What is the Supplement for?

This Handbook Supplement provides details of new options that will be available to existing agreement holders whose agreement started on the 1st February 2007 or later. They are part of a set of changes to Environmental Stewardship aimed at improving the delivery of environmental outcomes from the scheme.

Use this Supplement if you want to amend your agreement to include any of the new options on or after 1st January 2013.

The new options are:
- EF14/OB14 Hedgerow Restoration
- EF23/OF23 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds
- EF20/OF20 Ryegrass seed set as winter/spring food for birds
- EK21/OK21 Legume and herb rich swards
- HF24/OHF24 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds
- HK20/OHK20 Ryegrass seed set as winter/spring food for birds
- HK21/OHK21 Legume and herb rich swards

When your agreement has been amended, this supplement will form part of your legal agreement with Natural England and must be retained for reference. It contains the rules and management prescriptions you must follow for your selected option(s).

Unless otherwise specifically stated or explained in this supplement, all the scheme rules and terms and conditions as set out in the edition of scheme handbook applicable to your agreement also apply.
2. How do I Apply?

If the start date of your agreement is the 1st February 2007 or later the new options will be available for you to add to your agreement by amendment. **Please note: Any amendment to your agreement to add the new options can only take effect from 1st January 2013 onwards.** If you wish to apply to amend your agreement please contact your adviser direct or if you do not know their direct telephone number contact Natural England Enquiries on 0845 600 3078.

If you wish to improve the environmental performance of your existing HLS agreement by amending your option selection to include one or more of the new options in this supplement you can do so without impacting on your ability to make further changes to your agreement in the future. However, this type of change will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- **For amendments to ELS or OELS options only, the change should reduce the presence of low-priority options in the agreement (see below).** The ELS or OELS points released by the removal of low-priority options should be replaced by the addition of an equivalent value of high priority options in this supplement (or other priority options as set out on the ELS Priority Options web page at [www.naturalengland.org.uk/es](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/es)).

- **Your ELS/HLS, OELS/HLS or HLS only agreement should have at least two years left before it expires.** This will allow time for the new options to establish and have a positive impact on the environment.

- **Additional options must be taken from either the same version of the handbook that applies to your original agreement (the version of the handbook on which your application for your original agreement was based and then accepted by Natural England), or from this supplement.**

- **All other eligibility criteria must continue to be met – including the 30 points per hectare target for ELS/HLS and the 60 points per hectare for OELS/HLS.**

**Table 1 Low-priority options that must be reduced in the agreement as a result of the change.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Option description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EB1</td>
<td>Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB2</td>
<td>Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB4</td>
<td>Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB5</td>
<td>Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB8</td>
<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB9</td>
<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB12</td>
<td>Earth bank management on both sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB13</td>
<td>Earth bank management on one side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC1</td>
<td>Protection of infield trees on arable land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC1</td>
<td>Protection of infield trees on rotational land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE1</td>
<td>2m buffer strip on cultivated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE1</td>
<td>2m buffer strip on rotational land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE2</td>
<td>4m buffer strip on cultivated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE2</td>
<td>4m buffer strip on rotational land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE3</td>
<td>6m buffer strip on cultivated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE3</td>
<td>6m buffer strip on rotational land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE4</td>
<td>2m buffer strip on intensive grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE4</td>
<td>2m buffer strip on organic grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE5</td>
<td>4m buffer strip on intensive grassland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You must tell us about any proposed amendments and we must agree them before you make any changes to your options. We will send you a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1), to complete and return. Your amendment will not be valid until you have received a letter from us agreeing to the amendment and advising you of the date from which it will take effect. If it is successful, we will provide you with confirmation within 3 months of receipt of a valid request form.

We do not expect to amend an agreement more than once during its five-year term unless it is to achieve environmental benefits, as detailed above.

3. Management Options and Supplements

3.1 HLS Options

**HF24 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds**  
£822 /tonne

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

This option is used to provide winter food for seed-eating farmland birds through the "hungry gap" period in late winter, before natural food resources become available again in late spring.

This option is only available within HLS agreements that contain the minimum area of arable options required to meet the HLS Farmland Bird Package and where certain farmland bird species are present.

