Providing confidence that correct subsidy payments can be made to farmers, traders, and landowners

Rural Payments Agency

"Our farm visits play a huge role in the control of our schemes, and so any opportunity for those to go wrong is something that we want to avoid. In 2022, the amount of field officer data pack failures were reduced by a third compared to previous years. This improvement was delivered through the 1Spatial 1Edit product. 1Spatial's familiarity with our Land Management System processes was invaluable in terms of getting the required data out of our systems and onto the field officer devices."

- Brian O'Toole, Geospatial Lead, Rural Payments Agency

Industry	Government
Customer	Rural Payments Agency
Challenge	With its data editing software heading out of extended support, RPA needed to find a new solution that enabled Field Officers to carry out their visits effectively.
Solution	Using 1Spatial's 1Edit product, RPA Field Officers were able to collect, correct and confirm data during visits with a high level of confidence and accuracy.

Key Benefits:

➤ 1Edit has saved RPA's Field Officers time, by reducing the number of field officer manual interventions.

➤ 1Edit has saved RPA's Geospatial Team time checking data, by reducing the number of data pack errors.

➤ 1Edit has improved RPA's LMS data, by reducing the number of Field Officer data pack failures.

Background

Rural Payments Agency (RPA) makes subsidy payments to farmers, traders and landowners in England, and manages more than 40 schemes to help ensure a healthy rural economy and stronger rural communities.

RPA Field Officers carry out hundreds of visits, annually to ensure farmers, traders, and landowners are complying with UK and legacy EU legislation, scheme rules, and agreement options. These visits are a legal requirement and are key for mapping and tracking 2.6 million land parcels which are used to validate rural payment claims, so RPA can be confident that the correct payments can be made.

Government drivers

The UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan aims to improve the UK's air and water quality and protect our many threatened plants, trees, and wildlife species, by improving how the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) manage and incentivise land management. Defra and RPA require reliable data to manage and incentivise land management. At present, well-developed systems are used for land management but these systems will need to evolve to accommodate the needs of the 25 Year Plan and to place a greater emphasis on an environmental net gain principle for using and managing land sustainably.

Challenge

With its existing Leica Zeno data editing software rapidly heading out of extended support, RPA needed to find a Windows-based replacement that could be implemented with customised configuration and minimal impact on Field Officer visits. Ensuring a long-term return on investment and software compatibility with any future procurement of field devices was an additional consideration.

RPA's business need was commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) data editing software that could be used by Field Officers to check and capture land data in the field. It also needed to support integration with the RPA's Spatial Data Infrastructure (Land Management System) and SITI Agri systems.

The aim was to roll out the replacement software and deliver Field Officer training during the quieter periods of the year, in time for the new visit season.

Solution

RPA replaced its existing Leica Zeno software with 1Spatial's 1Edit data editing (COTS) software which allows field users to collect data, correct data and confirm data, with a high level of confidence and accuracy. Its flexible design means it can be used either in the field with a touch screen and survey devices, or in an office using a desktop device.

"Our Field Officers are very happy with the speed and reliability of the 1Spatial 1Edit product. By configuring it with our requirements and processes, we have eliminated the manual interventions that were needed in the past. There are also elements of our processes that we've been able to remove. For example, previously we had a post-processing stage for improving the accuracy of data captured on visits, which slowed things down and was very prone to error. All aspects now work very well together, and our Field Officers are delighted."

By ensuring alignment with industry standard protocols and working with data from RPA's current satellite positioning (GNSS) antenna, 1Edit enables data to be captured accurately in the field using GNSS positions. Furthermore, essential attribution is recorded on field devices, currently Panasonic Touchpad tablets.

As RPA's geospatial delivery partner, 1Spatial has the skills, knowledge, and experience to configure 1Edit to meet specific user requirements. The rollout, including training, was completed within four months, enabling Field Officers to use the software at the start of the new season for visits.

To support Field Officer training, 1Spatial produced 1Edit product materials and the remote delivery of a 'Train the Trainer' programme for regional RPA staff. 1Spatial also provided application support to cover advice and guidance for using the1Edit product, and technical support for deploying 1Edit onto tablets and laptops, as well as outbound and inbound data processing and associated data integration.

After implementation, 1Spatial provided early life support for two months. This enabled fine-tuning of 1Edit product configurations, and issues not encountered during acceptance testing to be addressed.

"1Spatial has worked with RPA over the past six years to support and develop its Land Management System. Our enterprise geospatial data management approach enacts RPA's data governance policies and procedures - improving data quality, improving data analytics and regulatory compliance for better operational outcomes."

- Matthew White, Senior Business Development Manager at 1Spatial

Contact Us

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