

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
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Ministerial Foreword - Forestry in Scotland is a sector that we can be justly proud of.

1 - Introduction and Rationale for Providing Grant Support for Forestry

1. Do you agree that grant support for forestry should continue to be improved and developed as a discrete scheme within the overall package of land support?

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

2. Are there any changes that would allow for better complementarity between the forestry and agriculture funding options?

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The focus should allow for support for natural regeneration as opposed to planting and also include options for agroforestry to develop landscape options for grazing within a forested area.

2 - Forests Delivering for Scotland's Climate Change Plan

3. How can the support package for forestry evolve to help tackle the climate emergency, to achieve net zero, and to ensure that our woodlands and forests are resilient to the future climate?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Support should be developed to breed improved stock of native deciduous trees. An ideal candidate for this would be birch. Birch breeding programs are underway in both Scandinavia and Ireland and provide useful models that could be developed in Scotland.

4. Private investment through natural capital and carbon schemes can make a valuable contribution to climate change. Do you agree that the grant support mechanism should have more flexibility to maximise the opportunities to blend private and public finance to support woodland creation,

Not Answered

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Natural capital requires much more critical evaluation as a concept. It requires a much harder assessment of delivery of real value than has often been accepted in the past.

5. How could the current funding package be improved to stimulate woodland expansion and better management across a wide range of woodland types, including native and productive woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

There needs to be a very careful analysis of the actual delivery of carbon value in terms which includes the timescale over which net positive carbon capture is actually delivered.

6. Do you agree that it should be a requirement of grant support that woodlands are managed to ensure that they become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and pests and disease?

Yes

How can the grant scheme support this?:

This required not only management approaches but also breeding. The economics of active management to deal with pest and diseases need careful evaluation. There is very little room for manoeuvre in terms of Management costs to deal with pest and disease. Resilient planting stock is key rather than management.

3 - Integrating Woodlands on Farms and Crofts

7. Which of the following measures would help reduce the barriers for crofters and farmers wanting to include woodland as part of their farming business? Please select all that apply.

Better integration of support for woodland creation with farm support mechanisms, Flexibility within options, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

Restoring woodland and hedgerows in field margins and boundaries has enormous potential to contribute to carbon targets. A valuable component of this could be the proposal to utilise repeated LiDAR surveys which can provide real rather than notional assessments of the evolution of carbon accumulations in a wide range of forest and field margin context and provide real rather than notional data to reward the development of carbon accumulating assets.

8. Establishing small woodlands can have higher costs. What specific mechanisms would better support small scale woodlands and woodland ownership?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

This may be best supported by the use of consortiums and communities of practice where management and support can be shared by local groups.

4 - Forests Delivering for People and Communities

9. How can forestry grants better support an increase in easily accessible, sustainably managed woodlands in urban and peri-urban areas?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

This may require different management approaches and the utilisation of different “harvest” schemes. E.g. recovering production by coppicing rather than felling or selective felling rather than clear felling of sites. The economics may also require the return of at least some notional value from public access.

10. How can grant support for forestry better enable rural communities to realise greater benefits from woodland to support community wealth building?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

This may require the development of public access paths, picnic areas, dog walking or mountain biking routes.

11. How can the forest regulatory and grant processes evolve to provide greater opportunities for communities to be involved in the development of forestry proposals?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

This may require public consultation as part of the grant awarding system

12. How can the forestry regulatory and grant processes evolve to ensure that there is greater transparency about proposals and the decisions that have been made on them?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

All the paperwork should be publicly available both for comment and input and subsequently after the award. The current model of planning support for building where public input before award and documentation of the rationale behind the award and what the award should achieve is available to enable the public to assess if the award conditions and delivery are being achieved.

13. Forestry grants have been used to stimulate rural forestry businesses by providing support with capital costs. Do you agree that this has been an effective measure to stimulate rural business?

Not sure

a. How could this approach be used to support further forestry businesses?:

b. How could this approach be used to support further skills development?:

14. How could the FGS processes and rules be developed to encourage more companies and organisations to provide training positions within the forestry sector?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Training schemes in collaboration with SRUC and other players should be supported.

5 - Forests Delivering for Biodiversity and the Environment

15. The primary purpose of FGS is to encourage forestry expansion and sustainable forest management, of which a key benefit is the realisation of environmental benefits. How can future grant support better help to address biodiversity loss in Scotland including the

regeneration and expansion of native woodlands?

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The current large scale management of much of upland Scotland to support sheep grazing on open land and shooting estates is a national disaster and embarrassment. Developing grazing schemes in mixed open forest has significant potential to both maintain the livelihoods of upland farmers and address issues of landscape decay and loss of biodiversity. If hunting or shooting is to survive without further creating uplands dessert then developing it in a woodland context which could both provide a more skilful sport and avoid the desertification of the upland landscape.

16. Herbivore browsing and damage can have a significant impact on biodiversity loss and restrict regeneration. How could forestry grant support mechanisms evolve to ensure effective management of deer populations at:

Landscape scale?:

In the short term fencing and reduction in populations of herbivores is required.

Small scale mixed land use?:

If you wish to make any other relevant comments, please do so in the text box below.

Please add your comments here.:

Scotland is currently at a watershed in terms of the development of major areas of the upland landscape. The knowledge is there based on models in Scandinavia and other areas how significant investment now together with the development of a vision as to how the future upland landscape of the country could be developed and enhanced could completely change the game. It will require vision and political will may require confrontation with existing vested interests. The Scottish Givernment cannot afford to loose this opportunity.

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We may share your response internally with other Scottish Forestry policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Forestry to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

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