

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-05-15 13:50:13

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.:

Currently the two systems do not integrate on the RPId IACS forms. For the past 5 years each year the land declaration is showed as an error code. This is apparently due to the two systems not being in tandem. This is an IT fix that is required.

The principles of agro forestry can be better pursued if livestock can graze an afforested area to do managed control of grass, brashing with horns etc. The original WGS scheme allowed livestock access after ten years, but this has increased to 20 now. I think this should be changed or modified to allow animals to be part of the "beating up" of new plantations

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.:

Help towards the use of timber species for building will reduce reliance on concrete for construction which is one of the biggest contributors to GHG. More support for new development to have subsidised prices for wood in construction will then increase the market for timber sales and make management of under utilised forests more attractive eg those forests remote from market or in hard to reach places for harvesting. This will also increase turnover of old forest stocks and promote new planting

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,

No

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The climate and impacts of carbon reduction from land should be a public asset. Private investment opens the market to capitalism and neoliberalism. A better solution would be a government co-op similar to the British Wool Board so that pricing is fair and open to all. Also investors can be vetted for credentials and good business 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.:

See above. Subsidise wood in the construction market to encourage a move away from concrete to wood

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?:

Citizen science monitoring using an app to map quadrants. Also targeted removal of invasive species eg rhododendron that also carried tree disease.

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, 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.:

Materials eg allocate fencing bundles via machinery rings. Eg machinery ring buys and stores enough fencing materials, vole guards etc etc to provide for 100 small forests. Government support helps them to advertise and market these bundles which can be open to plantings of 10ha or less

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.:

Access roads and paths

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.:

Sustain forestry commission owned sites and bring back local offices/ added value see Dumfries and Galloway for a good example of forestry commission site with cafe/parking/bike hire etc

Community organisations don't have sufficient and broad enough access to resources and expertise. The forestry commission (forest enterprise) is best placed to do this. Many examples of community owned woodland which is good but equal examples of poorly or under managed woodland. The advantage of forest enterprise is continuity of management

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.:

All forestry proposals should be tables within community circles. I personally do this through our local newspaper and community social media page. This is a good informal way to engage and invite people to come and see proposals. I don't think this needs a grant but perhaps evidence of an article and social media post as part of the application process

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.:

I'm not really sure

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?:

Make them less proscriptive. Eg I was successful in a grant for the log processor but part of the requirement was to get a tractor front end loader ticket. I have used one for over 25 years, but this was not good enough. The closest provider of "training" was Staffordshire. This along with wood processing training costs made the project too costly (time and money) so I stood down from the application

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

Following on from the previous statement. If certain skills are required to go with a capital cost FLS should provide a list of providers and costs to attend if they require a few days away from home as most farmers would have to hire in staff to take care of the farm

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.:

Set up pre arranged training packages to go alongside grant measures

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.:

Rhododendron ponticum to me is the biggest issue. It carries phytophthora and it kills biodiversity. Grant plans should be 15 years to allow for full eradication during seeding time (12 years) and there should be teams of people funded and training to work on this and eradicate all ponticum in Scotland. I have tried for grants twice to remove mine but been told I'm not in a focus area and the problem gets worse and worse. I only have so much energy to deal with it and with the help of volunteers do the best I can

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?:

Increase the length of the season.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Work with police and nature scot to facilitate culling in more built up or populated areas

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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