calculator and guidance and templates for the delivery of the report

250 carbon audits will be delivered this year. The carbon audits will provide value to both the beneficiary and Scottish Government. The beneficiary will benefit from a resource efficiency audit that will lead to economic savings and environmental benefits at a farm level. It will also provide an evidence base for Scottish Government, providing quantified GHG emissions reduction potential for farms that can inform how future policy can be shaped to meet GHG reductions commitment. We plan to report on GHG abatement on a quarterly basis

In addition to this general awareness, farmers/crofters need specific advice on the steps they can take to reduce their GHG emissions, to help lock carbon into the soil and to use their land for development of renewable sources of energy. Many produce buyers and retailers are asking farmers and growers to demonstrate their green credentials. Therefore, there are clear economic, environmental and reputational advantages for farmers and crofters to monitoring and reducing carbon foot print. One way of achieving this is through a carbon audit.

13 Mentoring for new entrants

The average age of farmers is increasing and insufficient opportunities exist to attract the numbers of new entrant farmers that the industry needs. This is a problem across Europe. It is a clear priority for SG to support generational renewal in agriculture in Scotland. Scottish farming needs to attract a steady flow of new entrant young farmers with drive, innovation and entrepreneurial skills.

In September 2012 the Scottish Government set up a New Entrants Advisory Panel. The Panel advises Government on the future role of support for new entrants. There has been active engagement with the Panel to explore what further or different articles could be introduced in the SRDP to remove barriers to entry and /or incentivise new entrant young farmers into the industry. a range of interventions were suggested by Panel one of which was mentoring.

It is widely recognised that all professionals, wherever they are in their career, can benefit from having a mentor. However, there are particular benefits for new entrants to receive mentoring support during their first few years after qualification, having taken on land or a tenancy or when receiving grant support. Therefore, another advisory component for FAS one-to-one advice programme will be mentoring for new entrants.

Mentoring support will help new entrants establish profitable and sustainable businesses. It will encourage them to make efficient use of resources available to them and provide guidance through an experienced operator. Ricardo will recruit and train potential mentors from the agricultural sector. We will continue to work with Lantra, the stakeholder networks and the advisers to identify well respected, forward thinking, innovative and inspirational individuals to recruit as mentors

There will be 60 mentees per year.

13.1 Process for recruitment of mentors

Mentors will initially be recruited through the contacts and recommendations of our adviser network and stakeholder panel who between them have contact with a substantial proportion of the farmers, crofters and land managers in Scotland and an excellent knowledge of who the leading farmers are. It is going to be these personal contacts that are most potent in encouraging a retired farmer to get involved and share his/her knowledge. We will also work in collaboration with Lantra who bring the experience of delivering the 'Get Mentoring' service and mentors working with the Get Mentoring service. There is not a single approach to recruiting mentors, the recruitment will usually involve personal engagement and introduction. Interested mentors will then complete a data collection form which collects information on the mentor to enable us to create a profile and to match their skills with mentees.

Mentors will come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences but appropriate attributes include.

- A sound knowledge /experience of agriculture at a grass root level.
- A master of traditional skills eg stone walling, hedge laying etc.
- Land based educational/skills background.
- Food and drink industry.
- Finance/business planning.
- Surveying/planning.

Mentors will be paid an honorarium of £250 per day. No mentor is able to exceed more than £2K per annum (i.e. a maximum of 2 mentees.).

13.2 Process for recruitment of mentees

Ricardo will continue to work closely with the New Entrants to Farming Programme. We will primarily focus on delivering a communications campaign to ensure these target farmers are aware and encouraged to access the support available. Interest from these parties will be funnelled through the Advice Line and website which will provide clear guidance on the scheme and how to apply.

13.3 Development of mentor guidance

Ricardo will develop guidance for mentors. This includes guidance on:

- Processes.
- Communication.
- Branding.
- The behavioural expectations.
- The timeline for delivering support and submitting reports.
- Documentation required to complete the visit and trigger payment.

14 Quality Management

In order to ensure quality of service, a number of key performance indicators relating to service will be monitored and reported on.

