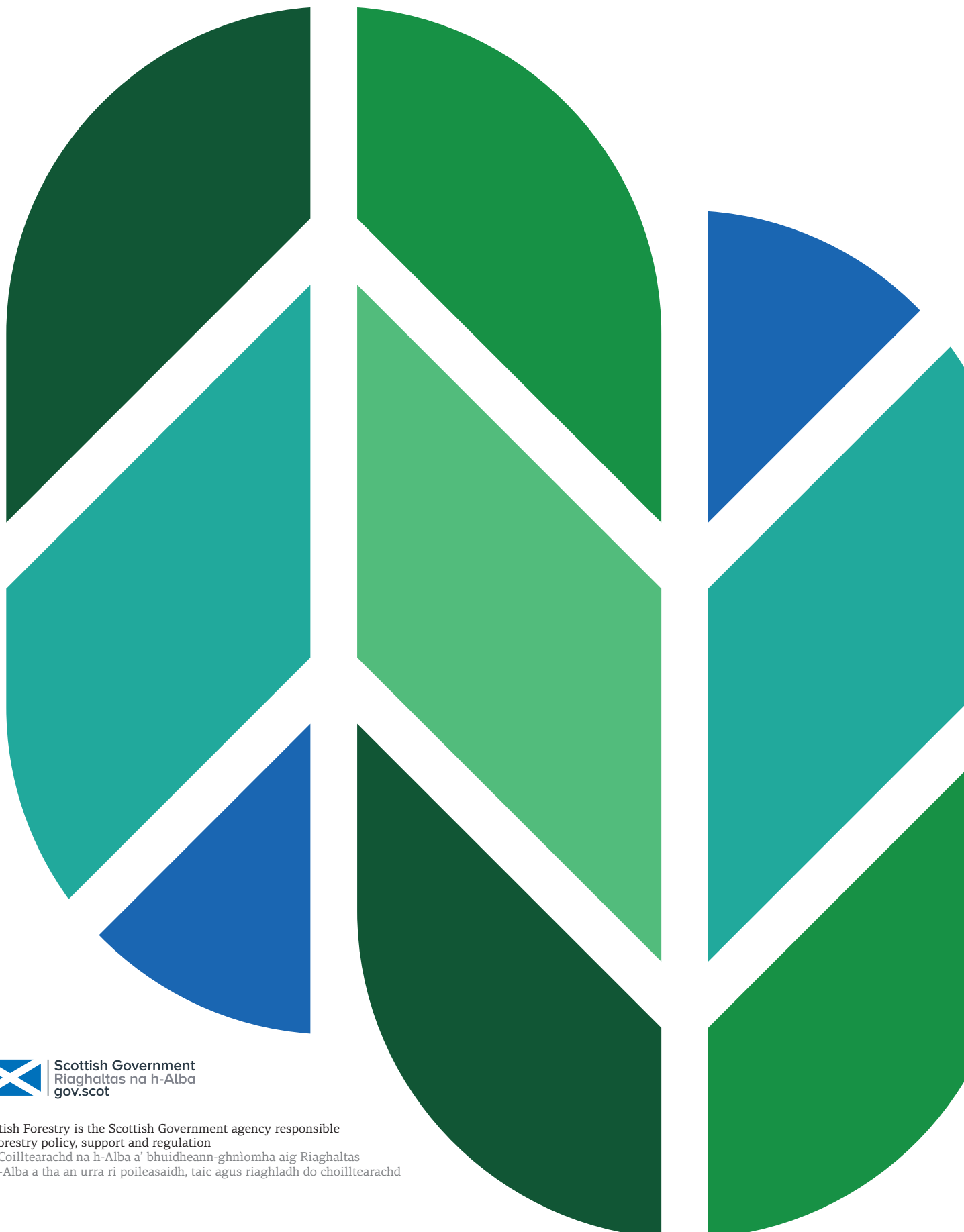




Scottish
Forestry
Coilltearachd
na h-Alba

Scottish Forestry Business Plan 2021 - 2022



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible
for forestry policy, support and regulation
Is e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas
na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd

Foreword



I am very pleased to be presenting our Business Plan for 2021-22. This is our third year of operation, and so much has happened in the short time since Scottish Forestry was created.

