



Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme

1st November 2020 - 31st January 2021

A guide to STEPS

WONDERFUL ON TAP



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Welcome to STEPS

Hello and welcome to our grant programme, **Severn Trent Environment Protection Scheme**® (STEPS).

The past year has been a tough one, with the wet winter, dry spring and ongoing pandemic having a massive impact on farm businesses and our local environment.

Despite this, we had a fantastic response to our recent limited Spring STEPS round, and many of you took the opportunity to really enhance biodiversity and improve water quality on your farm.

As many of our farmers know, **STEPS** is part of Severn Trent's wider **Farming 4 Water**® catchment management programme. The programme offers a range of options for farmers to select from, enabling infrastructure investment and land management improvements. Feedback from the businesses we are already working with has shown that farms prefer spring as the time to plan and get creative with our biodiversity options. We have taken this on board and this range of options will now be on offer in a new and dedicated biodiversity STEPS round in Spring 2021. This also means that our winter STEPS application window can be focused on options for water quality improvement.

We hope that everyone is as enthusiastic as we are and have plenty of ideas ready for the STEPS 2021 application round. We'd recommend getting in touch with your STW Agricultural Advisor as soon as possible. They're here to support and guide you through your application. As ever, STEPS is a competitive scheme and we cannot guarantee everyone will be successful, but chatting to an advisor is a good first step towards achieving a great application.

We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you again for your support.



Dr Jodie Rettino



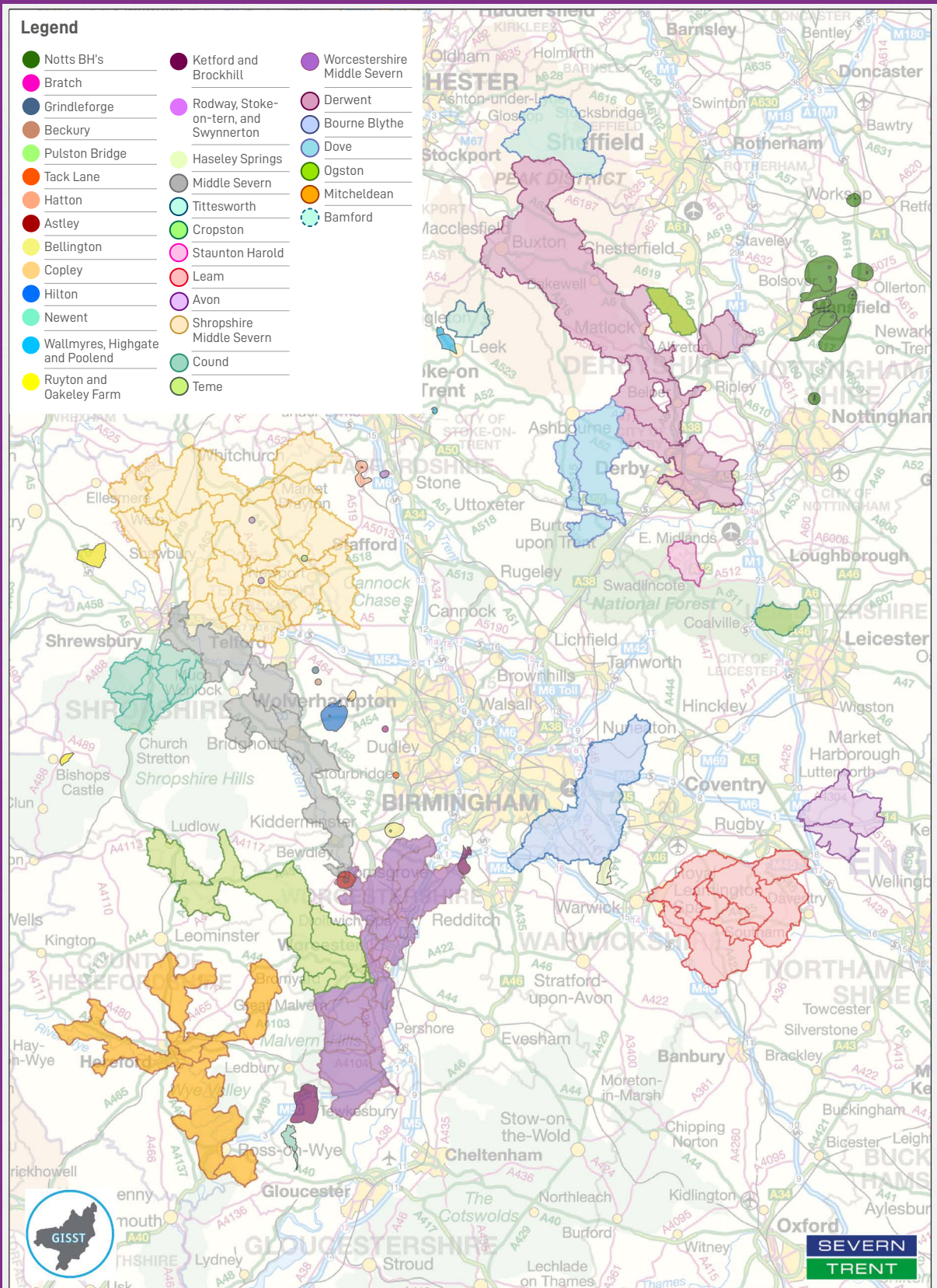
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Our grant programme is part of our ongoing commitment to protect our plant, soil, biodiversity and water environment. At the same time supporting the productive sustainable use of these valuable resources.

