

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?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

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.:

Our native woodlands are by and large contain far more biodiversity than plantations. The support package should focus primarily on maintaining and enhancing this biodiversity. This should take priority over and above grants for new woodlands, even if they are native woodlands.

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,

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The only issue I have here is accountability. An example: Aviva recently announced a multi-million package to restore rainforests in England and Wales only. Why does this not include Scotland?

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.:

Using *Rhododendron ponticum* as an example, we received an FGS grant to remove it from our Atlantic Oakwood and it was very effective on our 40 acre site. However, because it was not dealt at landscape scale we are still surrounded by a seed source which will make it difficult to defend. Consequently the scheme from now on should work at population level. Grants should encourage collaboration between stakeholders in order to achieve this. This should be preceded by funded survey work to determine the extent of the rhododendron in the area concerned. The grants should be long term as regular monitoring is essential to ensure the grant has well used and consequently funding should be available for follow-up survey work and any follow-up remedial work.

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?:

We urgently need to protect all our fragments of rainforest habitat, for the smaller they are the more vulnerable to these impacts. Also they need to be connected by corridors so that key species such as red squirrels are not isolated. Therefore grants need to be prioritised to support the above work.

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, Knowing where to get reliable advice, Clearer guidance on grant options, Flexibility within options, Intervention level, Support with cashflow, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

Encouraging "joined-up writing" between landowners who have adjacent properties.

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.:

Promote and explain the benefits of woodland crofts.

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.:

We live in a rural area so do not have suggestions here.

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.:

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.:

At the moment opportunities to be involved are weak (as in case of FLS forest management plans) or non-existent (as in case of forestry contractors employed by private landowners). Ideally this should extend beyond consultation and become actual participation and collaboration.

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.:

The general public do not currently understand these processes even if they are available somewhere on some website. Accesabilty and understanding of documentation and processes is a prerequisite to transparency.

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?

Yes

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

Make any grant applications as straightforward and easy as possible to complete by an applicant without having to take on an agent to act on their behalf. Also grants should be made available to successful applicants to develop skills.

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

see above

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.:

We have not got expertise in this area.

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.:

All PAWS sites, especially those in the core areas of Scotland's rainforest, could be restored through grants to remove non-native timber crops. However, this needs to be done sensitively and a consultant lichenologist/bryologist needs to be employed at an early to develop the plan. Also, a buffer area needs to be left around ancient or veteran trees to allow them space to flourish.

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?:

It is essential that the grants support adaptive management. Herbivore undergrazing can be as damaging as overgrazing. Funded survey work is vital on an ongoing basis to confirm that populations of sensitive bryophytes and lichens are maintained. It should be a grant condition that woodland herbivore impact assessments alongside other monitoring are carried out on an ongoing basis. Grants should also fund a bryophyte/lichen experts to give advice at the planning stage (this means that areas of high quality rainforest will be identified at the outset).

Collaboration between landowners and managers at a landscape scale need to be facilitated: this can only be achieved by applicants outlining how they will collaborate with neighbours to reduce deer numbers at a landscape scale.

Grants for deer management must result in a reduction of deer numbers and require a robust management plan. Enclosures should still be supported through the grant system but their use needs to be justified and monitored.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Conservation grazing works well at this scale and should be encouraged as part of the grant scale and this could be through the use of no fence collars for cattle.

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

Please add your comments here.:

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What is your name?

Name:

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What is your email address?

Email:

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Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Scottish Forestry would like your permission to publish your response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

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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?

Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

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