



The Scottish Government

Rural Development Contracts - Rural Priorities



Scotland Rural Development Programme

Guidance for Rural Development Contract – Rural Priorities’ Application and Claim Files

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Guidance for Rural Development Contract – Rural Priorities’ Application and Claim Files

Purpose

This guidance note is designed to assist Case Officers in the application of a consistent record management approach for RDC – RP Casework across RPID, FCS, and SNH. This guidance will be revised when we roll out a cross-organisation solution for electronic records management for RDC-RP Casework.

Introduction

The application process for Rural Development Contracts – Rural Priorities (RDC-RP) is predominantly electronic, with the initial Statement of Intent (Sol) and part of the Proposal able to be submitted via on-line application only. The other part of the Proposal, the outcome plan, although not on-line may also be submitted electronically. Correspondence between the Case Officer and the applicant/their agent is often through the online system, or by email or by letter/phone. Internal correspondence about cases may also be electronic, paper or by phone.

In the future records management for RDCs-RP case work will be electronic. However, at present, integrated electronic records management it is not possible across RPID, FCS and SNH. This means that, in the interim, records management will be physical, rather than electronic, with the creation of a paper master file.

The master file

The master file must provide the audit trail. This means that the file must contain a record of any documents that were part of the decision making process leading to either the funding approval, withdrawal, or rejection, of a RDC-RP Case.

A new master file is required for every Statement of Intent.

Sharing supporting documents

The processing of casework must minimise the potential for time delays caused by seeking input from colleagues who have essential specialist experience or knowledge to contribute. For this reason the sharing of electronic copies of key supporting documents will be normal practice especially when staff work from

different locations. When a paper document needs to be shared the most efficient way of doing so will be by scanning and emailing the document.

Case Officers may wish to store electronically, for their own convenience, documentation relating to a Case. The internal guidance for doing this will vary between RPID, FCS and SNH since alignment with existing corporate electronic records management systems is important. Please refer to the internal guidance written by RPID, FCS and SNH as to how to store electronic records in the interim (appendices 2, 3 and 4).

Remember that, for audit purposes, the definitive version of a document must be held in the master file.

Creating and maintaining a master file

1. On receiving the flysheet and Sol details from the Pre-Approval Co-ordinator the Case Officer will arrange for a master (paper) file to be created using the blue pre-printed file covers with “Rural Development Contract – Rural Priorities” on the front. All documents/correspondence should be filed on the master file.
2. The Case Officer is responsible for the upkeep and storage of the paper file. The applicant should direct all correspondence to the nominated Case Officer.
3. Files must be clearly marked, in the appropriate sections with the RPAC code, Business Reference Number (BRN) and Case reference number (appendix 1).
4. The Business name and the case title must be clearly written in the appropriate section using BLOCK CAPITALS.
5. The Date of Opening section should be completed.
6. All papers should be filed in chronological order using a standard A4 punch and secured with the blue plastic tags,
7. There will be four standard sections in each file:
 - Section 1 = Sol
 - Section 2 = Proposal and associated inspection
 - Section 3 = Contract
 - Section 4 = Claim and associated inspection

Each section must be clearly separated using dividers with section 1 at the back of the file cover and all papers within each section to be sequentially numbered in the top right hand corner e.g. ./1, ./2, ./3 etc

Any maps must be placed in the file pouch which is an integral part of the back cover of the file.

8. To facilitate shredding in years to come plastic pockets should NOT be used.
9. If one cover is impractical due to the volume of paperwork then the paperwork should be placed in a separate file cover attached to the 'main' file cover. This may be more relevant for Sol's covering multiple items. In the section on the file cover for "Volume" files should be marked 1 of 1, 1 of 2 etc
10. Once the contract has been signed by the applicant the master file should be passed to the relevant RPID staff who are undertaking post approval case work co-ordination.

File retention period

Files will be retained for seven years from the end of the financial year during which the last payment associated with the contract has been made. Please note that each business will have one contract that will be amended accordingly as each case is approved.