”

Priority catchment map

View it online at stwater.co.uk/steps



Our team

All of our team have a farming background, most have agricultural degrees, are BASIS qualified, and some have FACTS qualifications. Some of the team are also farmers, with farms located in our region.

North Warwickshire, Derbyshire (Dove)

Surface water catchments:

Whitacre, Bourne and Blythe, Dove

Groundwater catchments:

Haseley Springs

Una McBride

Phone number: 07811 847161

Email: Una.Mcbride@severntrent.co.uk

South Warwickshire/Northamptonshire

Surface water catchments:

Avon & Leam

Groundwater catchments:

N/A

Marion Perrett-Pearson

Phone number: 07970 944834

Email: Marion.Perrett-Pearson@severntrent.co.uk

Peter Bowman

Phone Number: 07711 169635

Email: Peter.Bowman@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire (Shrewsbury to Bewdley)

Surface water catchments:

Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Oakeley Farm, Ruyton, Hilton, Gringleforge, Copley, Beckbury

Geoff Jordan

Surface water catchment: Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments: Oakeley Farm, Ruyton, Hilton, Gringleforge, Copley, Beckbury

Phone number: 07800 961684

Email: Geoff.Jordan@severntrent.co.uk

David Trevatt

Surface Water catchment: Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments: Oakeley Farm, Ruyton, Hilton, Grindleforge, Copley, Beckbury

Phone number: 07399 493118

Email: Dave.Trevatt@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire (North of Shrewsbury)

Surface water catchments:

Shropshire Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Stoke-on-Tern, Rodway, Swynneton, Pulston Bridge, Hatton

Mark Biddulph

Phone Number: 07970 198191

Email: mark.biddulph@severntrent.co.uk

Cath Edwards

Phone Number: 07508 091799

Email: Cath.Edwards@severntrent.co.uk

Our team and our partners

Shropshire/Worcestershire (Ludlow to Worcester)

Surface water catchments: Teme

Groundwater catchments: Astley, Bratch

Emma Abbott

Groundwater catchments: Astley, Bratch

Phone number: 07909 000680

Email: Emma.Abbott@severntrent.co.uk

Jess Nott

Groundwater catchments: Astley

Phone number: 07498 540405

Email: Jess.Nott@severntrent.co.uk

Kate Singleton

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Phone number: 07432 454964

Email: Kate.Singleton@severntrent.co.uk

Worcestershire & Gloucestershire

Surface water catchments:

Worcestershire Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Ketford, Brockhill, Bellington, Newent, Tack Lane

Susan Bamber

Surface water catchment: Worcester Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments: Ketford, Brockhill,
Bellington, Newent, Tack Lane

Phone number: 07921 676664

Email: Susan.Bamber@severntrent.co.uk

Emily Williams

Surface water catchment: Worcester Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments: Ketford, Brockhill

Phone number: 07498 959818

Email: Emily.Williams@severntrent.co.uk

Robin Bickley

Surface water catchment: Worcester Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments: Brockhill, Bellington

