

**WELSH GOVERNMENT RURAL COMMUNITIES**  
**RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2014-2020**  
**EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND 2014 -2020**

**GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT APPLICANTS TO**  
**REQUEST CHANGES TO AN APPROVED**  
**PROJECT**



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## 1. Purpose of this Guidance

These guidance notes explain how to request changes to projects approved under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Programme 2014-2020.

## 2. Terminology

A guide to common terminology and definitions used in this guidance:

- Case: Approved project in the WEFO Online system
- Categories of eligible expenditure: also called types of headings; the items that have been approved for the project, against which you may claim
- delivery profile: approved financial profile for your project setting out when you will be claiming; changes to this must be approved by WG
- EMFF: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for Wales 2014-20
- Grantor: Welsh Government (WG)
- Income: match funding to fill the gap between expenditure and grant value; the income may be the applicants own funds, or funds they are receiving from elsewhere; projects funded at 100% intervention rate have zero income
- Indicators: targets set for your project that you must report against
- RDP: Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 – Socio-economic Measures (land based measures i.e. Glastir are managed separately)
- Rural Programmes: RDP and EMFF
- re-evaluation: process for requesting project changes
- Sponsor: approved applicant; referred to as 'you' or 'the sponsor' in this guidance
- Simplified Costs: these can be staff costs or flat rate (overheads) claimed on a unit cost per hour or on a percentage basis rather than actual or apportioned costs i.e. 200 hours (units) at an hourly rate of £20.95; the rate is calculated and set as part of the project approval; these are not applicable to all projects
- Virement: moving funds between categories of Eligible Expenditure (this is possible within certain limits, within the overall approved grant value)
- WEFO Online: internet based ICT system for submitting applications and claims to the Rural Programmes

## 3. What is a project change re-evaluation?

A project change or re-evaluation is the process of agreeing significant changes to an approved project. The approval of a project is granted based on an agreed delivery profile (forecast of when spend is to be claimed and under what headings) and notified through a grant approval letter. A project change can only be requested after approval.

Your grant approval letter sets out the terms and conditions of the grant. In particular, grant is offered on the condition that the project delivers in accordance with the details set out in the scheme guidance notes, project plan, business plan, delivery profile (DP) and any special conditions (if applicable).

If you identify that the project delivery is going to be different to what was agreed, you need to request a re-evaluation asking for approval of the changes. We may also identify through financial monitoring that changes are required e.g. the project is behind the agreed DP.

Any changes to a project must be agreed by the grantor in writing. When you notify us that your project needs to be modified, we will explain to you how the changes will be treated.

You are required to notify the grantor at the earliest opportunity if the project undergoes a substantial modification within 5 years after the project end date (as provided in the approval letter) that:

- a) affects its nature or implementation conditions or gives undue advantage to a firm or public body.
- b) results either from a change in the nature of ownership of an item of infrastructure or the cessation or relocation of a productive activity.

#### **4. What changes can be requested?**

Changes can include any alteration to the project such as significant changes to the types of expenditure or quantifiable targets set out in the project plan, business plan or the DP; it can also include any change to the project's purpose, its financing or ownership and/or any change to the project completion timetable.

This allows a flexible approach to the project delivery, the likely outputs, the expenditure headings and the claim periods within a project and reflects the realities of the project delivery i.e. changes to implementation plans, prices, delivery times, outputs, etc.

Please note that we are unable to approve any additional funding. In addition, only one re-evaluation per project each year will normally be permitted. You need to take this into consideration when requesting a re-evaluation for your project i.e. wait to submit the re-evaluation if you know there are likely to be further changes happening in a short time.

You can continue submitting claims while you prepare the request.

Virements (moving money) between approved expenditure headings of less than 15% of the total in the heading will be allowed and do not require the submission of a re-evaluation.

However, a re-evaluation must be submitted for anything that is equal to or exceeds 15%. For example, £1,000 out of an expenditure heading of £20,000 would be less than 15% and wouldn't require a re-evaluation but if that £1,000 was to be moved to a smaller expenditure heading of for example £5,000 it would constitute a change of more than 15% to that type and a re-evaluation would be required.

Please note that funding cannot be vired (moved) between projects.

The proposed changes to the delivery of a project must still reflect the original aims of the project, meet all the eligibility criteria as set out in the scheme guidance notes and provide value for money.

If a project is likely to reduce in scale and/or costs this must be explained on the re-evaluation so that the grant awarded can be scaled back and money returned to the overall 'funding pot'.

## **5. When /how do I request changes?**

You should notify us of any changes to the project in the first instance.

If you have claims available to you (status of invited) you will need to confirm to us whether you wish to submit these claims as they are or you want them to be cancelled. The re-evaluation will only take effect on claims that are invited after we approve and process the changes.

We recommend that any submitted claims are processed before the changes from the re-evaluation are effected. We will always prioritise processing of claims over re-evaluations unless the required changes are preventing you from claiming.

You can request a project change re-evaluation through your [RPW Online](#) account; this process has two steps:

- Step 1 - complete an online **Project Change Request**
- Step 2 - we issue to you an online **Project Change Re-evaluation** form and other required templates such a delivery profile, simplified costs template, etc. for your completion and submission in RPW Online

For full details, see How to Complete Guide.

**If you do not submit completed templates as requested (and where required supporting documentation) the re-evaluation will NOT be processed.**

When completing the re-evaluation please refer to:

- The latest grant approval letter issued to you which sets out the terms and conditions of grant and the corresponding agreed DP for what is currently approved for the project
- The relevant scheme/measure guidance notes

## **6. What could happen if I don't notify the grantor of the changes?**

If you do not notify SMU of a change to the project there is a risk that:

- a) Your grant may be terminated and you may be required to repay part or the whole of any grant paid
- b) any pending or future claims for grant payment will be held up. Claims received by SMU are checked against the approved DP; differences are queried and have to be resolved before a payment can be issued
- c) items within your project are deemed ineligible if expenditure has been incurred for items that are not in your approved DP – see terms and conditions of grant in your project grant approval letter

## **7. What happens once I submit a re-evaluation?**

We will check the completed re-evaluation and templates to assess:

- What the proposed changes are
- Eligibility of the proposed changes
- Timing of the processing of the changes in the system i.e. if there are claims being processed
- Depending on the nature /scale of the change a full Technical and or Financial Due Diligence may be required

If necessary, we will request additional information from you to process the re-evaluation. Delays in your response may affect our decision.

A re-evaluation will normally take to process from 30 to 120 working days of submitting all the required documentation including any supporting documents.

We will prioritise the processing of re-evaluations that affect your ability to claim. If you have a business case that requires approval sooner, please let us know. We will look at this on a case by case basis.

Once your re-evaluation is processed, we will notify you whether the request is approved or not.

- If it is approved the changes will be reflected in the next available claim (invited after the re-evaluation is processed)
- If the re-evaluation is not approved, an explanation will be provided as to why this is the case; in this instance the project should then continue to be delivered according to your most recent approval letter and agreed DP; the terms and conditions of grant that apply are those set out in your existing grant approval letter

**Please note, the submission of a Project Change Re-evaluation does not guarantee approval.**