

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-02-23 10:43:53

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 complex and a long term commitment requiring the knowledge and experience of those making the decisions and implementing the objectives on the ground both the public and private sector.

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.:

Simplify the application process - a single form and map - reduce consultation requirements for small schemes as these are expensive and often trying to prove a negative - this is of putting for applicants.

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.:

Species diversity and mixtures should be more broad. Funding for species mixes are currently restricted to 'fit' the grant scheme rather than good silviculture. Additional species choices should be allowed to take into account climate change. These should include sycamore and aspen as nurse mixtures within conifer restructuring sites to improve soil and reduce artificial fertiliser use.

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.:

There is a risk that high carbon prices combined with grant aid are increasing land prices taking areas out of farming for planting woodland. Restrictions on grant funding should be placed on land which has been purchased where carbon funding is the driver - hard to quantify!

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.:

Simplify the application process. reduce consultation requirements for smaller schemes. Management of existing woodland especially native woodlands and shelter belts is not currently served by the grant scheme if it is not designated. Payment for small woodland plans linked to work programme i.e. for understorey clearing, thinning and or wildlife benefits, public access. Flat rates of grant for areas for preparation of a management plan and supervision of operations.

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?:

Basic good management - those not practising these principles should not receive grant - maybe already covered under UKFS?

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, Clearer guidance on grant options, Flexibility within options, Intervention level, Support with cashflow

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.:

Flat rate payment for assessment of woodland areas and potential for woodland creation. Then for a management plan. Needs to be a simple plan application form. Mapping costs can be expensive to meet requirements of FS. Fencing costs prohibitive to small areas - even the current agro forestry grant for individual shelters net and posts the costs of materials alone exceed the grant rate without the cost of the planning, application and labour so there is no incentive to plant trees.

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.:

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.:

More detail on the public register - currently limited to map and areas (although not on all Felling applications). basic summary of proposal should be there to all to see. Local community councils should receive copies of the applications- FS could manage this by a simple link when loading up applications?

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?:

Grants should be available for skills training on basics - chainsaw use, pesticide application, woodland management - linked to colleges a fixed payment which the college would receive rather than the applicant.

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.:

For larger schemes say over 100ha requirement for training for those working on the implementation of the woodland. These could be planting, ground prep or surveying etc. Simple grant per ha direct funding for training to a registered provider.

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.:

Bring areas of undermanaged woodland into management. These are often shelter belts or remote native woodland areas. Funding for woodland plans and then also allow funding for areas not designated for the management of invasive species. There are huge areas of woodland which have rhododendron but can not access grants as the land has no designation.

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?:

Only provide grant support for estates/landowners which can demonstrate a deer management plan which will deliver the benefits to the wider woodland environment. No point in funding landowners to create a woodland with grant aid within a deer fence when they promote larger number of deer having a detrimental affect on the adjacent ground or woodlands. Those large landowners who are actively managing land for sporting (deer) and are not part of deer management groups should not receive grant funding for woodland creation or management.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Riparian areas are neglected as the grant scheme does not cover small strip planting or individual roundels of planting which would benefit the hundreds of miles of desolate river and tributary banks. Simple grant scheme payment for small group plantings along riparian - rate per block x number of trees and protection - simple application - no consultation .

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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Organisation:

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