Phone number: 07957 761004

Email: Robin.Bickley@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire

Surface water catchment: Cound catchment

Georgie Hyde

Telephone: 07498 671888

Email: Georgie.Hyde@severntrent.co.uk



Herefordshire/Gloucestershire (Mitcheldean to Leominster)

Surface water catchments: Mitcheldean (River Wye)

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Abi Croshaw

Surface water catchment: downstream of
Mordiford, including lower Wye

Phone number: 07990 068941

Email: Abi@wyeuskfoundation.org

Mike Williams

Surface water catchment: upstream of
Mordiford, including upper Wye, Lugg & Frome

Phone Number: 07920 441215

Email: mike@wyeuskfoundation.org

Staffordshire Derbyshire

Surface water catchments: Tittesworth

Groundwater catchments: Highgate, Poolend
and Wallmyres

Adrian Rochford

Phone number: 07423 437961

Email: Adrian.Rochford@severntrent.co.uk

Tina Bardill

Phone Number: 07384 815880

Email: Tina.Bardill@severntrent.co.uk



Our team and our partners

Our Partners

We have an exceptional way of working with partner organisations across the region. By utilising our partners skills and expertise, it allows us to work with and support our local farming community to provide access to schemes and programme grants that will ultimately help to protect and improve the quality of the local environment.



The Wye & Usk Foundation



Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Worcestershire



Warwickshire



Nottinghamshire

Derbyshire

Surface water catchments: Upper and Lower Derwent, Ogston

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Margaret Baile

Phone number: 07789 903652

Email: Margaret.Baile@severntrent.co.uk

Leicestershire

Surface water catchments:

Cropston, Staunton Harold

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Louise Richmond

Phone Number: 07713 333192

Email: Louise.Richmond@severntrent.co.uk

Nottinghamshire Boreholes

Surface water catchments: N/A

Groundwater catchments: Boughton, Bestwood, Rufford, Amen Corner, Budby & Budby Forest, Clipstone, Clipstone Forest, Chequer House

Phil Billings

Phone Number: 07784 924584

Email: Phil.Billings@severntrent.co.uk

How the grant scheme works

The scheme offers farmers and land managers, both owners and tenants, financial and technical support, to invest in tailored solutions to help tackle diffuse water pollution and to protect and maintain biodiversity and the natural environment.

This scheme is specifically aimed at protecting water quality, and enhancing the biodiversity on your farm.

We've awarded over 1800 grants to farms across our region, with projects ranging from pesticide washdown areas, to cover crops and biofilters.

We even offer an option for farmers to submit an innovative idea, specially developed for their farm business.

STEPS 2019/20 was the first time we offered options which target biodiversity. It was hugely successful, with farmers creating over 500 ha of new habitat.

In Spring 2020, we launched a special edition of STEPS, specifically to target biodiversity, which was even better - creating over 1700 ha of new habitat!

Following farmers feedback, for STEPS 2020/21, we've decided to split the water quality and biodiversity items out. Going forward, winter STEPS will only offer water quality options, and Spring STEPS will only offer biodiversity options.

How to apply for a grant



1 Is your farm in a priority catchment?

Do you farm, or have land in a priority catchment in the Severn Trent Region? See the map on page 4 of this brochure, or view it online at stwater.co.uk/steps

Each of our surface and groundwater priority catchments are affected by a particular pollutant, for example pesticides, nitrate or bacteria. Options which are particularly useful in addressing the pollutant risks of your catchment are highlighted, and are considered priority items.

How the grant scheme works

Your Agricultural Advisor will notify you of any other priorities in your catchment.

Additionally STEPS grants are available in Severn Trent 'priority Source Protection Zones' (SPZs) located around the selected drinking water boreholes listed below:

Amen Corner	Hatton
Astley	Highgate
Beckbury	Hilton
Bellington	Ketford
Bestwood	Newent
Boughton	Oakeley Farm
Bratch	Poolend
Brockhill	Pulston Bridge
Budby	Rodway
Budby Forest	Rufford
Chequer House	Ruyton
Clipstone/ Clipstone Forest	Stoke on Tern
Copley	Swynnerton
Grindleforge	Tack Lane
Haseley Springs	Wallmyres

2

Choose your options

Find details of the grant options available in the accompanying booklet or go online at stwater.co.uk/steps

Our Agricultural Advisors are available to help and assist you in the process. You can call them to arrange an appointment to suit you, or chat to them on the phone.

