

National Test Programme

Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

October 2022

Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

Title of Proposal

National Test Programme

Purpose and intended effect

Background

Since the UK left the EU, the majority of agricultural support for farmers, crofters and land managers in Scotland has been delivered through the domestic continuation of schemes previously run under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014-2020 programme. This is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to maintain a period of stability for farmers, crofters and land managers in the immediate aftermath of the UK exit from the EU, in order to give them as much certainty as possible in terms of their operating environment.

This situation cannot continue indefinitely, however, and so the Scottish Government is developing a robust and coherent long term support framework that will deliver high quality food production, climate mitigation and adaptation, and nature restoration.

As part of this development, a series of industry-led groups were established in 2020 to provide business knowledge, expertise and perspective through a series of reports and recommendations. These 'Farmer Led Groups' covered suckler beef, arable, dairy and pigs as well as the hill, upland farming and crofting sectors. In response to the reports and recommendations of these groups, in 2021 the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on the first steps in the transition to a new long term rural support framework, and also established the Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB) (which is also supported by the Scottish Government's Academic Advisory Panel) and the Agriculture Policy Development Group (APDG) to support the implementation of policy reform.

All of this fed into the creation of the Scottish Government's 'Vision for Agriculture', which was published on 2 March 2022. This sets out the aim to transform how farming and food production is supported in Scotland so that it becomes a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The vision is underpinned by the understanding that high quality, nutritious food locally and sustainably produced is key to our wellbeing, that farming, crofting and land management will continue to play an important role in maintaining thriving rural and island communities, and the acknowledgement that farmers, crofters and local communities will need to be supported to ensure they can capitalise on the benefits as we deliver our climate change targets and net zero ambitions, ensuring there is a Just Transition. A new Scottish Agriculture Bill is intended to be brought forward in 2023 in order to deliver on this vision.

Objective

The National Test Programme sits within the wider Scottish and UK context of transitioning support from the previous EU CAP regime to a domestic future rural support framework. The Programme recognises the need for urgency in addressing the climate change and biodiversity crises, as well as providing learning which will inform the further development of the future support framework and the new Scottish Agriculture Bill.

The short-term focus and priority is on those sectors that produce the highest emissions, including livestock production, and so the Programme prioritises them to begin the transformation journey, however the Programme also acknowledges the need for all farming activity to change in the longer term to become low carbon, sustainable and regenerative.

There will be a phased approach to the rollout of the Programme in 2022, making measures available to the current recipients of farm support payments on a voluntary basis. This will support farmers and crofters to better understand the sustainability of their business and policy development will include consideration of the measures that will become a mandatory requirement for accessing support under the long term future framework.

This type of conditionality is expected to apply to various core themes in the future, including:

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Biodiversity audits
- Soil testing
- Nutrient and forage plans, and
- Animal health and welfare plans

The Programme will be used to explore how best to apply some of these, along with actions ensuring that they deliver towards environmental outcomes and continue to support food production. This will allow for a co-design approach, support a Just Transition, and inform the development of the future support framework.

The Programme will be split into two tracks.

Track One, called 'Preparing for Sustainable Farming', will offer every farmer, crofter and land manager in Scotland support for a Carbon Audit. Once they have completed a Carbon Audit, or if they have already completed one, they can receive support for soil analysis. In addition, as part of a livestock digital data project farmers and crofters with cattle will be provided with access to performance data relating to their herd.

The purpose of this track is to encourage farms to improve their knowledge of their own current environmental performance and efficiency. Support for carrying out these audits and analysis will incentivise businesses to create a baseline of information and understanding in sustainable agriculture. This is a voluntary opportunity open to all farmers, crofters and land managers, to enable their businesses to gain an understanding of their own baseline at an individual farm level.

Track Two, called 'Testing Actions for Sustainable Farming', will include detailed testing of how new conditions or activities could be applied to future support, and to ensure delivery of environmental outcomes in a way that supports sustainable businesses. Once tested as part of the Programme, these can then inform future rural support schemes which will be rolled out nationwide. As part of the livestock digital data project under this track, SAOS (3rd party) will work with a small number of beef farmers, in different geographic areas, to demonstrate the impact of agri-tech and specialist advice and this will help inform future decisions on how advisory services and capital funding can be used to support Scottish beef farming businesses to improve productivity.