The last 18 months have been unique in so many ways. Our staff met the challenges of COVID-19 in a manner that was genuinely inspiring. Together, we put our [core values](#) into action, supporting each other and transforming the way we work.

Not only did our staff look after each other, they continued to support the forestry sector so that their essential work could continue in a safe and secure manner.

Despite the unprecedented disruption caused by the pandemic, we continued to work with all our stakeholders, and still achieved a great deal. For the third year in a row, more than 10,000 hectares of new woodlands were created, both [big](#) and [small](#).

We also helped the tree nursery sector to grow and continued to be vigilant on tree heath. At a time when local access to green spaces was more important than ever, we worked tirelessly with local community groups to maintain and enhance access to woodlands.

Now, in the first year of a new Parliament, we look forward to new challenges. Our country's forests and woodlands are being given a higher profile than ever before, especially their contribution to Net Zero policies and to tackling nature loss.

The Scottish Government, including new Ministers from the Scottish Green Party, is fully committed to expanding further and improving sustainable forest management.

This plan sets out the actions we will take this year to start meeting those challenges, ensuring that we continue to develop and invest in our staff and fully deliver the environmental, economic and social outcomes of forestry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D. Signorini". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dave Signorini
Chief Executive Officer

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1. Introduction

This third Business Plan for Scottish Forestry is a strategic document which draws together our priorities and actions for 2021-2022. It sets out how we will deliver against Scotland's Forestry Strategy, and how we will progress towards our corporate Strategic Objectives. This Business Plan will inform both staff and external stakeholders what we aim to achieve this year and where we will be targeting our staff time and resources.

The wellbeing and job satisfaction of our staff was central during lockdown, and continues to be a priority. Our staff are our greatest asset, and so much of this Plan is focused on supporting them, responding to our People Survey, rolling out our Values and Behaviours, and developing clear career support and progression policies.

Finally, this Business Plan details how Scottish Forestry will be able to support Scottish Ministers, in particular, the Minister for the Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. Forestry makes significant contributions to Net Zero policies and to the rural economy. It provides jobs, biodiversity and high-quality green spaces for people to enjoy. This Business Plan, and the work of Scottish Forestry reflects all of these areas of work.



Strategic Objective 1

Ensure that sustainable forest management is an integral part of public policy, particularly through leading and co-ordinating the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy



Strategic Objective 2

Develop our people and culture to improve performance and resilience, building a dynamic, flexible and modern workforce which serves the forestry sector and wider Scotland well



Strategic Objective 3

Become a more innovative, efficient and accessible organisation by delivering process improvements, and harnessing digital and technological solutions

About Scottish Forestry

As a regulator, funder and policy advisor, our purpose at Scottish Forestry is the sustainable management and expansion of forests and woodlands to deliver more for Scotland.

We do this by:



Providing policy input on forestry matters to Scottish Ministers and other parts of the public sector to ensure that sustainable forest management is an integral part of public policy.



Regulating the management of forests across Scotland, including the planting and felling of trees, and measures related to tree health.



Administering grants and providing other support to land managers to achieve delivery of new planting targets.



Promoting and supporting sustainable forest management as set out in the **UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)** both in grant funded and existing forests and woodlands.



Providing evidence to support policy and practice through reviewing and commissioning research.



Working in partnership to develop and implement projects which help realise the wide range of benefits forestry delivers for Scotland.



Delivering cross-border forestry functions on behalf of the four nations of the United Kingdom.

Agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party

The agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party supports the expansion of Scotland's forests through significant investment in ambitious woodland creation targets, balancing productive forestry and native woodlands. These new forests will bring a range of benefits including green, sustainable jobs, proven carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, and the opportunity for everyone in Scotland to enjoy the physical and mental health advantages of easy access to high-quality forests and woodlands.

It has been agreed to increase woodland creation in line with existing recently increased targets, and to explore opportunities to go further and faster, particularly on nature restoration. Specifically:

- increase annual woodland creation targets to 18,000 hectares per year by 2024/25. We will increase the annual native woodland creation target from 3000 to 4000 hectares and commit to setting evidence-based targets for both native woodlands and natural regeneration as part of the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy; and
- further protect Scotland's ancient woods through establishing a National Register of Ancient Woodlands, and by encouraging owners and managers to maintain them and improve their condition, providing support through the Forestry Grant Scheme.