14.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Quality of advice

- Quality of advice: at least 85%, of feedback by advice recipients is classed as good or better (assessed from answers to relevant questions in feedback form (Land Manager Evaluation Form)).
- Relevance of advice: over 85% of advice recipients thought the advice given was relevant to their business (assessed from answers to relevant questions in the feedback form).
- Impact of advice: over 70% of advice recipients state they will use the advice provided to change their management practices (assessed from answers to relevant questions in the feedback form).
- Behavioural change: over 70% of recipients of advice stated that they have taken action as a result of the advice provided (assessed at ILMP review visit and potentially via SG evaluation survey).

Advice Line:

- Response time for routine queries - 90% within 1 working day.
- Response time for detailed queries (those requiring specialist input) - 90% within 2 working days.
- Response time for complex queries - 100% within 5 working days.
- Quality of advice: over 70% of advice recipients state that the service they received was excellent or good (assessed did this help question asked at the close of each call and potentially via SG evaluation survey).

14.2 Scope and responsibility

The Ricardo service manager will be responsible for ensuring that the QA procedures are adhered to and that the process is implemented and revised as appropriate. The Ricardo quality manager (Rebecca Barrett) will be responsible for managing the QA process in line within the procedures agreed with the Scottish Government.

14.3 Fund management

Ricardo will be responsible for the financial administration process working closely with the Scottish Government's finance team. In order to ensure all aspects of the financial management process will have a 'triple check' process. This means that before money can be drawn down each month into the independent bank account the funds will be requested by the grant manager, checked by the finance manager and approved by the service manager.

14.4 Advice Line

Within the delivery of the Service, Ricardo is responsible for manning the telephone and email advice line for SFAS. In order to ensure quality of service, a number of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) relating to service will be agreed with the Scottish Government at the inception meeting to be monitored and reported on throughout the contract duration. SLAs relating to:

- Response time for routine queries - 90% within 1 working day.
- Response time for detailed queries - 90% within 2 working days.
- Response time for complex queries - 100% within 5 working days.

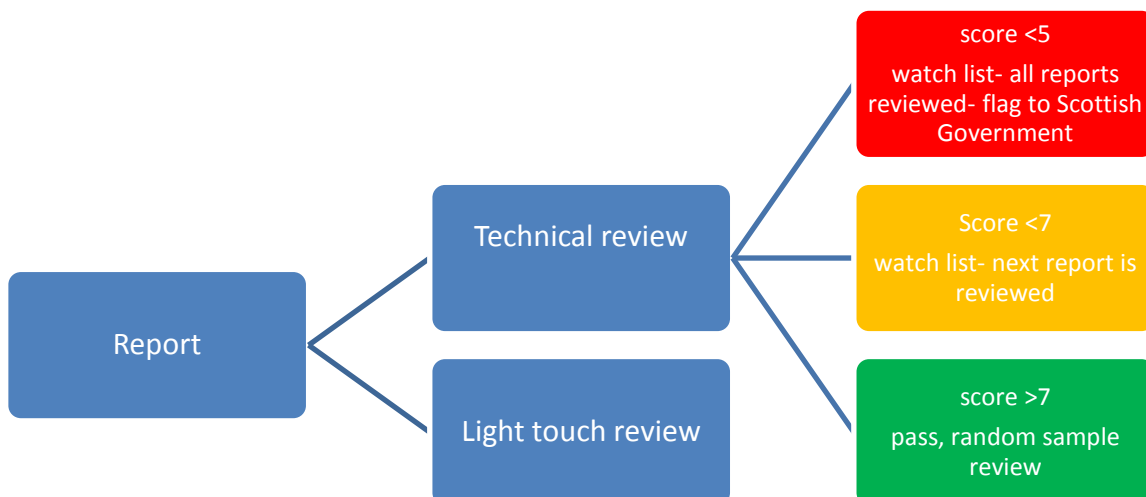
As a call or enquiry is received it is logged onto CRM. When the request is responded to it is then logged onto the CRM and the query closed out. The helpdesk manager will regularly run a report to identify any open queries and will follow up with the team should any queries be outstanding. – The CRM will therefore function as both the Logging and tracking tool.