The purpose of this track is to develop and test actions that are being considered as conditional elements of future direct support and to determine the data and metrics required to demonstrate they deliver against outcomes. The intention is that this will create a robust understanding of how new conditions or activities could be applied to future support, and ensure delivery of environmental outcomes in a way that supports sustainable businesses.

Rationale for Government intervention

Although the domestic continuation of support schemes from the previous EU CAP has provided farmers, crofters and land managers with some certainty and stability in the post-Brexit environment, it was only ever intended to be in place for a set transition period while a longer term future rural policy framework was developed. This transition period has allowed the Scottish Government to progress the discussions around what this framework for future support should look like. As part of these discussions, it was identified that baselining would be a key element of driving emissions reduction and environmental, technical and economic progress on Scottish farms and crofts. The twin tracks of the National Test Programme have been developed to help deliver this, by encouraging farmers and crofters to begin establishing their own baseline in advance of the increasing conditionality requirements that will form part of the longer term support framework. This will in turn inform the development of the requirements and actions that the Scottish Government will set regarding this conditionality.

The Programme is therefore aimed at the following outcomes of Scotland's National Performance Framework, as it supports the ongoing shift in rural policy towards being more environmentally sustainable and accountable and actively driving towards a greener economy:

- That people have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- That people value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment.

A key justification for government intervention is in its ability to guide markets towards achieving more socially optimal outcomes, in the presence of externalities (side effects). In the case of agriculture, one such externality would be its impact on the environment. The environment can be thought of as a public good, one which benefits all of society and would otherwise be underprovided for by the market alone.

This is due to the tendency for individuals (e.g. farmers, consumers, etc.) to place a higher weight on their own 'private' costs and benefits than they do on the wider (social) costs and benefits of their actions.

The policy specific rationale underpinning this Programme is therefore that it will:

- Combat the negative externalities associated with current farming practices, such as environmental degradation and air pollution.
- Support the farming sector to transition to a system where positive environmental actions are rewarded, by creating the right incentive mechanisms as current systems have distorted incentives.
- Support the farming sector to undertake actions which will deliver greater positive externalities for the population of Scotland (such as healthier animals, improved biodiversity, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, etc.).
- Be used as a tool to address information failure in the industry, by supporting farmers, crofters and land managers with trustworthy information and tools to help them succeed.

Consultation

Within Government

- Agriculture Policy Division
- Rural Payments and Inspections Division
- Information Systems Division
- Animal Health and Welfare Division
- Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services
- Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA)
- Natural Resources Divisions
- NatureScot
- Defra

Consultation and discussion between and within all of the above government departments helped to shape the policy proposals and development of the National Test Programme from an early stage.

Public Consultation

Following the publication of the Farmer Led Groups' reports between October 2020 and July 2021, the Scottish Government committed to consult on a potential sustainable Suckler Beef Climate Scheme as part of a wider suite of proposals on the future of agriculture support. In response to the reports, however, a number of stakeholders, including the National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFUS), called for a more pan-sectoral approach. It was therefore agreed that the consultation would be expanded to encompass all sectors of Scottish agriculture, consulting on key questions on the recommendations of all the Farmer Led Groups. Consequently the Scottish Government launched the ['Agricultural transition – first steps towards our national policy' public consultation](#), which ran from 25 August 2021 to 17 November 2021, and received over 300 responses.

The consultation focused broadly on the recommendations of the Farmer Led Groups, which aimed to provide practical recommended actions to lower Scottish agriculture's carbon footprint, enhance the environment and boost business. The recommendations were broken down into nine core themes, and key questions were asked on each:

- Baselineing
- Capital Funding
- Biodiversity
- Just Transition
- Sequestration
- Productivity
- Research & Development
- Knowledge & Skills, and
- Supply Chains.

The [analysis of the responses to this consultation](#) was published on 26 August 2022, and will be used by Government including through discussion with the Agriculture Reform and Oversight Board (ARIOB) and other stakeholders on the future support framework. These discussions and the responses to the baselining questions in particular have been used to inform the development of the twin tracks of the National Test Programme.

Both the responses to the consultation, and the learning gained from the National Test Programme, will be used to inform the consideration and development of the new Scottish Agricultural Bill.

