

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry  
Submitted on 2023-04-17 16:50:10

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.:

Apply cross-compliance. Withhold single farm payments where existing woodlands are not maintained in a good state.

## 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.:

Review what is considered native and what is sustainable. Recognise that site and climatic conditions have and continue to change and that continuing with some native spp in some locations (especially Scots pine in the east on better soils) is not sustainable without significant inputs requiring large carbon expenditure and set realistic alternative strategies - if it is a dead horse - stop flogging it. Allow introduction of eg ESF, NS, Serbian mixed woodlands on native sites which are no longer viable.

Allow mixtures / nurse crops as an alternative to fertiliser.

Allow combination fences.

Stop paying for deer fences except in limited cases - eg to protect designated sites. Increase the establishment grant to cover deer control - you should not care how deer control is delivered (within the law).

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 sure

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Grants and Carbon schemes interact to encourage change of use to tree planting. The present mix does not maximise the opportunity to encourage mixed / diverse / resilient woodlands. Review the WCC to remove the disincentives to diverse conifers.

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 is nothing much wrong at present for new woodland creation. For management of existing woodlands the scheme is hopelessly inadequate. There is far too much political focus on the new woodland. Against a target of circa 20,000 ha per annum - there are circa 500,000 ha of existing woodland in poor condition. The same or greater carbon gains could be made at a fraction of the cost by rejuvenating existing woodlands. It would be easy to allow existing woodlands to access grants and WCC carbon - based on the net canopy area. (20% existing canopy? 80% WCC).

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?

No

How can the grant scheme support this?:

You cant. Why? (not why do it - but why make it a condition? what will this stop?)

### 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.

Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

I dont know. This is a farming question - not a forestry question.

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.:

Ah - good question. Forestry and SFGS is undeniably targeted at larger schemes. See my earlier response on fencing- allow combination fences, allow use of recycled materials. (existing grants are only for new plastic tubes - not re-use, why?). Provide a basis lump sum to aid with development. Review VAT mechanism to enable small scale planting to be carried out ex-vat where applicants are non-registered.

Create a mechanism to guarantee a carbon market (sale) for small projects.

Reduce the risks of grant application.

### 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.:

They dont need to. Carbon finance can do this. CO2 Units from schemes which have a greater community involvement and benefit are valued more highly. ScotGov could help by making this more transparent and by reducing some of the risk - eg like the English Carbon scheme.

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.:

Provide long term loans - secured against future timber income so that communities see an early and stable return.

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.:

Establish a supplementary grant on a points system. Eg - where a forest proposal fully/100% meets community requests - the grant is paid 100% - split 50/50 scheme and community. This encourages (a) engagement and (b) cooperation.

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.:

Develop the existing online public registers to hold more information. Use the existing (planning) model - where most scheme content can be uploaded and viewed. Require applicants to erect info boards at prominent access points explaining the scheme benefits and targets.

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?:

see below

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

Provide training grants. eg pesticides; H&S management; environmental surveys; Archaeological feature recognition.

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.:

you dont need to. This is not the right mechanism. Support training through modern apprenticeships.

## 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.:

1. create a new category of woodland. The current system recognises New Woodland and Existing. Add in "Declining/native".
2. If an existing native woodland is in decline and (say) only 40% stocked - treat it as 60% New woodland for grants and carbon code.
3. Stop paying any deer fence grants - except designated sites. Increase the standard tree planting grants to include "deer protection". The applicant can opt to control by fencing (subject to impact assessment) - or by shooting. Some lucky ones will not need to and will "win" - recognition of past good management.

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?:

see point 3 above.

Small scale mixed land use?:

It cant - wrong mechanism.

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

Please add your comments here.:

Remove the requirement for an existing market for new species introductions. Recognise that the climate has changed from when our native communities were established 9000 years ago and that in some instances our native-natural species mixes are simply no longer (self) sustainable or efficient.

## About you

What is your name?

Name:  
[redacted]

What is your email address?

Email:  
[redacted]

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:

Publish response only (without name)

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.

I consent