

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.:

Forestry is growing in importance both as part of the mix of economic activity in rural areas and in its role in providing climate change resilience and mitigation.

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.:

Firstly, it is critical to ensure we do both well. If we want to have food production resilience, then we need to consider which food we can grow locally. At the moment, we think "wood" and "food" and there is little thinking of "woods for food". For example : I would like to see far more woodland planting that incorporates orchards and coppiced and nut production - hazel, sweet chestnut for example. There is no reason that we could not provide all of this locally, particularly as winters become less severe.

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.:

Firstly, I greatly support all mentioned above, but lets mean it. Why are we still allowing blocks of sitka spruce to be the main planting option? Mixed woodland can be far more mixed purpose (biodiversity, food production, flood prevention, and climate change carbon capture) and is known to be more resilient to the problems of climate change - wildfires, disease etc.

I would not subsidise conventional wood production at all if planted as it currently is. Put the subsidies into mixed woodland with multiple purposes. It will be an environmental disaster if conventional wood production is the dumping ground for carbon capture monies - a completely unresilient answer to the future issues. If they continue with this method then the trees will either burn down or be blown down before they reach maturity whilst failing to provide much biodiversity benefit at all.

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.:

I have no problem with private money being involved. I just don't want to see landowners rewarded for doing the wrong things because they are cheaper and easier. We have to move away from current practice.

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.:

No subsidies for current pattern of commercial forestry and in particular for large blocks of sitka spruce.

Subsidise mixed forestry in smaller strips of one species for the commercial market interspersed with diverse woodland. Ensure corridors between biodiverse woodlands to encourage species colonisation.

No subsidies for planting on existing farmland class 1 to 4.1 We must preserve our ability to feed ourselves. Crop failures are already an issue globally and will only get worse.

Look to subsidise change of land use from shooting to diverse woodland. Shooting estates are an anachronism and do not provide much benefit to local communities.

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?:

See my answers above. More diverse planting with more thought about multiple purpose woods including nut production.

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, Flexibility within options, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

Yes :

1. Protect class 1 to 3 land. Don't allow wealthy owners to turn it into climate change money spinning opportunities.
2. Ensure subsidies go to those who farm the land not to those who own it.
3. Do not subsidise land managed for shooting.
4. Include and encourage orchards and nut production as alternative food production for crofts and smaller farms.

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.:

They may have higher initial costs, but look at what happened in Storm Arwen. 15 million trees brought down - almost all in large scale forestry areas. We have to think differently. It may be cheap to plant and fell in the current pattern using the current practices, but we are not facing the same conditions. If the trees are burnt down or blown down before they reach maturity - we lose both ways, commercially and we lose carbon capture and biodiversity. We need to think radically - far more planting on the mountain heights to help with flood protection and wind shelter from storms. Rewilding these areas. Protect local food production and farmers and allow them to diversify. Don't think small scale, think large scale particularly for class 5 to 7 land.

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.:

Urban and peri-urban land should be completely different programme to meet different needs :

1. Food production close to centres of population. Vertical farms and community growing areas - community gardens with vegetable plots, orchards and nut coppice under trees. With adequate security.
2. Parks, woodlands and recreation areas which are beautiful and biodiverse and meet multiple needs - health promotion, cycling and walking, concert space etc.

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.:

Rural areas are blighted by the estate system and its prioritisation of shooting interests. Need to move away from this. All villages, should have access to a community growing area. Market gardens should be encouraged. And better integration between food production and woodland - as already described. No more concrete forests of one species only! No threats from wildfires due to the over reliance on a few tightly packed species.

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, there are opportunities to have a say locally, but is anyone listening?

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.:

Good question. Publish all grants.

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?

No

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

Forestry businesses are important. They need though to move on and face up to a world where there is no guarantee that what you plant today won't be burn or blown down. They need to face up to very different ways of planning and planting and harvesting. Don't subsidise the old way of doing things, provide capial support for increasing biodiversity and forest food production and resilience.

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

They will need help with the change - and they will need more labour to support the more small scale approach to blocks planted. Traditional woodland management skills will be necessary - coppicing, use of understory grazing, fire management etc. etc.

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.:

Make it part of the subsidy for larger grants to come with this requirement.

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.:

Rewild the mountains and poor quality land. Ensure planting schemes are more diverse. Ensure corridors between planting schemes are developed.

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?:

Make it a requirement of the grant to manage the deer population properly.
Disincentivise all use of land for shooting estates. Tax it!

Small scale mixed land use?:

Small owners may need help from the forestry service on deer management. Better it is done by professionals. Or start getting serious about reintroducing serious predators such as lynx and wolves and let them do it.

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

Please add your comments here.:

If all this review produces is minor tweaks to the current system, it will fail to protect Scotland and its people from what is coming and in someways is already with us.

It needs radically different thinking, and we can no longer tolerate so much land being set aside for the wealthy to shoot a few deer on.

We need the land to work so much harder than that to ensure resilience, carbon capture, woodland food production and improvements to our biodiversity.

About you

What is your name?

Name:

[Redacted]

What is your email address?

Email:

[Redacted]

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Cromar Future Group

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

Publish response with 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