

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.:

It is essential to recognise the various types of woodland and land use and the contribution forestry makes

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

Not sure

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

I do not work on agricultural sites

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.:

Ensure that diverse woodland types and management are grant aided at rates appropriate to the increased costs and that invasive species control is mandatory and grant aided,

Ensuring that there is support for seed orchards, innovations on tree nurseries would help.

On disease, a better control on entry of products and non-native plants and animals and phytoplankton conditions would assist. The soil and plants entering through horticultural products is a large risk, including as invasive species.

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.:

Ensure that the codes do not become so restrictive it stops future investment

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.:

The grant system needs to support the more expensive tree purchases required for diverse broadleaves and expensive native broadleaves such as aspen.

We need more support and seed orchards and nurseries then to grow these types of plants as the demand will be there. This will create more jobs.

We need to ensure that the costs of control of grey squirrel and deer is supported fully to ensure these trees survive. There is a lack of deer larders.

Stimulating the market for venison and ensuring a supply through larders would support the jobs and ensure the protection of the trees.

Overall we need to stop supporting pheasant and game shooting as it results in the the destruction of our biodiversity and feeding foxes which then predate ground nesting birds rather than the support of diverse native woodlands

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 need to ensure we have mixed woodlands across our landscapes to fully integrate economics, community, biodiversity, resilience, open habitat etc.

The grant system could have clearer payments for habitat management of matrix land uses as these have been identified as areas where species such as black grouse do best but also benefit the landscape, diverse species etc.

There is a difficulty in getting appropriate land use change at present. Upland farms and sports shoots have been highly managed and this has created areas suitable for ground nesting birds where there should have naturally been native woodland. Sometimes these areas have been classified as priority habitats but are purely dependent on areas cleared for sheep and are not a climax habitat. The difficulties in trying to buy areas for woodland creation and not have breeding birds that prevent this creation is holding back the restoration of our landscape. The over grazing by herbivores not only reduces our climate change and biodiversity recovery potential by eating the ground flora, but the compaction of the soil over hundreds of years has depleted its ability to absorb water and carbon .

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.

Are there others not listed above?:

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.:

Ensuring grants cover fencing and tree costs are appropriate to current prices

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.:

Expand WIAT areas to ensure we can integrate more path and other community needs in to the plans. The use of sites by mountain bikers helps peoples health etc but can be costly to maintain

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.:

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.:

Ensure the current consultation system is used and there is an arbitrator available who is not biased. Sometimes arbiters are obviously coming from a biased position.

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?:

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

There is a need for housing, deer larders etc in rural areas to support the work of peatland restoration, habitat management and woodland creation, There needs to be a clear route for practical skills through the School of Forestry and we need more people to go through the school

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.:

If grant aided and advertised we would support these

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.:

There is a difficulty in getting appropriate land use change at present. Upland farms and sports shoots have been highly managed and this has created areas suitable for ground nesting birds where there should have naturally been native woodland. Sometimes these areas have been classified as priority habitats but are purely dependent on areas cleared for sheep and are not a climax habitat. The difficulties in trying to buy areas for woodland creation and not have breeding birds that prevent this creation is holding back the restoration of our landscape. The over grazing by herbivores not only reduces our climate change and biodiversity recovery potential by eating the ground flora, but the compaction of the soil over hundreds of years has depleted its ability to absorb water and carbon .

The grant system should not support the management of ground for sports shoot and sheep grazing.

The system of woodland creation approval and grant aid needs to be recognise the benefits of habitat change from sheep grazing and sports shoot to native woodland and support the biodiversity benefits. Rather than focusing on the number of curlew etc on a site. The ground nesting bird issue is a northern hemisphere climate change issue and sports estate issue. These birds are at the edge of their range in Scotland, in other countries they do well in a mixed woodland and open areas and there are no issues with forestry. The sports shooting encourages foxes through large numbers of birds introduced to the ground and the control of predators (and indiscriminate control of native species such as pine marten and stoats etc) is a major problem for our biodiversity . Trying to buy these site and restore even native woodland is very risky and difficult and to ensure we can reach 30 by 30 this needs to be addressed rapidly

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?:

We need more deer larders and skills for deer controllers that is not focussed on sports shooting but the biodiversity and woodland benefits.

Education and communication of the impacts of herbivores on our biodiversity and woodland is required

it should be statutory for all land owners with deer populations to ensure they are not impacting the objectives of their neighbours with high deer numbers,

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.:

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:

[redacted]

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