3

Make your application

Apply online between 1st November 2020 and 31st January 2021. Simply go online and fill in the easy application form at stwater.co.uk/steps

All applications are assessed the end of February, and we aim to let all applicants know the outcome of their application within 6 weeks.

4

Assessing your application

The grant scheme is a competitive process and all our applications are assessed and reviewed based on the farms individual circumstances and the options you choose to apply for.

5

We'll be in touch

Once you submit your application, we'll acknowledge receipt. Then once every application has been assessed, we will notify everyone of the outcome of their application via email.

If successful, this email and the attached letter specifies the items and grant amount that has been awarded to you, so it is important to keep it.

You will be able to download and accept your agreement electronically.

If you would prefer to receive your agreement via mail, you will be given the option to do so in the application process. Applicants who select this option will receive two agreements which you will need to sign and send one copy back to us.

6

Complete the work

Once you have returned your signed agreement to us you're free to get on with the work.

After completing your work, let your Agricultural Advisor know, and they will supply you with a claim form. You'll need to submit photographs, receipts or invoices to show that the work was completed.

We'll then reimburse you for the amount agreed in your offer and agreement letter.

Dedicated support and advice

To help you get the best out of what's on offer, our local Agricultural Advisors are available to help you.

STEPS 2020/21

Terms and Conditions

Your personal data and environmental information

1. By participating in the scheme, you agree to provide ST with the necessary personal and farm business data in order to comply with the scheme's requirements, and to meet our audit parameters. Any data used for our own audit purposes is totally anonymous.

For further details, please, read the Privacy Policy on our website: stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/legal/privacy/

2. In the event that we receive a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"), we may be required to disclose information to third parties that you have provided to us, to the extent that it is environmental information as defined under the EIR.

The Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme (STEPS) is part of Severn Trent's Farming 4 Water catchment management programme.

The scheme is a grant programme solely covered by Severn Trent and provides a wide range of options to farmers for infrastructure investments and land management items.

These Terms and Conditions are here to help applicants understand the requirements and conditions of the grant funding that can be awarded.

All applicants accept that they are familiar with the Terms and Conditions outlined in this document and will comply with them.

If applicants have any queries in relation to their application they should speak to their local Agricultural Advisor (contact details at the front of this handbook), or email; farming4water@severntrent.co.uk before submitting their application.

In the event that there are any changes to these Terms and Conditions, they will be publicised immediately on the Severn Trent Water website and an updated version of the document available for download. You will also receive a soft copy via email where possible.

The following abbreviations will be used throughout the Terms and Conditions:

STEPS 2020/21 Terms and Conditions

'ST' shall mean Severn Trent Water Limited.

'STEPS' shall mean Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme.

'SPZ' shall mean Source Protection Zone.

'Objective' shall mean a specific action required to be completed in association with a particular scheme.

'Farm' or **'Holding'** shall mean all the production units that are under the control of the applicant farmer/land owner.

'Farming Activity' shall mean dairy farming; livestock production; cultivation of fodder and tillage crops, and the growing of horticultural crops.

'Eligibility' shall mean essential criteria which must be fulfilled to allow a STEPS contract to be agreed.

'Application' shall mean an application for a STEPS support scheme prepared and submitted by land owner/manager.

'Watercourse' shall mean all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, cuts, culverts, dykes, sluices, and passages through which water flows, but excluding any pipes owned or used by ST or any other water or sewerage undertaker.

'EA' shall mean Environment Agency.

'Building control regulation' shall mean the most up to date regulations as outlined by your local council or Local Authority.

The STEPS grant scheme Terms and Conditions

1. Criteria for funding

- You must be aged eighteen or over, on the date you submit your application.
- You must be the owner or leaseholder of the farm.
- Applications may be submitted by a 3rd party on behalf of the landowner, however you should declare this on the application, and provide confirmation that the landowner's permission has been obtained.
- Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm, or have land within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment, and/or farm within one of ST's priority SPZs.
- For details on priority catchments, the map is available on page 4 of this brochure.
- Size of farm: arable farms must be a minimum size of 5 hectares; grassland farms must have a minimum size of 3 hectares
- STEPS priority water quality items must be implemented on land which is being farmed.

