

Response ID ANON-VEPG-2GEM-W

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-04-28 11:08:36

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.:

Agroforestry. There are currently no credible options to support agro-forestry in either forestry or agricultural funding mechanisms. There is huge scope for planting trees IN and not just AROUND fields. It maybe that agroforestry is better suited as an agricultural funding option, but proper support is needed.

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.:

Better measures to create new riparian woodlands.

Riparian woodlands deliver multiple benefits and, in the context of the climate emergency, offer great potential to help regulate river water temperatures and protect rivers from increases in water temperatures that are threatening the survival of salmon and other species.

New native woodlands next to rivers should be a priority for FGS and suggestions on how to do this are made later in this submission.

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 you answer in the text box.:

Larger scale FGS applications should not be able to benefit excessively from natural capital / carbon schemes and government funding.

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.:

Better incentives for the management of established woodlands would be beneficial. This includes native woodlands and productive 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?

Not sure

How can the grant scheme support this?:

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.

Knowing where to get reliable advice, Intervention level, Support with cashflow

Are there others not listed above?:

Grant levels can be an issue at the smaller (farm/croft) scale. See question 8.

The current loan scheme is helpful but still requires significant (50% cost) outlay for 6 months or more. Perhaps the loan rate could be higher (eg 75%)?

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.:

Degressive payment rates are one option. This means payment rates decline as lengths / areas increase. This reflects economies of scale and the issues of high cost small woodlands.

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.:

Perhaps a higher grant rate for these sort of projects. [Redacted] However, it was quite a lot of extra work to get this up and running.

Potentially there could be a support payment associated with the development of these type of projects to reflect the extra time spent with community engagement.

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.:

The process needs to be clearer and more open. Most people would have no idea where to find out about what woodlands are proposed in their area. Even for people who know the system it can be hard.

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.:

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?

Not Answered

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

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

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.:

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.:

Riparian woodlands are a key consideration here. The benefits of riparian woodlands are well documented: reduced flood risk, protection from diffuse pollution, habitat linkages and regulation of water temperatures.

The Woodlands for Water enhancement is welcome but there are some significant barriers to riparian woodland creation, particularly in a farmed land context.

The requirement for 15m wide woodlands can be prohibitive in many riparian woodland cases. 15m can be a large amount of land to take out in a productive grassland / arable situation and most farmers wouldn't even consider this. A key recommendation would be to reduce the width requirement specifically for riparian woodlands. A suggestion would be a minimum width of 8m. Evidence suggests that this width of new woodland would deliver almost all the required benefits and would likely result in much improved uptake.

One concern may be that the area of woodland created is lower (although overall one would expect a net increase). It may be worth having a metric that quantifies the LENGTH of riparian woodland created rather than the AREA. This would be a much better way of highlighting the positive benefits achieved.

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?:

Helping to facilitate / create new deer management groups, especially in areas where they don't exist (lowland areas) or where they are poorly functioning.

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:

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