The National Test Programme has been developed in consultation with the ARIOB and the Policy Development Group (PDG) that was established to support the ARIOB. The PDG has considered the proposals in detail which have then been reported to the ARIOB who have had the opportunity to offer a view.

The ARIOB represents a wide range of interests across agriculture and beyond to ensure a good representation. The PDG is a small group, however the members have been selected as they have an overview of the sector and land management, to then represent a range of interests, rather than sectoral.

Research is also being undertaken as part of the design and delivery of the digital services. This includes research with end users to identify their needs and problems accessing and using the services that will deliver the National Test Programme.

Business

The consultation on, and development of, the initial steps towards a transition to a future support framework, including the National Test Programme, has been taken forward with co-design and participative consultation at the forefront.

The Farmer Led Groups brought together a mix of individual farmers and crofters, business owners, and industry organisation representatives with direct knowledge and expertise to propose practical workable solutions at a sub sector level, resulting in a series of reports and recommendations which provided the basis for the

development of the Programme. The detail of the memberships of each of these groups is available here: [Farmer-led climate change groups - Agriculture and the environment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/consultation/consultations/2016/160601-farmer-led-climate-change-groups)

The Agriculture Reform and Oversight Board (ARIOB), which was established to drive forward the work of the Farmer Led Groups and the implementation of policy reform and has been heavily involved in the development of the National Test Programme, is also made up of a mix of individual farmers and crofters, business owners, and industry organisation representatives. Details of its membership are available here: [Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/consultation/consultations/2016/160601-agriculture-reform-oversight-board)

The National Test Programme represents a continuation of this commitment to co-design and participative consultation with businesses, rather than the culmination of previous engagement. As part of the Programme, we intend to engage with businesses to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the two tracks. For Track Two in particular, we are in the process of establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which will provide a structured mechanism for this engagement. This learning will then be used to inform the development of the future support framework and the new Scottish Agriculture Bill.

User research will be undertaken to understand user needs and problems, and to test out theories and hypotheses for the mechanism that delivers the policy.

Options

2 options have been considered, and they are described in more detail below:

Option 1 - Do Nothing

The Scottish Government would continue to provide support only under the domestic continuation of previous EU CAP schemes, until such a time as the new Scottish Agriculture Bill comes into force.

Sectors and groups affected

The sectors and groups primarily affected would be the agriculture sector, farmers, crofters, land managers, and government.

Benefits

This option represents a continuation of the status quo, and therefore a known quantity in terms of what support is available to individual farmers, crofters and land managers. The funding that has been identified to be used as part of the National Test Programme could be reallocated to existing support schemes, which would potentially see a small uplift in some of the support payments made to farmers, crofters and land managers. As no new support mechanisms would be introduced, there would be no additional costs or changes in terms of Scottish Government administration and implementation.

Costs

As this option is based on the continuation of the status quo, it should not create any additional monetary costs beyond those normally incurred in the provision of the existing support. It will also be unlikely to produce any savings.

The main costs of this option are non-monetary. By continuing with only the existing CAP support mechanisms, the Scottish Government would fall out of step with the progression on rural support policies elsewhere in the UK and in the EU. The administrations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland have each publicised their plans to move away from the support mechanisms established under the 2014-2020 EU CAP regime, to a greater or lesser extent, with various pilot projects and programmes in the process of being implemented. The EU has also agreed on the next round of the CAP, which will run from 2023 to 2027, and which aims to be fairer, greener, and more performance based, as well as allowing greater flexibility for EU Member States to adapt measures to local needs and conditions through the creation of new national-level Strategic Plans. If the Scottish Government does not take action and begin trialling new mechanisms of support, it risks being perceived as falling behind the progress being made in terms of rural support elsewhere.

A common theme with the progression of all these rural policies is the determined shift towards measures which are intended to address the global climate change and biodiversity emergencies. The Scottish Government has set its own ambitious targets in relation to these emergencies, including specific emissions envelopes for the agriculture sector, and delaying making any changes or trialling new support mechanisms until such a time as the new Scottish Agriculture Bill has been passed would result in an environmental cost, and make the transformations required in the agricultural industry all the more difficult for the businesses involved.