- Any evidence of 'double funding' will result in the cancellation of your agreement and withdrawal of any potential funds.
- Where funding has already been released, you will be required, and agree, to refund it and we (ST) will take the necessary action to recoup the funds, including any legal costs.
- Any applicant or application found to be fraudulent will be rejected and the applicant disqualified from future ST programmes and schemes.
- ST may reject applications if they are not likely to benefit water quality, biodiversity or the environment.
- The submission of a valid application does not guarantee entry to STEPS.
- Once offered a grant, applicants can't change their capital or works, or amend their agreement unless given permission by ST.
- Contracts are non-transferable except in the case of:
 - Certified serious illness of applicant
 - Death of the applicant
 - Long term professional incapacity of the applicant.
- Each STEPS item specifies particular criteria to be met, in order to be included in an application.
- We cannot fund any item or work which is a regulatory requirement.

2. Supporting evidence for applications

Mandatory supporting evidence is required in order to successfully assess your application, as outlined below:

- Brief description of the farm enterprise
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Forecast timescales for completion of the project
- Photographs of site prior to commencing any work
- Farm maps which display farm boundary and site location of STEPS items chosen
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer - innovation'.

Our Agricultural Advisors will be available to support with the application process free of charge but are not responsible for the submission of your application.

3. How we assess your application

- A scoring system is used to ensure that funding will go to projects that demonstrate a the greatest water quality benefit. We will also take into consideration any prior engagement with a ST Agricultural Advisor, participation in other ST catchment schemes and, particularly in the case of Farmer innovation applications, value for money.
- Application forms are usually submitted through the online portal accessible through the Severn Trent Catchment Team website stwater.co.uk/steps
- Scoring is a competitive process, and not all applicants are guaranteed to receive full funding or any funding at all, even if applicants have been successful in the past.
- All applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome of their application.
- Where possible, as part of our ongoing commitment to our impact on the environment and in a bid to reduce paper waste, agreements may be issued and accepted via email.
- Applicants will be given the option of choosing how they are notified at the outcome of their application at the end of the application process.
- The agreement form must be signed, dated and returned to us, either electronically or by post (if applicable).
- Returning and signing the agreement form acknowledges that you are committed to the work, as per your grant application, and will abide by these Terms and Conditions.

4. Your obligations

- If successful in being awarded STEPS funding, you must return a copy of your signed grant agreement to the catchment team by the date specified on your acceptance letter. Agreements not returned by this date will be voided and the funding reallocated to other STEPS projects.
- You must inform ST of any change to a selected option and a written reason displaying your actions. You will then receive confirmation of approval. If you change the location of the STEPS item and do not inform ST you may not receive the allocated funding.
- All records must be kept for 5 years following entry into the scheme. Records include invoices, receipts, permits, maps, photos and consents.
- Any breach of cross-compliance noted during an on farm inspection may be reported to the EA.

STEPS 2020/21 Terms and Conditions

- All work must comply with relevant environmental legislation, have the appropriate planning permissions, and meet the latest building control regulations and British Standards.
- Specialist On Farm Advice (SOFA) visits are a requirement for some STEPS items. Refusal or cancellation of the visit without rearrangement will result in the STEPS application being terminated or funding withheld.

Planning permission and consents

- Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You may or may not require planning permission from your local authority or relevant body – it is your responsibility to check and to apply if permission is required.
- Planning permission may be required depending on the capital scheme chosen. Consult your local planning authority or National Park authority to seek advice.
- You must enclose a copy of the consent, or the application for consent, with your application if relevant.
- In some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; applicants can discuss this with their Agricultural Adviser. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.
- All works must comply with relevant environmental legislation associated with the scheme.
- Once the scheme is complete it must be kept in agricultural use e.g. not changed to an alternative use such as residential or commercial accommodation, for a minimum of 5 years from the date of your STEPS contract.

Health and safety

- All work must comply with the relevant health and safety legislation. Please visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) for further information. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that any work carried out under a STEPS agreement complies with the relevant health and safety legislation. This includes all subsequent maintenance of items which address water quality or biodiversity. The HSE may need to be notified of some construction work.