2. Moving on from COVID-19



Supporting the Forestry Sector as Restrictions Lift

Another key area of focus will be conducting work across the sector to facilitate its recovery from COVID and working with partners to address issues which have arisen as a result from the lockdown, such as delays to planting, shortages of timber supplies and curtailed plant health surveillance.

The forestry sector rose to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic maintaining the supply of timber for essential purposes including pallets for the movement of food and medicines as well as woodfuel for biomass heating systems. The Forest Industry Safety Accord guidance 'Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in forestry' enabled nursery production and tree planting to virtually stay on track, delivering the woodland creation which is central to achieving Net Zero by 2045.

As we come out of lockdown the sector is responding to unprecedented demand for timber and increasing woodland creation targets. There is a need to ensure that we

remain focused on the highest priorities to best achieve the objectives in Scotland's Forestry Strategy (SFS). Development of the second SFS Implementation Plan over the coming month provides the opportunity to do just that through working with stakeholders to take stock and where necessary, to re-focus. The National Stakeholder Group has a key role to play in advising Ministers of the opportunities and challenges facing the sector including:

- building the resilience of our forests in the face of climate change, and to pests and diseases;
- continuing to grow the use of timber and other wood products as part of our journey to Net Zero;
- de-carbonising the sector's own activities;
- attracting and developing a forestry workforce with the right skills for the future; and
- ensuring all our communities benefit from forestry expansion, and that woodland expansion fits well with other land uses.

We have continued to fund forest plan preparation grants as it is clear that some forest managers were put on furlough, or were unable to progress plan applications or renewals due to lockdown. This has included variation requests to claims for planning grant in to 2021 for example. This means that we are helping landowners and agents to get back on track with sustainable forest management, including planning for timber removals.

We have also worked with land agents and landowners to help them vary planting schemes which they could not complete in 2020. This will help with recovery in the wider supply chain, including the nursery sector for example.

Learning and Innovation following COVID

As with many organisations, the COVID restrictions presented many challenges for Scottish Forestry – but it also propelled our organisation forward. As we emerge from restrictions, we want to build on the learning from lockdown.

During lockdown, we established a good foundation for remote working as an organisation, a working practice which was not widely in place in March 2020. During the last 16 months, we have built our expertise and confidence in remote working. This includes:

- implementation of Microsoft Teams across the organisation as a platform for messaging, video based meetings, sharing ideas and collaboration on documents;
- strengthened ability to conduct meetings, events and workshops remotely;
- developed the format for, and participating in, remote training;
- social opportunities such as group team chats, random drop in events, and communities of interests (book groups, film nights and sport challenges);

- shift from paper files to digital working;
- use of electronic signatures to process invoices, transfers and grants; and
- increased staff communications through video updates from our Senior Executive Team.

The results of our Return to the Workplace survey (June 21) highlights that the majority of staff want to work at home for part of their working week to benefit from an improved work/life balance and reduced commuting times. Our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Plan indicates that blending office and remote working can reduce stress, improve mental health and help some staff manage their disability.

Our vision for the future is that we want to enable our staff to perform at their best, no matter where they are and in a way that meets our business needs. Our research shows that staff want greater autonomy which flexible working can allow, which will lead to increased staff satisfaction and will positively impact on staff retention. We want to continue the geographic dispersal of our national posts to enable us to benefit from a wider talent pool, enabling people to be based from any of our office locations, alongside remote working. In driving down staff commutes, and longer term, reviewing the way we use our office space, we will reduce our emissions, part of our journey to Net Zero. Extending digitalisation, which was accelerated during lockdown, will provide Scottish Forestry with the tools to maximise our flexibility and performance as an organisation, modernising our approach not only to remote working, but also processing grants and claims, and our use of maps and GIS and how we conduct site visits.

3. Our Values and Behaviours

Our Values and Behaviours were branded and launched in April 2021. They have grown from staff engagement and discussions and have resulted in a strong foundation on which we can continue to build for the future.