In addition, with the development of a long term future rural support framework continuing apace, waiting until after the new Scottish Agriculture Bill has been passed before any aspect of the framework is tested would risk creating an unhelpful and unnecessary “cliff-edge” change in the support for farmers, crofters and land managers. This would be out of step with the co-development approach being taken as part of a Just Transition, and also be detrimental to the development processes of both the Bill and the future rural support framework, as testing various aspects of potential new support mechanisms before they are implemented in full will enable the Scottish Government to gather data and evidence to further inform their decisions about and make improvements to their proposals. It will provide a clearer picture of which methods are particularly effective and feasible to roll out on a large scale, therefore another cost of not acting now is that any future attempts to implement conditionality into support payments may not be implemented in the most effective, efficient, or practical way.

Option 2 - Implement a National Test Programme

Sectors and groups affected

The sectors and groups primarily affected would be the agriculture sector, farmers, crofters, land managers, and government.

Benefits

The environment can be thought of as a productive resource – it is an amenity to be enjoyed as well as a source of food, raw materials, etc. One of the key purposes of the National Test Programme is to encourage farmers, crofters and land managers to improve their knowledge of their own current environmental performance and efficiency by creating a baseline of information and understanding in sustainable agriculture. This need to establish a baseline was one of the priorities identified by the Farmer Led Groups, the public consultation on ‘Agricultural transition – first steps towards our national policy’, and subsequent discussions by the ARIOB and the PDG. This is an important step along the road to transitioning towards a more environmentally sustainable agricultural industry, and so in turn towards meeting the ambitious Scottish Government targets for the industry to address the climate change and biodiversity emergencies. The long-term benefits of a healthier environment and increased biodiversity will be coupled with healthier competition, increased levels of innovation and reduced inefficiencies, the benefits of which are likely to compound into the future. Many of the actions can also result in improved efficiency and reduced inputs, for example soil testing could result in more targeted use of fertiliser, therefore resulting in economic benefits and supporting sustainable food production.

The establishment of the Programme in advance of the introduction and implementation of the new Scottish Agriculture Bill and the new future rural support framework also provides two key benefits. The first is that the voluntary nature of the Programme will provide an important stepping stone for farmers, crofters and land managers as part of the transition towards greater mandatory conditionality in this area as part of the new framework for future support. The Programme has been designed to try and make it as attractive as possible for businesses to take part, for example, the entry requirements for Track One are set to be as minimal as possible to maximise the opportunity for businesses to take part, and businesses will be reimbursed for the time taken to complete the initial survey for Track Two.

The second is that the Programme will allow the Scottish Government to gather information and evidence on the outcomes of the two tracks, and their impacts on businesses, as part of the development process for the Bill and the future support framework. This will aid the Scottish Government in further discussions and consultations with stakeholders on how this sort of conditionality might best be included.

Costs

A total of approximately £51 million over three years has been identified to fund the National Test Programme. The precise breakdown of this funding will depend on both the uptake of Track One and the decisions made on the design of Track Two (which are subject to the ongoing co-design process).

Costs to businesses should be minimal as the Scottish Government funding has been designed to cover all costs incurred due to the participation in the Programme.

Scottish Firms Impact Test

As previously described in the Consultation section, the National Test Programme should be viewed as part of the ongoing co-design and participative consultation process with businesses, rather than the culmination of previous engagement. Its development has been heavily informed by the views of businesses presented through the Farmer Led Group reports and recommendations, the public consultation, and the input of the ARIOB. As the name suggests, the Test Programme will also help the Scottish Government to test the impact of the actions and requirements of the two tracks on businesses, as part of the development process for the new Scottish Agriculture Bill and the full future support framework. Further engagement with businesses will take place as part of the monitoring and evaluation of this Test Programme.

It is unlikely to have any impact on international trade and investment, as participation in the Programme is voluntary and only entails farmers, crofters and land managers being encouraged and supported to begin establishing their own baseline for climate change and biodiversity metrics, and testing of more involved actions that will establish a robust method through which farmers, crofters and land managers can deliver the benefits to climate and nature. It is therefore not likely to have any impact on production levels.

Competition Assessment

Participation in the National Test Programme is voluntary, and is open to all recipients of CAP support. It won't have any impact on production levels, as it only entails businesses being encouraged and supported to establish their own baseline for climate change and biodiversity metrics, and testing of specific tools and advice that will establish robust methods through which farmers, crofters and land managers can record the benefits to climate and nature they deliver through their businesses. It will not: limit the number or range of suppliers, either directly or indirectly; limit the ability of suppliers to compete; reduce suppliers' incentives to compete vigorously; or limit the choices and information available to consumers. A competition assessment is therefore not required.