- All work must comply with all British Standards and Codes of Good Agricultural Practice.
- Capital items must be installed in accordance with Protecting our Water, Soil and Air: a Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers (CoGap).
- Capital items installed under the scheme must have a minimum design life of 10 years; or have a minimum design life of 20 years if the item has to comply with The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry, and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended 2013) (SSAFO).

Environment Agency, Natural England, other authorities and legislation

- If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from the EA or from the relevant authority;
 - National Park
 - Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Protected Species
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Registered Parkland
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Registered Battlefields
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
 - RAMSAR
 - Biobed/Biofilter construction and spreading of used Biomix to land.
- Before commitment to any work, you may have to seek guidance from the EA e.g. installation of a biobed on your farm holding.
- Any work carried out within 1m of the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the EA. Telephone: **03708 506506** or email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

5. Our (ST) obligations

- Assess applications in an unbiased manner.
- We will provide one-to-one support through our Agricultural Advisors. Where necessary, in order to protect you and our advisors, this support may be conducted via phone, video call, or via email in order to comply with government guidelines in social distancing.
- Respond to queries within 20 working days via our catchment team inbox email – **farming4water@severntrent.co.uk**
- Provide at least 7 days notice of any planned site visit and inspection.
- We may carry out on-the-spot checks at farm level to ensure compliance with the requirements of the scheme.
- We will keep all your personal, farm and financial information confidential. See our privacy statement, at the end of these Terms and Conditions.
- This does not affect our duty to report any breaches in cross compliance to the EA.

6. Processing grant payments

- All applications for support and payment claims will be subjected to our administrative checks, and any other controls deemed necessary, before approvals or payments are made under the scheme.
- Receipts or invoices for materials purchased for the delivery of STEPS options must be retained and must be submitted with your completion and evidence of the work carried out.
- Participants must provide documentary evidence of payment. Receipts must be made out by the vendor to include the name and address of the beneficiary.
- Receipts must be dated and any materials purchased before entry to STEPS will not be accepted.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any requested supporting documentation for the release of payments is submitted. Photographs of site must be taken and retained both before and after completion of work. (Please take both photos from same position where possible).
- The maximum payment to any participant in STEPS shall not exceed £5,000 per year. This includes the option for constructing complete pesticide handling facilities.

STEPS 2020/21 Terms and Conditions

7. Additional funding opportunities

- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand that if they decide to apply for funding from other EU funded or National Schemes, addressing similar objectives to the STEPS scheme, that they will be at risk of losing any grant awarded from ST, and also the other organisation to which an application has been made for funds. This is known as double funding.
- Double funding is defined as grant money used, from different sources to fund the same capital works at the same location. As a guide, the following schemes should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Countryside Stewardship
 - Paths4Communities
 - Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
 - LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
 - Woodland Grant schemes
 - Energy crops.
- In relation to your claim, all paperwork must be kept for 5 years after the start of your agreement.
- VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered.
- If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included in the total costs provided it does not exceed the £5000 limit.

8. Breaching your agreement and participation in STEPS

Force Majeure - where an applicant is unable to continue within STEPS commitment(s) due to reasons beyond their control. The following categories of Force Majeure will be recognised (not an exhaustive list):

- Death of the participant
- Long term professional incapacity of the participant
- Expropriation of a large part of the holding if such expropriation could not have been anticipated before joining STEPS
- A natural disaster affecting the holding's agricultural land
- The accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the farm e.g. destruction of property via a fire

- An outbreak of disease affecting all or part of the livestock on the farm
- The disposal or vacation of land to satisfy a court order or legal settlement in cases of marital breakdown
- A profound change of business circumstances that makes participation financially unviable.