Management includes spreading a tailored seed mixture at least weekly from January to April and keeping a record of the feeding carried out. The amount and type of feed will be determined by Natural England to support the target farmland birds present.

There are also two new Entry Level Stewardship and two new Organic Entry Level Stewardship options that are available under Higher Level Stewardship

When these options are used in HLS, the payment rate is equivalent to the points value of the options in pounds sterling, and they will contribute to your HLS payment. Full details of these options can be found on page 4-6 of this supplement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Option description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OE5</td>
<td>4m buffer strip on organic grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK5</td>
<td>Mixed stocking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>Permanent grassland with low inputs on SDA land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK20</td>
<td>£80</td>
<td>£190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHK20</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK21</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHK21</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>New in 2013</strong></th>
<th><strong>New in 2013</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryegrass seed-set aws winter/spring food for birds</td>
<td>Legume- and herb-rich swards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK20</td>
<td>£80</td>
<td>£190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHK20</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Payment</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK21</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 ELS and OELS Options

**OK20/EK20 Ryegrass seed-set-aside as winter/spring food for birds**  190/80 points per ha

The aim of this option is to allow silage fields to go to seed in autumn, providing a food resource throughout winter and into the ‘hungry gap’ in February for buntings (such as yellow hammer) and other granivorous birds. It may also increase abundance of invertebrates and small mammals.

This option is only available on swards containing at least 50 per cent ryegrass (perennial, Italian or hybrid). Temporary grassland (sown to grass or other herbaceous forage for less than 5 years) and grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown within the last 5 years are eligible for this option. It can be applied on whole or part-fields. If used on part-fields the area should be at least 10m wide. For most birds it will be beneficial to site next to a hedge but for skylark it should be sited away from trees and hedges.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within normal farm rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

**(EK20 only)** There is no restriction on use of lime, fertiliser, manure, fungicides, insecticides or selective herbicides prior to taking the silage cut(s).

**(OK20 only)** There is no restriction on use of lime, manure, or other inputs permitted by your organic registration body prior to taking the silage cut(s).

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Close the field for at least 5 weeks and take a silage cut by 31 May.
- On swards containing at least 70 per cent Italian or hybrid ryegrass you may also take a second cut of silage (or hay) by 30 June.
- After cutting and removal, close the field, allowing the sward to flower and set seed in the autumn. Leave the sward undisturbed with no harrowing, rolling, cultivation, application of manure or fertiliser until 1 March. You may then destroy the sward or restore it by harrowing or grazing. (This may be helped by the establishment of fallen seeds).

**OK21/EK21 Legume-and herb-rich swards**  250/200 points per ha

This option will provide habitat and food for invertebrates including crop pollinators, benefit soil structure, mitigate climate change by reducing nitrogen fertiliser use and provide high-quality forage for livestock.

This option is only available on temporary grassland (sown to grass or other herbaceous forage for less than five years) or grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown in the last five years. It can be applied on whole- or part-fields.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal farm rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- **(OK21 only)** Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body (OIB) for a derogation.
- In the first 12 months of the agreement, establish a mixed sward of grasses. Legumes and herbs/wildflowers (e.g. chicory, yarrow, ribwort, plantain, forage burnet, black knapweed, common sorrel). This is usually most reliably achieved by sowing into a clean seedbed but could be done by oversowing existing grassland following creation of 50 per cent bare ground.
- For the remainder of the agreement the sward must contain a minimum cover of 10 per cent red clover and an additional 10 per cent other legumes plus herbs, plus wildflowers (cover does not include white clover, creeping buttercup or injurious weeds). The sward must include at least 5
species of grass, 3 species of legume (including bird’s-trefoil), and 5 species of herb/wildflower.

- Re-establish if necessary, on the same or a different field, to maintain these minima.
- Manage by cutting or grazing but allow to flower by resting for a 3-5 week period between 1 May and 31 July. You must delay cutting until the majority of red clover plants have started to flower.

(OK21 only) Control injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.

(EK21 Only) Do not apply pesticides except herbicides to spot treat or weed-wipe for control of injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

- You may apply lime and organic manures.

(EK21 only) You may apply inorganic fertilisers provided they do not contain nitrogen.