Consumer Assessment

Participation in the National Test Programme is voluntary. It won't have any impact on production levels, as it only entails businesses being encouraged and supported to establish their own baseline for climate change and biodiversity metrics, and the testing of specific tools and advice that will help establish robust methods through which farmers, crofters and land managers can record the benefits to climate and nature they deliver through their businesses. As such, it will not have any impact on consumers. It will not: affect the quality, availability or price of any goods or services in a market; affect the essential services market; involve storage or increased use of consumer data; increase opportunities for unscrupulous suppliers to target consumers; impact the information available to consumers on either goods or services, or their rights in relation to these; affect routes for consumers to seek advice or raise complaints on consumer issues.

Test run of business forms

New digital business forms will be introduced to deliver the National Test Programme. Digital Scotland Service Standards will be followed from initial concept through to design and delivery to ensure that the project meets the needs of end users, internal users and policy objectives. Testing will be done with end users and internal users using prototypes to ensure that these standards are met. Continuous testing will be used throughout the project from concept to delivery to ensure that standards are met and the service meets everyone's needs.

Digital Impact Test

The National Test Programme will have a digital impact, as the claim process for it will be entirely online. Recognising the issues with internet connectivity in the remote rural areas that many of their businesses operate in, applicants also have the option of completing the claim form at their local RPID area office. By having the claim process for the National Test Programme only available online, the Scottish Government is mirroring the process used for the applications for the main rural support subsidy schemes. The first phase of Track Two will be an online survey, with the option for paper copies to be posted out and submitted for those that require it, to ensure that a lack of internet access doesn't exclude any participants. This is also consistent with the increasing shift towards the use of online interactions and services by the Scottish Government.

The National Test Programme is designed to feed into the development of the new Scottish Agriculture Bill and the future rural support framework, and so it, and the digital technology involved, is a relatively short term measure. However, the digital forms and processes developed for the National Test Programme will use new technologies where possible, and reusable components that can be repurposed or reused for the long term future rural support framework. Any development during this interim period will be a hybrid of existing technologies and new technologies. The design will make it as seamless as possible for users.

Legal Aid Impact Test

The National Test Programme will not have any impact either on an individual claimant's access to legal aid or on the legal aid fund.

Schemes which are run under retained EU law, i.e. the domestic continuation of the EU CAP schemes, have an appeals process which allows individuals to appeal (through the Land Court) on eligibility for payments made under them. The Programme is not being run under the same legislation (i.e. retained EU law), and therefore does not attract this right of appeal. If an individual is not satisfied with the decision made by the Scottish Government about their claim under the Programme, they may submit a request for a review of that decision. This process will not require any legal representation.

Enforcement, sanctions and monitoring

For Track One, a reporting process has been developed by RPID to ensure that applications can be monitored in terms of number of participants, the options taken, the geographical spread, and the budget. This reporting will enable regular progress monitoring which will in turn be considered in any future developments of Track One, and in the development of the longer term rural support framework. All claims made under Track One will be subject to a level of validation during the claim process in the form of questions, and the requirement to supply data that would be difficult to supply unless the work had been done. All claims will be exposed to inspection selection, with a population selected for additional checks before payments are made.

For Track Two, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is being developed, however as this track is following a later timeline this is at an earlier stage of development than the monitoring and enforcement for Track One.

Implementation and delivery plan

For Track One, the full guidance was launched in late April 2022, with the claim facility window to be launched in late May/early June 2022. Access to the first phase of cattle performance data was made available in May 2022.

For Track Two, the intention is that the implementation will be split into two distinct phases:

Phase One launched in July 2022, and is comprised of:

- Recruitment of the participants, based on a robust methodology, with clear information provided about what will be expected of them.
- Gathering and analysing information from the cohort to understand their current state, in order to inform the actions supported in phase 2. This is in the form of a web-based questionnaire asking about their experience, motivations, barriers, data gathered etc. of both the various audits/plans and then secondly of the actions that farmers have taken on farm to improve their environmental sustainability (either flowing from the audits/reports or independent of those).
- Payment of participant for their time participating in this work and gathering and providing information.