Appendix 1 physical file cover

RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRACT - RURAL PRIORITIES					
RPAC:	BRN:	CASE REF:	BUSINESS NAME <i>and</i> CASE TITLE	RPAC:	
				BRN:	
				CASE REF:	

FILE REVIEW SECTION			VOLUME <i>(1 per case)</i>	
OPENING DATE				
CLOSING DATE				
REVIEW DATES				
DESTROY DATE				

REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE

Appendix 2: Rural Development Contracts – Records Management –Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate Internal Records Management Guidance for Casework Files

This guidance note is designed to assist RPID Case Officers in the application of a consistent record management approach for RDC – RP Casework across RPID, FCS, and SNH. In the future records management for RDCs-RP case work will be electronic. However, at present, integrated electronic records management is not possible across RPID, FCS and SNH. This means that, in the interim, records management will be physical, rather than electronic, with the creation of a paper master file.

This guidance will be revised when we roll out a cross-organisation solution for electronic records management for RDC-RP Casework

There are three processes where RPID must keep records on Rural Development Contracts. These are;

1. Where the Case Officer is an RPID staff member, a case file is required.
2. RPAC (Regional Proposal Assessment Committee) Administration and Local Meetings plus Formal Meetings & Application Assessments.
3. Where RPID is advising on a case, but is not the lead case organisation or officer.

1. Case File Creation

1.1 Case Officer

Each Rural Development Contract case will require a file. The RDC Case Officer should request a physical case file, via their local Information Management Support Officer (IMSO), as soon as he/she receives a Statement of Intent. New files should be requested using the standard file request form (or for a large number of file requests (10 or more) use the file upload spreadsheet tool). The file naming convention **must** be in the following format:

Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP): Rural Development Contract (RDC): Rural Priorities (RP): BRN 123456: 2008-

There will be a level 4 folder (all level 4 folders are yellow) set up in eRDM for Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) Rural Development Contract

Rural Priorities casework and all physical case files must be recorded in this area.

The RPID Area Offices will have access to the individual office's SRDP Working Papers files (these already exist for SAF and other RPID Schemes) and any electronic copies of case documents can be stored to this, as well as printed and filed into the physical 'master' file. Files will be created by BRN, not individual case and **not** Farm Code.

1.2 Information Management Support Officer (IMSO)

IMSOs must carry out the standard checks before approving the request for the casework file in eRDM. In particular, you should confirm that a file for the BRN does not already exist, that it is created in the Casework: Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) Rural Development Contracts (RDC) Rural Priorities (RP) level 4 folder and that the file naming convention is correct, as described above. The file upload spreadsheet (Object ID: A232720) can be used for bulk file requests, guidance on how to complete the spreadsheet can be found in eRDM object ID: A789452.

In the interim until an e-solution is found all SRDP RDC RP casework files will be physical, although Case Officer can use the SRDP Working Papers electronic file to save information and/or draft records as is the case for other RPID Schemes. For the physical file to be created, eRDM Records Management Team (RMT) will create the file, print an RDC file label and send this to the relevant RPID Area Office where the local IMSO can attach the label to the file. Additional guidance on the structure of a physical case file is provided in the Guidance for Rural Development Contract – Rural Priorities' Application and Claim Files.

1.3 Case File Maintenance

The Case Officer is responsible for the upkeep and storage of the paper file. In the interim period the physical file is the master file and must contain all records required for audit purposes and to support the decision making trail. In addition, electronic copies of documents may be held for convenience or collaborative purposes. However, where these then form part of the audit trail, as noted above, you must print them out and place them on the physical file.

1.4 Document Naming Conventions

Where copies of Rural Development Contract documents are stored electronically for convenience, these must be named in accordance with the naming conventions and format agreed by the three organisations:

Case 123456 - RDC document type - document description (free text)

- RPAC region - BRN 123456

The **RDC document type** would be selected from the following choices:

- map
- correspondence
- plans
- consent
- contract
- claim
- inspection
- breaches
- other

so,

Case 3644251 - Statement of Intent – Map - Farm Code 817/0011 Received from Mr D Farmer on 26 June 2008 - Forth RPAC - BRN 123456

If a document or map is amended and resubmitted then the name of the previous document should be changed so that it contains the word “superseded” or “obsolete”

Case 3644251 - Statement of Intent – Map - Farm Code 817-0011 Received from Mr D Farmer on 26 June 2008 - Forth RPAC - BRN 123456 - Superseded

The new document or map should be saved with the same name, but with Current at the end.