Our values and behaviours define who we are and the high standards we expect in our working environment. This allows our staff and customers to feel safe, valued, included and respected. They are a statement not only about how we treat others but how we expect to be treated.

They will underpin all our future work and will be integrated into our staffing systems such as our Performance Management Framework and Forward Job Plans. In this coming year, we will continue to work with our team managers on ideas as to how our values can become part of the DNA of SF.

We will promote our values and behaviours through our newly designed templates in our internal and external communications and documents. We will be providing our Values booklet as part of our recruitment process. We will be setting up training opportunities on our values for new and existing employees on identifying and addressing inappropriate behaviours. We will build on our case studies of our values in action, showcasing examples such as our Deaf Friendly Forest School which uses learning in the outdoors to develop stronger relationships and understanding between hearing and deaf children in schools.



4. Our Governance, Leadership and Advisory Arrangements



Scottish Forestry has clear and robust governance and leadership arrangements in place. We have structures to manage and monitor our activities and make sure we are achieving objectives. The Senior Executive Team oversee the day-to-day management and direction, deliver against agreed programmes of work, and provide information, advice and guidance to the Chief Executive on key corporate matters and decisions. It is made up of the heads of five functional teams – Operational Services and Transformation; Operational Delivery; Executive Team; Policy and Practice; and Finance and Business Support.

Our Chief Executive is accountable personally to Scottish Ministers and to the Scottish Parliament for the effective and efficient operation of the agency and for its effective financial management. They must ensure that the agency works with other parts of government in support of the achievement of strategic objectives and National Outcomes.

We have a range of advisory bodies in place, both to direct the work of Scottish Forestry internally, and the broader direction being taken by SF/Scottish Government.

Group/Meeting	Purpose	Who and how often
Strategic Advisory Group	Support and advice to Chief Executive to help reach robust and well informed decisions. Their remit includes the strategic vision; the corporate and annual financial plans/ budgets; the effective use of resources; risk management; and overall performance. They take an overview of where we are, provide scrutiny, and test and challenge our approach.	CEO, Chief Forester, SET Members and Non execs, meeting four times a year.
National Stakeholder Group for Scotland	Advise Scottish Government on strategic issues that influence the realisation of the Scottish Government's long-term vision for forestry, SG outcomes and delivery of climate change and biodiversity forestry targets.	Senior members of SF and SG and stakeholders from across the sector. Meet three times a year.
Customer Representative Group	Brings together organisations within the forestry sector and related land uses to discuss and resolve matters of concern relating to operational delivery, grants and licenses administration in Scotland.	Diverse range of stakeholder organisations from across the forestry sector and those with an interest in land use. Meet three times a year.
Audit and Assurance Committee	Supports the Chief Executive by providing advice and constructive challenge particularly around risk management, performance, control, governance and associated assurance to support year-end accountability and reporting.	Non execs. CEO and Head of Finance and Business Services attend all meetings. Meet up to four times per year.
Leadership Team Meetings	Help provide consistent leadership within SF and consistent messaging internally and externally.	All Cost Centre Managers/Team leaders and SET Members. Meeting fortnightly.
Scottish Tree Health Advisory Group	Provides advice on tree health matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ maintenance of Scottish Action Plans e.g. for Chalara, Dothistroma, and Ramorum; ■ addressing gaps in skills and capacity required to support tree health e.g. surveillance, training and citizen science; ■ communication of key tree-health messages to relevant audiences; ■ development of policies and guidance to build tree health resilience across whole sector – including nurseries, woodland managers, conservation and landscape interests and timber processors; ■ preparedness for pest and disease outbreaks; and ■ interactions with the Plant Health Centre. 	Scottish Tree Health Advisory Group

5. Our Strategic Objectives and Our Priorities

Our three Strategic Objectives, as set out in our Corporate Plan, continue to drive our work. This Business Plan provides more detail on what Scottish Forestry will undertake during 21-22 to work towards these Strategic Objectives. It will also outline the steps we will take both as an organisation and in working with the sector as we emerge from Coronavirus restrictions.



Strategic Objective 1
Ensure that sustainable forest management is an integral part of public policy, particularly through leading and co-ordinating the delivery of Scotland’s Forestry Strategy.