**EB14/OB14 Hedgerow restoration**

The aim of this option is to rejuvenate hedgerows on the farm to encourage the development of thick, dense, continuous hedges, which link other hedges and habitats, such as ponds and woodlands to benefit wildlife and improve the historic landscape character.

**Hedges that are a priority for restoration**

- Short, over trimmed and gappy hedges, or tall, thin and gappy hedges.
- Hedges connected to woods or adjacent to ponds, or other watercourses, to link habitats.
- Hedges adjacent to other management options such as buffer strips, field corners and nectar mixes, as this will add value to the habitat.
- Hedges alongside public rights of way or in conspicuous parts of the farm where landscape and access improvement can be best appreciated.
- Hedges of particular historic value such as parish boundaries.

You must have management control over both sides of the hedge and of the land adjacent to the hedge, and the hedge must fit the eligibility criteria for all hedge options in your original handbook:

- If your ELS/HLS agreement started before October 2008 see page 36 of the 1st edition ELS handbook.
- If your OELS/HLS agreement started before October 2008 see page 59-60 of the 1st edition OELS handbook.
- If your ELS/HLS agreement started between October 2008 and January 2010, see page 30-31 of the 2nd edition ELS handbook.
- If your OELS/HLS agreement started between October 2008 and January 2010, see page 39-40 of the 2nd edition OELS handbook.
- If your ELS/HLS agreement started between February 2010 and December 2012, see page 55-56 of the 3rd edition ELS handbook.
- If your OELS agreement started between February 2010 and December 2012, see page 66-67 of the 3rd edition OELS handbook.

**How can a Hedge be restored?**

There are two methods of restoration available under this option:

- Hedge laying. This involves the complete rejuvenation of the hedge by partially cutting through the woody stems close to the ground level and laying them over to create a dense barrier, from which re-growth should shoot. Hedges or sections of hedges suitable for laying are those comprising shrubs at least 3m in height with frequent stems up to 25cm in diameter. There must be
sufficient suitable stems to make a laid hedge of living pleachers (the laid stems).

- Hedge gapping up. This involves establishing new plants into gaps in an existing hedge. It can also be combined with laying to ensure the development of a continuous hedge. To be eligible for gapping up at least one-quarter of the hedge must still consist of shrubs and/or trees.

You can enter up to 40m on your application form. This represents the annual commitment. Hence, if you enter 40m on your application form, you will be required to complete 200m over the full 5 years of your agreement (or 400m if you have a 10-year ELS/HLS agreement).

You can complete the work ahead of schedule but you must have completed at least as much as the annual commitment for each agreement year completed. Points earned will be based on the annual commitment, not the actual amount of work completed in any single year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example, where the annual commitment is 40m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of agreement year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hedges, or lengths of hedges, in this option can also be entered into the hedge management options (EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 and EB10).

**Management requirements**

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Obtain current, dated photographs (see photographs requirements on page 8) of the hedge to be restored as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.

- At the end of the agreement at least 90 percent of the restored hedge must be continuous with no gap (other than the gateways) more than 1m wide. If sections, more than 1m wide, of laid hedge die after restoration then the gaps should be planted with new hedge plants, following the gapping up prescriptions.

- Following restoration, prevent damage by livestock and other animals such as rabbits.

- Any fences must be sited at least 12m from the centre of the hedge.

- Retain all historic boundary features e.g. stone gate posts.

- Retain any existing hedgerow trees where they are a characteristic feature of the local landscape. They must not be damaged by fencing wire or used as fence posts.

- **(OB 14 only)** Only apply herbicide to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese Knotweed).

- **(EB14 only)** Only apply herbicide to spot-treat or weed-wipe for control of injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); or invasive non-native species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

In addition, for hedge laying, you must comply with the following:

- Before work starts, all old fencing must be removed and disposed of appropriately. Also, cut and pull out bramble and other scrambling plants where they will hinder laying the cut stems.

- Lay when the hedge is dormant, between 1 November and 1 March, in the style customary to the local landscape. However, in exceptional circumstances, work may continue up to 1 April provided you conduct a survey to ensure that there are no nesting birds.