Case 3644251 - Statement of Intent – Map - Farm Code 817-0011 Received from Mr D Farmer on 26 June 2008 - Forth RPAC - BRN 123456 – Current

Please note that these are convenience copies and if it forms part of the record it should be printed and filed into the physical file, until the e-solution is found.

1.5 Case File Retention

Rural Development Contract case files will be retained for seven years from the financial year in which the final payment is made. As RPID are the paying agency SNH and FCS will transfer the case files to RPID while the cases are still live. File retention will be the responsibility of the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (RPID).

2. RPAC Administration Files

In addition to the RDC case files, 2 further files will be set up for each RPAC; one for RPAC Administration and Local Meetings and one for RPAC Formal Meetings and Application Assessment.

3. RDC Case Advice

When an SNH or FCS case officer contacts RPID for advice on a case, we need to keep a record of our response.

One file for each RPAC will be set up to store documents and records of RPID advice on RDC cases where RPID is not the lead organisation or officer and we do not have a case file. All such advice should be stored to this file. Where a particular case generates a significant volume of correspondence then we will determine whether it is appropriate to set up an individual file for this.

The naming convention for such records should be as at 1.4:-

**Case 123456 - RDC document type - document description (free text)
- RPAC region - BRN 123456**

The free text document description could for example be: - referred by SNH case officer for advice

4. Further Information

If you have any queries on Rural Development Contract records management please your local IMSO who can then escalate the query to the [RPID CSD Helpdesk](#).

Appendix 1

List of RPACs for use in document names

- Northern Isles
- Outer Hebrides
- Grampian
- Tayside
- Argyll
- Forth
- Borders
- Clyde Valley
- Ayrshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Highland

Appendix 3: Rural Development Contracts – Records Management – Forestry Commission Scotland Internal Guidance

Shared Electronic File for RDC-RP Case Documents

An electronic file is to be set up by the Case Officer for all RDC-RP cases allocated to the Case Officer. Work is to be carried out by RPID to provide a shared area which all 3 organisations can access. In the meantime, each Organisation must set up their own shared area. A new Shared area has been set up for FCS which uses the Scottish Government Server.

Shared Area Details

A new shared area called "Maps on SRDP File Store" has been set up.

All FCS users who have a Username and password for SRDP have been given access permission to the shared area.

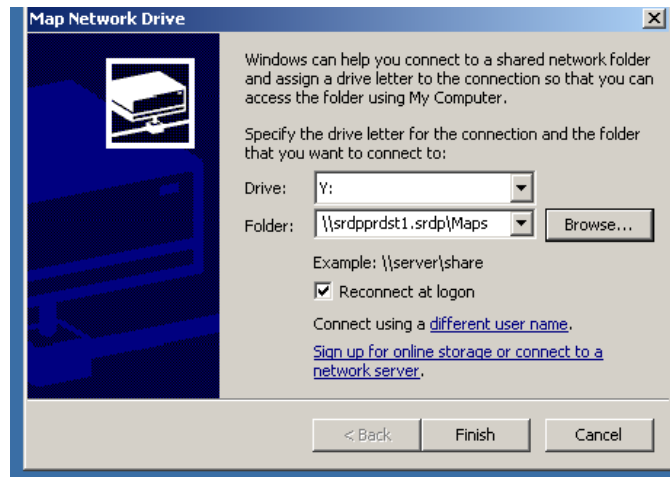
A folder has been set up within the main folder (RDC-RP) for each RPAC Area within the shared area

Every time a new electronic file is to be set up for a business a sub folder with the applicant's BRN should be set up within the RPAC area folder. There should only be 1 sub folder per BRN within the RPAC Area folder.

How to Connect to the New Shared Drive

1. Go to the "My Computer" icon on your desktop, or via "Windows Explorer".
2. Select the drop-down "Tools" menu, and then select "Map Network Drive".
3. Enter an unused drive letter, e.g. **Y** as the Drive Letter (if you already access a shared drive under **Y** then please select another available drive letter) and type the path (as shown below) in the Folder field.
4. Folder details (screen shot below) will be <\\srdpprdst1.srdp\Maps> Ensure you check the "reconnect at Logon box.
5. Click Finish and when prompted enter your username in the format firstname.lastname then enter the password (Please contact Marie Lowrie or Mary Leitch for your password), your new network share/drive will be connected.

