

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?

No

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Scottish Forestry should develop it's own Forestry Grant Scheme in the same way FC did with WGS and SFGS. That way, it can be light on its feet and responsive to changing demands and priorities.

Everyone is keen to promote the success of FGS, but nobody ever talks about the costs involved in running the scheme and the limitations imposed by RPID. A lot more delivery could have occurred at a lot less cost if SF hands hadn't so tied by RPID.

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

No

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Very leading question, almost like it's a done deal already that FGS will remain part of RPID grants.

Remove the use of LPIDs, go back to map measure.

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.:

Upland commercial Forestry needs to be allowed to operate at scale and any support package must recognise this. It's no use requiring every forest to reach increased diversity requirements if it doesn't have the climate or soils to grow them. Don't lose sight of the fact that many thousands of hectares were planted in the 70's and 80's on very marginal land where only SS and LP can grow to achieve a commercial return. It's clear SF are keen to promote further diversity in commercial woodlands, but few if any of its staff have any recent experience of professionally doing so. Their CE isn't even a forester at all!!!! Perhaps only one board member is a forester and yet these are the people trying to drive this agenda - it is complete incompetency. You just need to look at SF sister organisation FLS and their attempts to grow diverse woodlands because somebody with no experience said they should, looks great on a map, all these nice colours, does anyone ever go and look at their sites - what a shambles and a huge cost to the poor Scottish tax payer. All the diverse species chewed to bits by hares which they are not allowed to control - how do you expect the private sector to grow these species successfully - the costs are enormous and you will end up with terrible woodlands and no timber to harvest, so no toilet paper to mop up all this bull!

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.:

Leading question again. Sounds like you want to reduce the cost, but maintain control.

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.:

Reduce the application complexity, pages and pages long currently.
If your staff don't have relevant experience stop them interfering [Redacted]

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?:

More resilient - it's total guess work. By pushing this diversity agenda all you are going to create is less trees and less harvestable volume, as the diverse trees which replace Sitka Spruce won't grow anything like as well. They will not grow because either the soils and climate doesn't suit and or they will be consumed by weeds or eaten by hare, rabbit, vole, deer and sheep as they are so palatable. To protect them is nearly impossible because the cost of doing so is huge. There is a very good reason why the then FC, having trialed all the diverse species in the 60's, planted SS on mass. Have you ever been responsible for growing diverse conifers, first hand? If not, then I'd urge you to reconsider your ideology until you have - it's just not so easy, trust me, i have - lots. Again look at what FLS have achieved when trying to do so recently - disaster - all eaten.

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?:

It's generally too costly to apply to FGS on small scale areas and the guarantee of success is not there due to SF staff demanding what they want, rather than what the farmer wants.

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.:

It should be as simple as tick a box for a particular model and the grant is paid upfront, the landowner then plants the trees and the scheme is then inspected. SF get way too hung up on really small areas of tree planting which really doesn't matter. SF must spend more money administering small schemes that what they actually cost.

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.:

Your money should be focused purely on removing dead and dying ash trees that pose a public safety risk than worrying about anything else.

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.:

Focusing on growing valuable and much required softwood timber will be the best thing you can ever do for communities, as if we don't have enough of it because we have become distracted with political guff, like the way this question is worded, then the cost of timber will soar and really constrain communities who rely on this renewable resource for every day living. e.g. heat, paper, cardboard, timber for construction, etc. Remember we are talking about trees planted today for your grandchildren to use, not us. So think long and hard about all the spin that SF put out.

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.:

Sorting out SF 'public register 'would be a good start.

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.:

Sort out the PR.

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?:

The truth of the matter is it has pushed up land prices and driven youth out of rural communities.

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.:

There isn't a lack of jobs, there is a lack of people who want to work in the sector because the regulator SF is such a pain to deal with or work for.

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.:

I'd focus all efforts on culling deer, this will be the most efficient and cost effective way of creating new native woodland via regeneration.

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?:

It should focus on promoting the consumption of venison so to increase it's value. if venison was more valuable, we wouldn't have the deer densities we have now. Also, the grant scheme should work to make more larder facilities available as this is an essential piece of equipment required to harvest venison fit for human consumption and currently most hunters don't have access to one.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Encourage deer culling through incentives, training and provision of equipment.

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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Name:

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What is your email address?

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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:

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