Should a call require technical support from an adviser or other external body the Advice Line will call the adviser to confirm that they will be able to respond to the call within the required time-frame (one working day), they will enter the details of the enquiry in the CRM and an electronic ticket will be issued to the adviser (by email). When the adviser has called back the customer they will complete the response field in the ticket with details of the time, date and response provided. This ticket is then returned to the Advice Line and automatically uploads to the database, closing-out the enquiry. The Advice Line manager will run a report on a weekly basis to identify any open tickets and will chase up any late responses. Should there be a valid reason for a response taking longer the customer will be kept informed.

The helpdesk manager will be informed of all complaints and will log details of the action taken and lessons learnt on a complaints register. Following each complaint, the helpdesk manager and programme manager will review whether there is a need to provide further training or to modify Advice Line procedures. We do not expect complaints and each complaint will be taken very seriously. If a complaint concerns an FBAASS registered advisor, we will discuss the matter with Lantra seeking the earliest possible resolution.

14.5 ILMP Quality Assurance Process

A two-tiered QA process will be adopted involving both a 'light-touch' review operating alongside a 'technical' review which will incorporate a scored 'traffic-light' system.



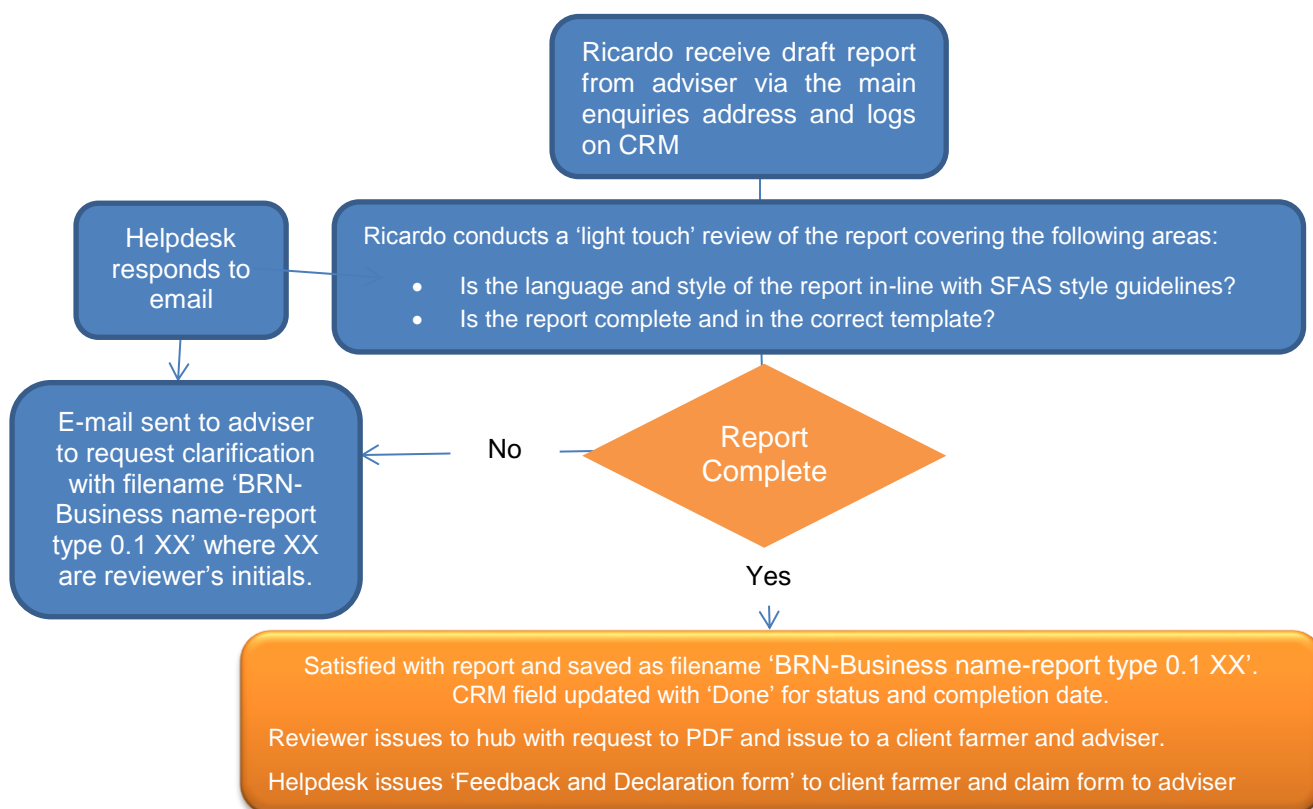
14.5.1 Light-touch QA process

Once received into the Hub via the advice@fas.scot address the Helpdesk team will log the report. Ricardo will then conduct a 'light-touch' review of the report as detailed in the diagram below and covering the following aspects:

- The correct template has been used and is complete;
- The clarity of presentation;
- Typographic errors; and
- Clarity in terms of grammar and language.