The new Scottish Government Ministerial structure represents a very positive move for forestry. Modern productive woodlands and forests deliver carbon sequestration, timber, biodiversity and other environmental benefits. Scottish Forestry’s work has significant contributions to both Net Zero policies and supporting the economy, communities and rural interests. The work we conduct is embedded within both the Net Zero portfolio as well as the Rural Affairs portfolio, which means we have an even greater influence within the Scottish Government.

To deliver on this mixed agenda, planting targets have significantly increased. We are investing in our organisational capacity to ensure we can meet these targets, as well as working with our external partners.

Year	Proposed annual woodland creation target (hectares)
2020-21	12,000
2021-22	13,500
2022-23	15,000
2023-24	16,500
2024-25	18,000

Sustainable forest management will be supported across new and existing forests and woodlands, through the use of Long Term Forest Plans, undertaking research to build our evidence base, and proactively protecting plant and tree health.

Threaded throughout all these activities will be action to assist the sector in recovering from COVID. You can see some evidence in Section 2 about some of the measures we have taken. As restrictions have lifted, our staff have met customers and stakeholders on site (within our internal guidelines) in order to provide essential advice, guidance, support and approval. This has facilitated the recovery of sector activities including woodland creation and sustainable forest management, felling permissions and illegal felling investigations and tree health surveillance.

To maximise the societal benefits of forests, we will work with partners, local communities and people to increase access to forests and woodlands, as well as broaden awareness through our media and communications activities. This year we will also be supporting the development of the second Scotland's Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2025, by working with partners across Scotland to identify future priority actions that will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Forestry Strategy's vision and objectives.



Strategic Objective 2

Develop our people and culture to improve performance and resilience, building a dynamic, flexible and modern workforce which serves the forestry sector and wider Scotland well.

We will implement a safe return to the office, harnessing the lessons of lockdown. Our new model of working will be a blended model, with staff able to work flexibly, from our office bases, remotely and from home.

To deliver on increased planting targets, our staff capacity will expand, and we will be moving towards our new operational model for the Conservancies. This redesign and increase in resources and capacity will not only provide better customer service, but enable staff to manage their workloads better, have increased support in their roles, and clearer career progression. Increases to our national staff base are also planned to meet our regulatory requirements, and to function well as an organisation.



In response to the People Survey, we will work to improve access to learning, training and skills development. Building on work detailing the skills required for specific job roles across the organisation, we will look to provide the learning, training and development our staff need to perform effectively and progress in their careers. We will continue to revise our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, taking action to address key areas such as the gender pay gap and attracting young people to our organisation. All these activities will be bolstered by regular, interactive internal engagement and communications, and by the roll out of our Values and Behaviours. We will extend the monitoring, analysis and use of our Staffing Management Reports to inform decision-making on our staffing activities at a strategic level.



Strategic Objective 3

Become a more innovative, efficient and accessible organisation by delivering process improvements, and harnessing digital and technological solutions.

We will be targeting investment in our Improvement and Delivery Programme. We will build on the digital improvements we have already made as an organisation to improve our infrastructure to provide excellent customer service, working on our Forestry Grant Scheme and Felling Permissions digital interfaces and GIS systems. We will continue to develop our systems to meet our corporate responsibilities, addressing our gaps in compliance, and improving our annual reporting. We will continue to improve our financial planning and procurement procedures, with key projects including the purchase of new financial systems and a management information platform.



6. How we contribute to the National Performance Framework Outcomes



Scottish Forestry contributes directly to and supports a number of Scotland's National Performance Framework outcomes, in particular:



Environment: We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment

This year, there will be a focus on integrating our annual target of 13,500 hectares of woodland creation with other land use objectives. This includes working with partners on climate change and carbon sequestration, building this emphasis into forestry grant incentives. By encouraging the management of forests which comply with the UK Forest Standard, we will be promoting enhanced environmental benefits from our forests and woodlands including increased biodiversity, flood management and species protection. In providing advice and guidance to the sector on tree health, biosecurity, and, specific pests and diseases, we will be maintaining the long-term health of Scotland's trees, woods and forests.



