

## **Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authorities' Support Service to Land Managers (2015-2020)**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and Cairngorms National Parks were established in 2001 and 2003 respectively, under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The National Parks are Category V Parks under the International Union for Conservation of Nature classification for Protected Areas. A Category V Protected Area is 'managed mainly for landscape conservation and recreation. It is an area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.'
- 1.2 The statutory aims of Scotland's National Parks are:
- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
  - To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
  - To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
  - To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities

### **2. Aim of Service**

- 2.1 The aim of this proposed service is to enable Cairngorms National Park Authority and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority to provide technical support to land managers (including agricultural producers) in order to facilitate delivery of the above statutory aims (see 1.2).

### **3. Form of Aid**

To facilitate delivery of the above statutory aims (see 1.2), the National Park Authorities propose to provide a technical support service to land managers (including agricultural producers) constituting four measures (see 3.1 below) in accordance with Articles 21, 22, 38 and 39 of European Commission (EC) Regulation 702/2014.

#### **3.1 Description of Measures**

- 3.1.1 Organising education and training events or programmes in accordance with Article 21.3 of EC Regulation 702/2014;
- 3.1.2 Providing consultancy services in accordance with Article 22 of EC Regulation 702/2014;
- 3.1.3 Organising education and training events or programmes in accordance with Article 38 of EC Regulation 702/2014;
- 3.1.4 Providing consultancy services in accordance with Article 39 of EC Regulation 702/2014;

#### **3.2 Beneficiaries**

In accordance with Article 21.7 and Article 38 of EC Regulation 702/2014:

- 3.2.1 Eligible beneficiaries for measure 3.1.1 and 3.1.3 (education and training events or programmes) will be SME land management businesses (including agricultural producers and those engaged in the forestry sector as

appropriate), particularly, but not exclusively, those operating wholly or partly within or adjacent to Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks.

In accordance with Article 22.7 and Article 39 of EC Regulation 702/2014:

- 3.2.2 Eligible beneficiaries for measure 3.1.2 and 3.1.4 (consultancy services) will be SME land management businesses (including agricultural producers and those engaged in the forestry sector as appropriate) operating wholly or partly within or adjacent to Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks, directly targeted by the National Park Authorities, or third parties acting on behalf of the National Park Authorities, on the basis of potential to deliver the above statutory aims (see 1.2), as further defined in the National Park Partnership Plan and supporting documents including the National Parks' Biodiversity Action Plans, Woodland & Forestry Frameworks, Core Path Plans, etc.
- 3.2.3 Where the provision of technical support is undertaken by a producer group or other organisation, membership of such a group or organisation will not be a condition for access to the service, and any contribution of non-members towards the administrative costs of the group or organisation concerned will be limited to the costs of providing the service.

### **3.3 Eligible Costs**

Eligible costs are those of National Park Authority staff or third parties acting on behalf of the National Park Authorities:

- 3.3.1 Organising education and training events or programmes (measure 3.1.1 and 3.1.3), including the costs of salaries, fees, travel, subsistence, equipment, materials, office costs, venue costs, catering, publicity, etc in accordance with Article 21.3(a) and Article 38.3(a) of EC Regulation 702/2014.
- 3.3.2 Providing consultancy services (measure 3.1.2 and 3.1.4) through visits, surveys, reports, funding applications (including SRDP funding), letters, emails, phonecalls, etc, including the costs of salaries, fees, travel, subsistence, equipment, materials, office costs, etc in accordance with Article 22.2 and Article 39.2 of EC Regulation 702/2014 – eligible costs will not include support for consultancy services which constitute a continuous or periodic activity for producers, nor relate to the producers' usual operating expenditure, such as routine tax consultancy, regular legal services, or advertising.
- 3.3.3 For measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.3 (education and training events or programmes) and measures 3.1.2 and 3.1.4 (consultancy services), the service will not be offered in any circumstances that would result in double-funding. The National Park Authorities will ensure close liaison, joint-working and data-sharing with appropriate partner agencies to ensure that double-funding is avoided. Specifically in relation to measure 3.1.2 and 3.1.4 (consultancy services), beneficiaries who have received support from the National Park Authorities through this service to prepare an Outcome Plan as part of a Rural Priorities scheme Proposal will not claim from the Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspections Directorate the funding normally available towards the cost of preparing the Outcome Plan.

### **3.4 Maximum Aid Intensity**

For measures 3.1.1 and 3.1.3 (education and training events or programmes):

3.4.1 In accordance with Article 21.8 and Article 38.6 of EC Regulation 702/2014, the rate of aid will be up to 100% of the actual costs, granted in-kind by means of subsidised services (either of National Park Authority staff or of third parties acting on behalf of the National Park Authorities) and specifically not involving direct payments of money to beneficiaries.

For measures 3.1.2 and 3.1.4 (consultancy services):

3.4.2 In accordance with Article 22.8 and Article 38.6 of EC Regulation 702/2014, the rate of aid shall be limited to EUR 1,500 per advice, granted in-kind by means of subsidised services (either of National Park Authority staff or of third parties acting on behalf of the National Park Authorities) and specifically not involving direct payments of money to beneficiaries.

3.4.2 Where technical support for all measures is not provided by National Park Authority staff but by third parties acting on behalf of the National Park Authorities, the National Park Authorities will ensure that the service provider will be selected and remunerated according to market principles, in a non-discriminatory way, using tendering procedures where necessary which are in accordance with public procurement law, and in any event, using a degree of advertising sufficient to enable the services market to be opened up to competition and the impartiality of procurement rules to be reviewed.

### **3.5 Duration**

Providing that the EC accept that the proposed service complies with Articles 21, 22, 38 and 39 of EC Regulation 702/2014, the service will commence on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and will cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### **3.6 Expenditure**

Expenditure is expected to be as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> March 2015 to 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2016:	£290,000.00
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2016 to 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2017:	£290,000.00
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 to 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2018:	£290,000.00
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2018 to 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	£290,000.00
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	£290,000.00
Total:	£1,450,000.00