9. Breaching the agreement

This could result in the non-payment or recovery of the grant payable or already paid. Note that applicants are responsible for the work carried out (even if work was contracted to an external contractor). The following are classed as breaches of agreement (not an exhaustive list):

- Refusal to allow ST Agricultural Advisor access to the land for inspection on reasonable notice (7 days)
- Providing false or misleading information in relation to the grant and evidence
- Submission of a claim for capital works that are not completed or where funds have been used for an alternative purpose
- Lack of evidence of how the funds were spent or of the finished work e.g. photos
- Removal of any capital works without written consent from ST
- Change of use of a capital item, e.g. roofing over a manure storage to turn it into a grain or machinery storage (even when at the applicant's own expense)
- You are found to not meet the criteria for funding
- Not following the relevant deadlines for responding and submitting your agreement form
- Failure to comply with the appropriate standards, planning rules and agricultural codes of practice
- Subsequent refusal of a Specialist On Farm Advisory visit (should one be required in order to be eligible for a STEPS item) after returning your signed agreement
- Failure to adhere to STEPS item requirements as specified in the STEPS brochure.'



Will I be guaranteed entry to the STEPS following my application?



Q What is a priority catchment?

A These are specific areas across the region where we abstract water to treat and use for drinking water. We abstract water from surface rivers, reservoirs and groundwater drinking water catchments and boreholes. These are often at risk due to specific forms of diffuse pollution from farms. In particular groundwater sources are most vulnerable to nitrate pollution while surface waters are at most risk from pesticide pollution.

Q What is the availability of a grant?

- A ST will pay the fixed costs offered in the handbook for each of the items.
- The maximum payment per application, per year, per catchment is £5000, including applications for funding of pesticide handling items over 2 years (up to £10,000).
 - Pesticide washdown project grants up to £10K are paid in two instalments across two financial years. Successful applicants for these projects must claim the first instalment before 1st March 2022 and the second between 1st April 2022-1st March 2023.
 - You may apply for several items but they must all be submitted under one application.
 - Extensions to pesticide washdown areas/roofing/ rainwater harvesting granted in previous STEPS rounds will not be accepted.
 - ST cannot make additional funds available should the match funded portion of the grant be greater than anticipated. This includes where the total (water quality priority items) grant in the agreement is less than the £5000 limit.
 - There is no lower limit on the size of the grant.
 - Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or farm within one of the ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs). Please contact your ST Agricultural Advisor (contact info at start of handbook) or you can email the Severn Trent Catchment Team at farming4water@severntrent.co.uk
 - The location of the priority water quality STEPS items must be within the Severn Trent priority catchment. Items located outside these catchments cannot be funded.
 - We will not fund any item directly linked to a regulatory requirement.
 - We will not fund any infrastructure or project which is also receiving money from another grant scheme. An applicant can only apply for a ST grant in addition to another grant where they fund different items
 - We will not fund the costs of any maintenance, normal wear and tear, or direct replacements of capital items.

FAQs Frequently Asked Questions

Q Are there any other factors that are taken into account when applications are being assessed?

- A** Yes - applications will be prioritised according to the following:
- The reduction in water pollution for the water quality priority items in the application will deliver i.e. the water quality benefit. This will vary between items, and between catchments, so consult your ST Agricultural Advisor for more information
 - Location of the farm within our catchments
 - Size of farm (arable farms must be a minimum size of 5 hectares. Grassland farms must have a minimum size of 3 hectares)
 - Perceived water quality benefit - Each catchment contains priority STEPS items. Your application will be prioritised if one of these are chosen. Contact your ST Agricultural Advisor for more details
 - The award of STEPS grants are not influenced by any other interaction between a farm business and ST, for example where construction may have taken place on agricultural land. STEPS grants shall not function as a means of compensation or payment for these activities
 - Past engagement with ST Agricultural Advisors
 - Attendance at ST workshops over previous years.

Q When will I get paid?

- A** Upon completion of the works, obtain a claim form from your ST Agricultural Advisor. Claim forms should be submitted to ST, accompanied by photographic evidence and valid receipts.
- All grant funding is awarded as a single payment when all works are completed
 - ST is unable to make part payments
 - Should an applicant be unable to install certain items in their agreement, grant funding may only be claimed for the work which has been completed
 - Unclaimed funding either for uncompleted works or those which have not been started, cannot be held and rolled over to subsequent STEPS rounds.

The deadline for submission of evidence is March 1st.

Q What do I need to supply with my application form?

- A** You need to supply the following with your application form:

- A brief description of the farm enterprise
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Timescales for completion of the project
- Photographs of site prior to commencing work
- Farm maps which display the farm boundary, and the site location for works being undertaken
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer innovation'
- Copies of your farm map(s) that display:
 - The boundary of your holding;
 - The location of the proposed scheme on your farm map, mark an 'X' on the map along with STEPS item code;
 - A national OS grid reference, or valid postcode, marked for the scheme location.

