

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.:

Creation of more native woodland, including through replacing felled conifers with native broadleaves, is the most effective way to capture CO2 while protecting our environment and improving biodiversity.  
Supporting more planting of sitka spruce. an aggressively invasive alien species which produces poor quality wood, which is dried in gas ovens(!) and when used in construction rots within a decade, is deplorable. Any extensive monoculture is unwise, and SS which is actively spreading itself over valued peat and moorlands is particularly inappropriate given the aforementioned characteristics.

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.:

Stop funding blanket sitka spruce. The generous tax and grant incentives for this has increased land values above anything farmers can afford. It pours taxpayers' money into an environmentally damaging crop and drives out rural communities. A more sensitive approach to encouraging farmers in LFAs to plant broadleaves on the parts of their farm which are not good grazing (a substantial proportion) and riparian planting where grazing is not allowed anyway. Farmers need tailored training opportunities to manage woodland creation and maintenance.

## 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.:

We now have plant data and climate data for Scotland going back several thousands of years and for parts of Europe which were not glaciated, but which experienced considerable climate change, over much longer periods. These data suggest that most of Scotland's (current) native broadleaves have a substantial ability to survive a wide range of climatic conditions. Providing the conditions are suitable for natural regeneration they should be able to survive the sort of changes which fall within the range predicted by the main models.

The ongoing huge amount of climate research worldwide, employing many different disciplinary approaches, is constantly adding to our knowledge and understanding of the Earth's climate. It is also raising awareness of the great complexity of the climate system and how much we still do not know or understand. It should be noted that settlements and remains of trees alive in the mediaeval warm period are still being uncovered by retreating glaciers across the world, which indicates that global temperatures then were as high or higher than now. Proxies indicate that since the last ice age there have been other even earlier warm periods.

Pests and diseases are a serious threat which Scotland and the UK should be doing more to deal with.

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,

Not sure

Please explain you answer in the text box.:

Need to see the details of any proposed scheme, plus convincing evidence of how it would work, in order to answer this question.  
As you know there are already a number of public/private projects and it would be helpful to find out more about them. Also some evidence of private sector partners who are demonstrably keen to participate in further projects.

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.:

Application processes are far too bureaucratic and complicated for small applications. There are probably lots of farmers, community groups and others interested in small scale planting, provided they can cope with the application process without the help of expensive consultants.

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?

No

How can the grant scheme support this?:

You tell me - you have just asked me how to make them more resilient. If you have some well-researched, convincing ideas about this you should write them into the grant conditions.

### 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, Clearer guidance on grant options, Flexibility within options, Support with cashflow, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

See answer to previous question. Keep it all simple, clear, in English, not bureaucrat's speak.

Get rural schools involved - need to start the interest and learning process young. Trees take a long time to grow and if you do not start educating future land managers when they are young, trees and woodland planted now will not be helped to thrive.

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.:

Simplify the application process - that will reduce SG costs. Add these savings to the cash available to cover higher costs.

Identify specific elements which increase costs and consider how to reduce these. It is amazing how much costs can be reduced if you make the effort.

### 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.:

1. Protect greenspace in and around towns and cities.
2. Involve communities and schools in design, creation and management of woodland. When local groups actively create and/or care for woodland they are less likely to be frequented by undesirables.
3. Link police with local community groups. Shared information like the Lothian and Borders Police and NFUS watch system can work well.

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.:

No blanket solution. Encourage community groups to come forward with ideas and practical plans, not top down solutions. Ask the CWA. Provide more training for skills in using and working wood in different ways.

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.:

Ask community groups, CCs and others.

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.:

Put it all on the web.

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?:

Most substantial forestry grants have been for blanket conifers, usually owned by distant, often corporate, bodies. They do not use local labour, they do not create local jobs. Unless the grants for blanket conifer planting are abandoned, they will continue to drive rural depopulation.

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

It does not support 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.:

Stop funding largescale conifer planting and put the cash saved into more and better grants for broadleaves.

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?:

Shortage of skilled shooters. Encourage target shooting with clubs, courses, competitions. Provide training opportunities for state school pupils. Need more rifle ranges.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Need more highly skilled marksmen/women. See above.

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 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.

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