Once complete, the report will be saved to the CRM. If this The Helpdesk will then send a pdf of the report to the farmer and adviser simultaneously. The farmers will also be issued a 'Feedback and Declaration Form' and the adviser a claim form. The CRM will be used to track the time to conduct the 'light-touch' review and to ensure the time to review reports is kept to a minimum.

A flow diagram depicting the light-touch QA process is provided below.



14.5.2 Technical Review

Once received from the adviser via the advice@fas.scot address the Ricardo team will log the report onto the CRM. The first report from each adviser will be subject to an in-depth assessment. Following the first report, further reports will be either assessed at random or if the light touch reviewer raises concerns.

The 'technical accreditation' review will be much more detailed and will involve a 'deep-dive' into the quality of the technical advice as well as the 'softer' aspects of clear report writing.

The assessment will cover:

- Formatting, punctuation & grammar
- Readability
- Meeting the guidance; and
- Technical content and the extent to which a compelling case is made for adoption of the actions within the Plan.

Table 1 Guidance for Technical Review of reports (assessors' scoring).

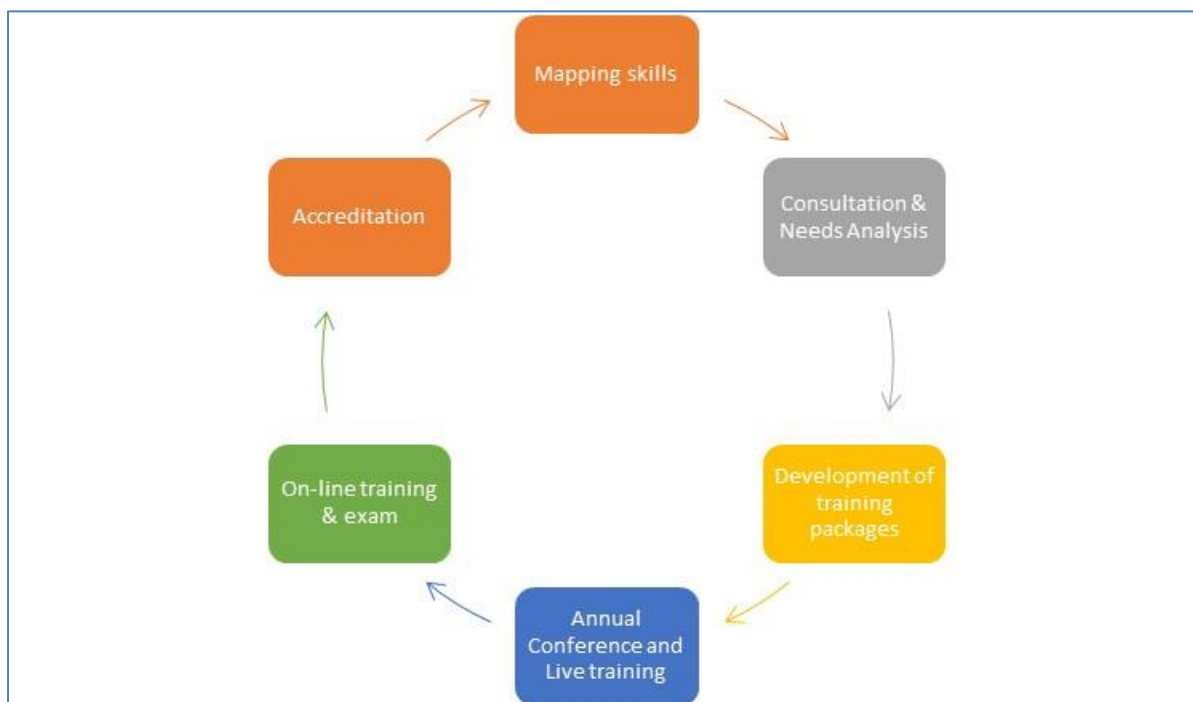
Description	Technical Score	Description
Report clearly lays out how scope has been met	10	Technical advice provided appears to fully meets client requirements
Report meets scope but not fully described in report	9	Technical advice provided appears to substantially meets client requirements
Report meets scope but only partially described in report	8	Minor omission in terms of technical advice
Report doesn't cover one minor element of the scope	7	Significant omission in terms of technical advice
Report doesn't cover or describe why one significant element of scope wasn't covered	6	Major omission in terms of technical advice
Significant omission in terms of scope (e.g. primary focus of report not covered)	5	Wrong technical advice in one part of the report
Major omission in terms of scope (e.g. primary and secondary focus of report not covered)	4	Wrong advice throughout the report
Substantial omissions in terms of scope (i.e. majority not covered)	3	Serious technical errors in most of the report
Serious omissions in terms of scope (i.e. failure to address nearly everything)	2	Serious technical errors in all areas of the report
Nothing in report matches scope (i.e. none of the requested support provided)	1	Insufficient technical information in to allow any assessment (report generic not tailored to the client)