Economy: We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy

Forestry is a vital sector in the rural economy and provides crucial supplies to the construction and biomass industries, whilst food, medicines and other critical supply chains rely on the provision of pallets and wood packaging materials, supplied by Scottish sawmills and processors. This year we will be building the evidence of the economic impact of forestry and securing the availability of wood fibre and timber supplies. In delivering the Strategic Timber Transport Fund, we will be moving towards the total decarbonisation and future proofing of timber transport and timber harvesting. We will be encouraging young people and those changing career to enter the industry, by increasing knowledge and awareness of forestry sector careers in key stakeholders such as career advisors.



Health: We are healthy and active

The latest Public Opinion of Forestry survey shows strong public backing for the Scottish Government's support of forestry, with 86% per cent of respondents visiting forests or woodlands in the previous 12 months, and a third saying they have visited more often. We will be building on this, engaging more people and communities in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands. We will be encouraging a more diverse range of people to value and use forests and woodlands, particularly those close to where they live and work. We will work with partners to embed lifelong learning and play in, and about, forests and woodland to improve people's life chances and understanding about the climate emergency and biodiversity crises.

7. Our Staff



We are investing in our staff and are looking for ways to support and develop them. Part of this is the expansion of our organisation across the coming year.

Year	2020	2021	2022
Number of staff	183 + 8 Agency Staff	191	220
Full Time Equivalent	170.83	177.17	201.7

We are appointing a range of new staff to support our organisational infrastructure and new target operating model. Following our business planning process which ran March to June 21, we expect this to increase by 26 members of staff, if recruitment is successful.

New Target Operating Model for our Conservancies

The key elements of our new target operating model for our Conservancies are:

- Investing in more front line delivery capacity to achieve and sustain the target of 18,000 of Woodland Creation ha/yr;
- Moving towards geographical grouped technical forestry teams with a mix of Woodland Officer and Assistant Woodland Officer grades;
- Developing and investing in scheme/process management teams and capacity in Conservancies, optimising how current Grants and Regulations works is undertaken;
- Conservancies will be composed of a number of forestry and process/scheme management teams. The number of these teams will depend on scale of work programmes;
- Where necessary, additional capacity, to interface with National Office Teams and the Improvement Programme; and
- Specialist delivery roles will continue, either as part of specific Conservancies or working across Conservancies, co-ordinated at a National level.

People Survey

The Civil Service People Survey runs every autumn, and we obtain the results early winter. Across 21-22, this vital source of feedback from staff has, and will continue to influence decisions in areas such as:

Development – investment in training and new Performance and Development Policy and Procedures.

Workload/Resourcing – Recruitment to additional positions and new target operating model.

Communications – Regular all staff communications, consultation on future ways of working, and Virtual Teatimes with our Chief Executive.



8. Our Financial Resources

Scottish Forestry's money comes from Scottish Government Exchequer. As you can see from the graphic below, our predicted budget for 21-22 is £81.053M. Although overall our budget has increased, we are operating under tight restrictions, with an ongoing expectation of savings identification and increased efficiencies.

Our funding for Woodland Grants has increased in line with our increased planting targets. Our planting target for 20-21 was 12,000 hectares. For 21-22, it is now 13,500 hectares. Our funding in the area of Woodland Grants has increased from £55.8M in 20-21 by £8.5M to £64.3M in 21-22. Our salaries budget has increased to resource these increased planting targets.

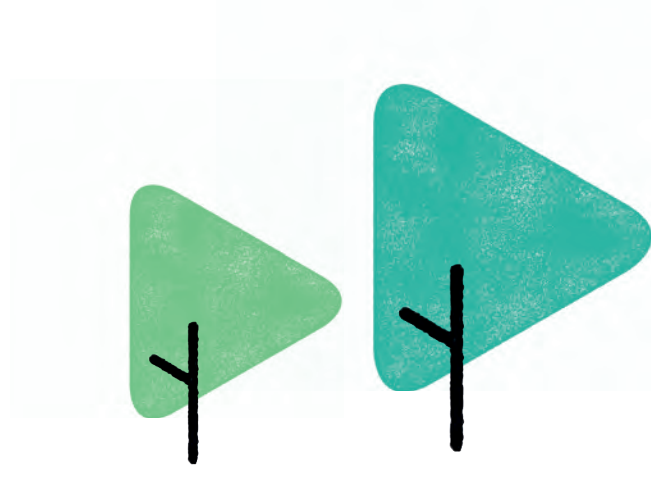
Our administration/running costs cover areas such as general office costs, training, travel and subsistence. In 20-21, our staff were working from home. As a result, our costs came down. These savings have been projected to continue across 21-22, alongside a reduction in costs for office space and office services. Our administration/running costs are expected to be £4.54M for 21/22.

