



Management agreements

Management agreements are legal contracts over land, usually protected areas. We use them to support natural heritage management.

A management agreement (MA) involves NatureScot making payments to a land manager in return for an agreed programme of work. We typically offer MAs for [European sites](#) and [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#).

MAs usually run for five years. Very rarely, the timescale may be longer or shorter if this is necessary to realise the full natural heritage benefits.

We may register a longer-term or higher value MA against the land title to ensure that management continues even if there's a change in occupancy.

SRDP vs management agreement

The Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) is the main source of funding for rural Scotland. We encourage land managers to seek SRDP support if we believe management is needed to improve the special features of the land.

If SRDP can't provide such support, and we see management as a priority, we may offer support through an MA. Such a situation may arise if SRDP options don't cover specialised management or the land manager is ineligible for SRDP.

Eligibility for a management agreement

We may offer an MA to any land manager who has the right to carry out the agreed management during the contract.

We won't offer an MA where a land manager:

- receives other public support for the same activity
- is in financial difficulty

Eligible costs

Our support to land managers is to fund site-specific natural heritage management. It isn't intended to cover normal agricultural production costs. The following costs are eligible for support.

Annual management costs

Up to 100% of income foregone/additional costs. Covers ongoing day-to-day running costs.

Cost of management works

These costs may be supported by using standard rates or paying for up to 100% of the actual costs of management. Covers one-off works or investments where the benefits accrue over a period of more than one year.

Investments most often supported include:

- provision of stock fencing
- scrub removal

- removal of invasive plants – e.g. bracken, rhododendron
- ditch blocking
- tree removal
- provision of alternative stock watering

Advice costs

Advice on site-specific natural heritage management requirements (under articles 22 and 39 of Commission Regulation [EU] No. 702/2014). The full cost of advice (up to 1,500 euros per advice, paid directly to the adviser) will be supported where there is no economic benefit to the land manager.

Legal basis for management agreements

Domestic

- Section 15 of the Countryside Act 1968 (as amended)
- Section 49A of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967
- Section 16 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
- Section 2 of the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991