Peer reviewers will be selected by Lantra from the panel of assessors. Peer reviewers will be senior advisers who have been approved by Scottish Government to act in this capacity. Reports will be sent

directly to the peer reviewer and Lantra will pass the comments back to Ricardo who will update the QA tracking sheet accordingly.

Recording

- All reports are logged onto the CRM and also added to the QA tracking database.
- **Issues captured on a log will be used to help identify any quality or guidance issues – these will be shared as part of the consultation and needs analysis process that will inform future adviser training needs as per the training and accreditation will follow this annual activity cycle**



14.5.3 Quality Assurance

A record of which reports have been checked and any issues identified will be kept on the QA tracker database.

The peer reviewers will send comments to Lantra who in turn will send Ricardo a comprehensive report (see appendix 1) within 10 days of receipt. Ricardo who will forward to the Adviser. The Quality Manager will update the tracking sheet accordingly. The adviser will then have two weeks to update the reports and re-submit them to Ricardo. An explanation of the significant issues must be recorded and corrective actions agreed by both parties, and recorded.

If the score from the accreditation process is above 7 then the adviser will be able to continue to deliver ILMPs with only light touch review. If the first report scored less than 7, feedback will be shared on why the report was not of a high enough standard. The next report by the adviser will automatically be added to the accreditation review process. If this report achieves the required benchmark, then the adviser will be removed from the watch list. If not, then the adviser will be placed on a watch list where all future reports will receive a technical review. If their reports are consistently below standard and in agreement with the Scottish Government, then the adviser will not receive accreditation the following year and will be removed from the list of accredited advisers and will no longer be able to conduct the ILMP reviews.

14.5.4 SLA

- initial QA of reports - light touch – 3 working days
- Technical review – 10 working days

14.6 Complaints Process

The complaints process is detailed in the rules and procedure document sent with every offer letter.

The service manager (Caroline Wood) will be informed of all complaints and will log details of the action taken and lessons learnt on a complaints register. Following each complaint, the Caroline and will review whether there is a need to provide further training or to modify procedures. We do not expect complaints and each complaint will be taken very seriously. If a complaint concerns an FBAASS registered advisor, we will discuss the matter with Lantra seeking the earliest possible resolution. Should a complaint be substantive Caroline will immediately inform Anna Murray (Scottish Government) and will discuss Ricardo's proposed resolution. In the case of a severe misdemeanour this may involve removing an adviser's accreditation. Such a step would never be taken without the agreement of Scottish Government.

15 Monitoring and Evaluation

Feedback from customers will be collected after the delivery of each advice activity via the 'Feedback and Declaration Form'. No advice visit will be closed out for payment until this form is received. Through review of this data we will seek to understand the perceived value of advice and measures farmer/crofter intends to implement. This data will provide valuable insight into where improvements can be made to the service or internal processes, which we will seek to implement to continually improve and enhance our delivery.



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