Phase Two will run from Autumn 2022 onwards (dependent on the completion of Phase One), and will ask farmers and crofters to undertake specific actions and provide data and feedback. This is expected to involve:

- Identification of a list of actions and how they are to be applied across the sample (i.e. do they apply to all participants, sectoral approaches etc).
- Provision of guidance, farmer agreement to undertaking the actions (they will have the choice to continue into Phase 2).

- Farmers will then undertake actions, receiving appropriate advisory support.
- Farmers provide data and feedback for analysis.
- Payment made to farmers for actions and time incurred for feedback.
- Analysis of the actions, impact and informing future conditionality.

Post-implementation review

The purpose of the National Test Programme is to begin to encourage baselining of environmental metrics by farmers, crofters and land managers, and to use the learning obtained from this to feed into the development of the longer term future rural support framework. The Programme therefore represents short-term transitory support, rather than a long-term policy change, and so there are no plans for a review as such. There will however be continuous monitoring and evaluation throughout the Programme, and in particular the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that is being developed for Track Two will provide a mechanism for future engagement with businesses about the outcomes and impacts of this Programme, and the products of which can then be considered as part of the development of the longer term future framework.

Summary and recommendation

The National Test Programme is being recommended as, by encouraging environmental baselining by individual businesses, it provides an important voluntary stepping stone for farmers, crofters and land managers as part of the transition towards greater mandatory conditionality which will form part of the new framework for future support. The need for a baseline was one of the key priorities identified both through the wider public consultation and through discussions in the various stakeholder groups. By beginning to establish this through the National Test Programme, in advance of the new Scottish Agriculture Bill and establishment of the long term future rural support framework, the Scottish Government will be able to use the learning, information and evidence gained as part of the development process for these longer term future policies.

Although the 'do nothing' option represents a known quantity in terms of what support is available to individual farmers, crofters and land managers, this is heavily outweighed by the costs of not beginning to trial new forms of support.

Summary of benefits and costs

Option 1 – Do Nothing

Benefits

The 'do nothing' option represents a known quantity in terms of what support is available to individual farmers, crofters and land managers.

The funding that has been identified for use as part of the National Test Programme could potentially be reallocated to existing support schemes, which may result in a

small uplift in some of the support payments made to farmers, crofters and land managers.

As no new support mechanisms would be introduced, there would be no additional costs or changes in terms of Scottish Government administration and implementation.

Costs

This option should not create any additional monetary costs beyond those normally incurred in the provision of the existing support. It will also be unlikely to produce any savings.

The main costs of this option are non-monetary.

These main costs include: the risk of not meeting our legally binding emissions envelope targets for the agriculture sector; losing the opportunity to test which methods are most effective, efficient, and feasible to roll out at a large scale, and being out of step with the co-development approach being taken as part of a Just Transition; and being perceived as falling behind the progress made in terms of rural support elsewhere.

Option 2 – Implement a National Test Programme

Benefits

The National Test Programme encourages farmers, crofters and land managers to improve their knowledge of their own current environmental performance and efficiency by creating a baseline of information and understanding in sustainable agriculture. This is in line with the priorities identified during the public consultation and discussions in the various stakeholder groups. This will also in turn help the agricultural industry to meet the ambitious Scottish Government targets to address the climate change and biodiversity emergencies.

The voluntary nature of the Programme will provide an important stepping stone as part of the transition towards greater mandatory conditionality as part of the new framework for future support.

The Programme will also allow the Scottish Government to gather information and evidence on the outcomes of the two tracks, and their impacts on businesses, as part of the development process for the new Scottish Agriculture Bill and the longer term rural support framework.

Costs

A total of approximately £51 million over three years has been identified to fund the National Test Programme. The precise breakdown of this will depend on the uptake of Track One, and the decisions made on the design of Track Two, which are subject to the ongoing co-design process.

Costs to businesses should be minimal as the Scottish Government funding has been designed to cover all costs incurred due to the participation in the Programme.

Declaration and publication

I have read the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options. I am satisfied that business impact has been assessed with the support of businesses in Scotland.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mairi Gougeon', written in a cursive style.

Date: 26 September 2022

Mairi Gougeon
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands



© Crown copyright 2022



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-101-9 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, October 2022

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1175342 (10/22)

W W W . g o v . s c o t