As a result of the EU exit, the co-financing element of the grants has reduced by £16M with all Forestry Grant Schemes approved after 31 December 2020 being funded fully by Scottish Government. Scottish Government now provides 100% of our funding. The difference between the net budgets between the two years is due to the absence of income from the EU in our baseline budget. It does not mean that our budget has been significantly reduced.

The Forestry Development Programme covers funding for Scotland's Forestry Strategy.

Our Tree Health budget has decreased based on previous spend, and reflects our funding forecasts based on these previous patterns.

Some forestry service provision is shared across the UK, and there is an agreement as to what agencies across England, Wales and Scotland will carry out. Scottish Forestry takes the lead in certain areas, such as Woodland Carbon code and Economics. The main area of expenditure under this arrangement falls under Research Delivery. There is Cross Border funding attached to this, and this is the first year it has been incorporated into our baseline budget.



Business Plan - Finance

Baseline budget allocations	2020-21 £000	ABR/SBR £000	Revised £000	2021-22 £000	ABR/SBR £000	Revised £000	Movement £000	Movement %
Woodland Grants	53,800	1,500	55,300	61,800	1,500	63,300	8,000	14%
Grants paid on behalf of DEFRA/ Welsh Government	-	500	500	-	1,000	1,000	500	100%
Co-financing*	(26,900)		-26,900	-	-10,500	-10,500	16,400	-61%
Recovery of Grant monies from DEFRA/Welsh Gov	-	-500	-500	-	-1,000	-1,000	-500	100%
Net Woodland Grants	26,900	1,500	28,400	61,800	-9,000	52,800	24,400	86%

*EU co-financing no longer applicable to new woodland grants claims from 2021-22 due to EU withdrawal but in the ABR we identified £10.5m of EU co-financing for forestry grant schemes agreed prior to 1 January 2021.

Salaries (inc agency staff)	8,648	17	8,665	9,542		9,542	877	10%
Admin & Running Costs	4,679		4,679	4,458		4,458	-221	-5%
Forestry Development Programme (Scottish Forestry Strategy)	1,350		1,350	1,370	190	1,560	210	16%
Tree Health	900		900	830		830	-70	-8%
Timber Transport Scheme	2,000	6,000	8,000	2,000	5,000	7,000	-1,000	-13%
Cross Border Funding*	-	4,863	4,863	2,730	2,133	4,863		0%

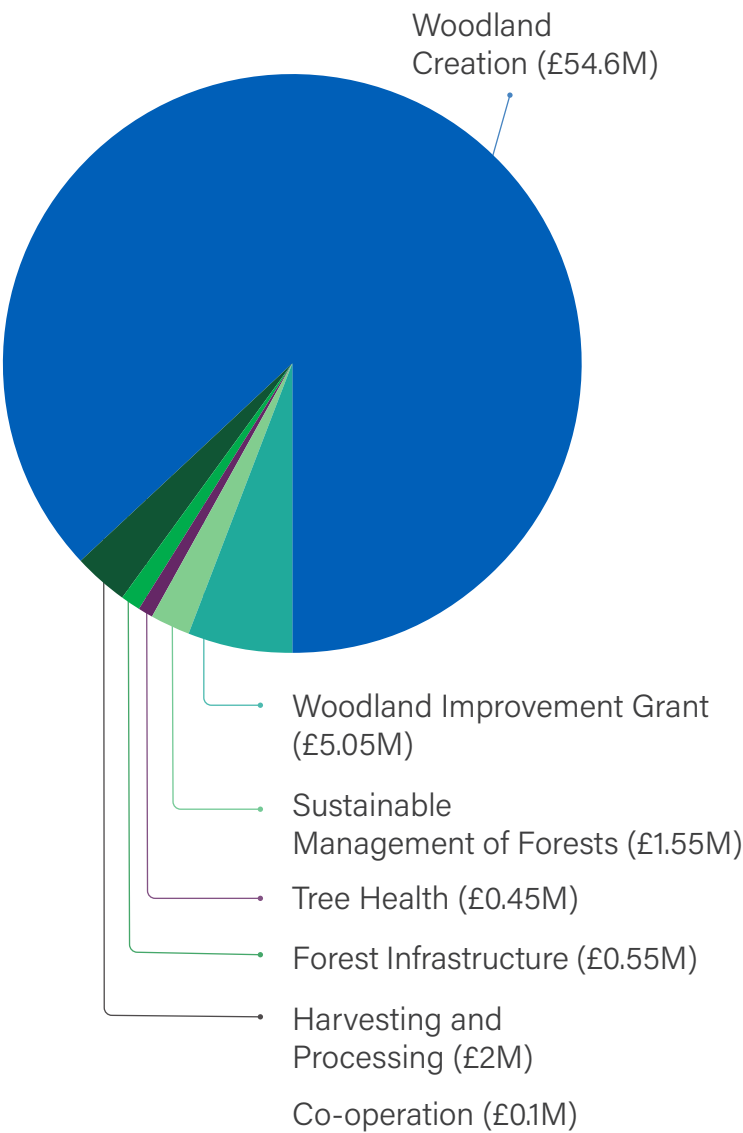
*Included in baseline budget from 2021-22. Previously transferred through in year budget revisions.