- Twiggy material may be placed over the cut stems to provide some protection to the re-growth from grazing animals. Wood may be stacked to provide valuable dead wood habitat for wildlife.
Cut material may be chipped and used as a mulch to control weeds.

Site any fires to minimise environmental damage. Material should either be burnt immediately or left until the end of the bird breeding season (i.e. September) as piles of brash are attractive nesting sites for birds. Bonfire sites must not be sited on low-intensity grassland, other wildlife-rich areas or areas of historic or archaeological interest.

In addition, for gapping-up you must comply with the following:

- Thoroughly clear gaps of existing vegetation.
- Plant dormant two-year-old bare rooted stock (45cm-60cm) between 1 November and 1 March, avoiding periods when the ground is frozen or waterlogged. Plant a minimum of six plants per metre in a double staggered row with at least 30cm between rows.
- Plant in line with existing hedgerow. Plant species to match those in the existing hedge. Single species planting can be used e.g. to restore hawthorn enclosure hedges. Plants should be of British native origin.
- Any newly planted hedge plants that die must be replaced in the following planting season.
- You may control injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive alien species (e.g. Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by use of a mulch.

**OF23/EF23 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds**

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

Many farmland birds, including yellowhammer, grey partridge, tree sparrow, corn bunting, linnet and skylark, require seed food throughout the year. A decline in seed availability during the non-breeding season has been a major cause of decline in many seed-eating species. Overwinter stubbles and wild bird seed mixtures provide winter food for seed eaters, but this has typically run out by mid-winter, leaving these birds with a 'hungry gap' before natural food resources become available again in the spring.

Providing cereal, oilseed and specialised grains will help farmland birds both survive through this hungry gap and also enter the breeding season in much improved condition.

This is a rotational option. This means it can move around the farmed area but the same total tonnage of feed must be maintained each year.

**(OF23 only)** This option can only be used with option OF2 Wild bird seed mixture. The maximum amount of this option that can be entered into the agreement is 0.5 tonnes per hectare of OF2 Wild bird seed mixture.

**(EF23 only)** This option can only be used with options EF2 Wild bird seed mixture and/or EF22 Extended overwintered stubble. The maximum amount of this option that can be entered into the agreement is 0.5 tonnes per hectare of EF2 Wild bird seed mixture and/or 0.2 tonnes per hectare of EF22 Extended overwintered stubble.

Please note, where the option is located on areas ineligible for SPS (for example, an area of hard standing), the SPS eligibility rules will still apply and the feeding area cannot be claimed for SPS.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Select a feeding area/s either on firm free-draining farm tracks or hard standing areas close to existing areas of overwintered stubbles or wild bird seed mixtures or on overwintered stubbles or wild bird seed mixtures. Selecting areas next to hedges, bushes or trees (shelter belts) to provide a safe haven for the feeding birds would be beneficial.
- Spread the food on the ground at least once a week from 1 January until 31 March. Hoppers (feed distributors) may be used to support ground feeding but should not be the sole method of supplementary feeding. Move hoppers regularly and/or protect them by guards or cages to reduce
the impact of vermin.

- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body (OIB) for a derogation.
- The food must be a mixture of wheat, barley and oats (75%) and red millet, white millet, and canary seed (25%). Tailings (small seeds removed from the harvested crop) are not permitted.
- Distribute enough food to match consumption, ensuring a fresh supply of food is maintained without leaving seed unconsumed. This is especially important where ground feeding is undertaken.
- A ‘feeding diary’ must be kept – to include details of:
  - mixture (weight of components and cost)
  - date of feeding
  - amount fed
  - location of feeding.

In addition, all receipts for the purchase of seed must be retained and made available on inspection.

**Photographs**

If you are required to supply photographs in support of your application, (because an option you have selected requires you to do so), each photograph must clearly show the feature to be managed. Ideally, the whole of the feature should be on one photograph, but where necessary you should use more.

Each photograph should display the date on which it was taken and must be clearly numbered. The photographs should be cross-referenced with a map showing the position the photographs were taken from, the number of the photograph and an arrow indicating the direction of the shot. You can submit the photographs in either digital format (on a CD) or as colour prints (at least 6”x4”).