- This drive (share) will re-connect each time you logon, but for some users it will prompt for the password to be entered the first time it is used after any new reboots/logons. Note, not all users are asked for a password



Filename Details

Within each BRN sub folder any case documents should be filed. Each document must follow set naming conventions which are:-
Case 123456 - document type - document description (up to 100 characters free text). (Please note that other organisations need to enter the RPAC Region and BRN at the end of the filename, but FCS are not required to do so as these are contained within the folder names).

The RDC document type should be: map, correspondence, plans, consent, contract, claim, inspection, breaches, other -
e.g. Case 123456 - Plan - 1st draft of Outcome Plan

Please note that there is a space between each hyphen

Appendix 4: Rural Development Contracts – Records Management – Scottish Natural Heritage Internal Guidance

There are three processes where SNH must keep records on Rural Development Contracts. These are;

1. Where the Case Officer is an SNH staff member, a case file is required.
2. RPAC (Regional Proposal Assessment Committee) administration and meetings.
3. Where SNH is advising on a case, but is not the lead case organisation or officer.

1. Case File Creation

1.1 Case Officer

Each Rural Development Contract case will require a file. The RDC Case Officer should request a physical case file as soon as he/she receives a Statement of Intent. New files should be requested using the standard new file request object/process, and the file naming convention **must** be in the format;

Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP): Rural Development Contract (RDC): Rural Priorities (RP): BRN 123456: 2008-

so,

Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP): Rural Development Contract (RDC): Rural Priorities (RP): BRN 114762: 2008-

There will be one eRDMS fileplan folder set up for Rural Development Contract casework and all physical case files must be created in this, and any electronic copies of case documents must be stored to this. Files will be created by BRN, not individual case. This is in keeping with the Scottish Government approach whereby the BRN is the prime factor; one BRN may have several cases and these cases may spread across several RPACs.

1.2 Records Liaison Officer

RLOs must carry out the standard checks before creating the casework file in eRDMS. In particular you should confirm that a file for the BRN does not already

exist, that it is created in the Casework folder and that the file naming convention is correct.

All files will be mixed i.e. there will be a physical and electronic file. For the physical file to be created, you should enter the required metadata to create and then print a RDC file cover sheet and attach this to the front of the file cover or complete the file cover manually. You should also insert the Objective reference for the BRN file in the line above "volume". In order not to get confused with SG Objective references you will need to add the prefix SNH e.g. SNH A166742.

1.3 Case File Maintenance

The Case Officer is responsible for the upkeep and storage of the paper file. In the interim period the physical file is the master file and must contain all records required for audit purposes and to support the decision making trail. In addition, electronic copies of documents may be held for convenience or collaborative purposes. However, where these then form part of the audit trail, as noted above, you must print them out and place them on the physical file.

1.4 Document Naming Conventions

Where copies of rural development contract documents are stored electronically for convenience, these must be named in accordance with the naming conventions agreed by the three organisations and in the format;

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1.5 Case File Retention

Rural Development Contract case files will be retained for seven years from the financial year in which the final payment is made. SNH will however transfer the case files to the Scottish Government while the cases are still live. File retention will be the responsibility of the Scottish Government.

5. RPAC Administration Files

In addition to the RDC case files, 2 further files will be set up for each RPAC; one for RPAC Administration and Local Meetings and one for RPAC Formal Meetings and Application Assessment.

6. RDC Case Advice

When an RPID or FCS Case Officer contacts SNH for advice on a case, we need to keep a record of our response.

One file for each RPAC will be set up to store documents and records of SNH advice on RDC cases where SNH is not the lead organisation or officer and we do not have a case file. All such advice should be stored to this file. Where a particular case generates a significant volume of correspondence then we will determine whether it is appropriate to set up an individual file for this.

7. Further Information

If you have any queries on Rural Development Contract records management please contact Tracey Robinson, Managed Sites Officer (tracey.robinson@snh.gov.uk).

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- Ayrshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Highland