Note: If applying for a fence/track, draw the proposed line on the map. For an example map, please ask your Agricultural Advisor.

Q Will my farm be subject to STEPS inspections?

- A** Yes - inspections and checks will be carried out at a farm level by ST to ensure that all funded items have been completed as per your application. All applicants can expect a farm inspection within a 5 year period from joining the STEPS scheme.

Q Will I be guaranteed entry to the STEPS following my application?

- A** No - submission of an application does not guarantee approval. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to water quality, together with other factors such as location, value for money and previous engagement with the catchment team.

Q Can I apply if only part of my farm holding falls within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or within one of ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs)?

- A** Yes. However, any STEPS water quality items must be located within the catchment boundary. This is a competitive process and your application may not score as highly as those schemes fully in a catchment where the benefits may be greater.

Q When is the opening/closing date for the application period?

- A** The application period is open until June 31st January 2021.



How much can I claim?



Q Where can I get a claim form?

A By contacting your ST Agricultural Advisor.

Q When will I be informed if my application is successful?

A Applicants will be informed within 6 weeks of the application closing date. Once written confirmation has been received, applicants may commence work on their STEPS item(s).

Q What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

A You will receive a formal letter outlining the reasons for your declined application. Depending on your application you may be encouraged to apply next year.

Q When does the work have to be completed by?

A All STEPS project work must be completed and claim forms/evidence received by ST by March 1st 2022.

Should you be unable to complete or start the works, your application will not automatically be accepted for the following STEPS round, although you will be encouraged to reapply.

In exceptional circumstances applications may be granted a short extension however this cannot be guaranteed.

Farm management items must be completed in accordance with that specified in the handbook.

Q When will I receive funding?

A Successful applicants are entitled to claim their funds once work is completed.

Applicants are required to provide evidence of completed work by March 1st. All successful applicants will receive their funding by March 31st.

Q What happens if the work is not completed on time or the standard of work does not meet the required specifications?

A Depending on the circumstances you may not receive the funded grant money. It will affect your application for grants in subsequent years.

FAQs Frequently Asked Questions

Q How much can I claim?

A Fixed cost pesticide handling and washdown items (specified in the brochure), may be selected up to a combined value of £10,000 in a single application. The grant will be paid to a successful applicant over two financial years.

Please note that second hand material including refurbished items should not be purchased under STEPS.

VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered. If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included in the total costs, provided it does not exceed the £5000 threshold (Total Cost).

Q The handbook says that a STEPS item needs a specialist advisory visit. What is this and do I need one?

A Yes-some items require a bit more planning and or management in order to provide the greatest benefit to your business and the environment. Specialist advisory visits by industry experts help to provide this information and can be arranged for free by your Agricultural Advisor. If you have already had a visit from an expert e.g. through Catchment Sensitive Farming and can show that your plans are sufficient, additional visits may not be required.

Q Am I entitled to apply for grants from other organisations?

A Yes. However, grants can't be combined with other funding sources for the same work in the same location. This is known as 'double funding'. Failure to acknowledge this may result in both grants being reclaimed. Examples of such funding schemes include:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Countryside Stewardship
- Paths4Communities
- Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
- LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
- Woodland Grant schemes
- Energy crops.

Q Do consents and permissions need to be given and investigated before submitting the STEPS application?

A Yes, see your STEPS handbook for reference. Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You must enclose a copy of it with your application or in some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; applicants can discuss this with their Agricultural Adviser. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.

Q Can I withdraw my application after I have been successful?

A Yes - Please contact your Agricultural Advisor for advice. Written or electronic confirmation that you wish to withdraw will be required.

Q If my STEPS application is successful, will this affect further applications to the grant scheme in subsequent years?

A No. STEPS operates on an annual basis. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to water quality, biodiversity and previous engagement with ST.

Q Will I receive a notification that my application has been received?

A Yes. All applicants will receive a notification that their application has been received within 2 weeks.

Q What are the water quality priority items for my catchment?

A Priority items may differ across each of the priority catchments - contact your Agricultural Advisor for details of the priority items in your area.

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