Total Net Budget	44,477	12,380	56,857	82,730	-1,677	81,053		
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Forestry Grant Scheme

Scottish Forestry is responsible for administering the Forestry Grant Scheme. Through the Scottish Rural Development Programme, funding is provided in two key areas: Woodland Creation; and Sustainable Forest Management £54.6M of funding will be provided for Woodland creation and £9.7M for Sustainable Forest Management. The availability of grants in the eight different categories for 21-22 will be broken down as follows.

Forestry Grant Scheme Breakdown
21-22: £64.3M



9. Our Priorities and Activities in Detail

Strategic Objective 1 – Ensure that sustainable forest management is an integral part of public policy, particularly through leading and co-ordinating the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy.

Woodland Creation

- Delivery of 13,500 Ha of woodland creation. This will be done in line with relevant regulations, the requirements of UKFS and the charter times for processing grant applications. Meet the increased annual native woodland creation target from 3000 to 4000 hectares and commit to setting evidence-based targets for both native woodlands and natural regeneration as part of the 2022 Biodiversity Strategy. We will be looking at our programmes and policies to deliver on the Scottish Green Party agreement. We have already committed to ensure at least 4000 Ha of the 13500 Ha woodland creation target for 2021-22 is made up of native species.
- Monitor sustainable expansion and management of woodlands through use of Earth Observation techniques.
- Work with Land Commission Scotland and the forestry sector to develop a more structured approach to consultation with stakeholders over woodland creation proposals that can help strengthen that component of the UKFS.
- Integrate annual target with other land use objectives for expansion of forests and woodlands by linking with partners working on climate change and carbon sequestration, building this emphasis into forestry grant incentives.

Ensure forests and woodlands are sustainably managed

- Promote Sustainable Forest Management and support development of Long Term Forest Plans, which are compliant with UK Forest Standards. Work with partners

to deliver enhanced environmental benefits from our forests and woodlands, such as increased biodiversity, flood management and species protection. Lead review of UK Forest Standards and update. Facilitate national conversation over resilience and adaption of Scotland's woods and forests and develop concept of 'The Right Tree in The Right Place'.

Improved evidence base to inform development of policy, practice, and, implementation

- Ensure the policy and regulatory framework which underpins the delivery of Scotland's Forestry Strategy and contribute to SG outcomes is more coherent, visible and up to date on hot topics such as Net Zero and EU Exit. Proactively review and further develop policy on carbon, resilience and adaption, and community engagement through working with relevant SG Teams, Public Body Partners and wider stakeholders. Ensure policy developments on deer, biodiversity and post-EU environmental equivalents are progressed in partnership with forestry interests through engagement with relevant SG Teams.
- Ensure Scotland's research needs are met by working with partners, and by commissioning research in different areas such as tree planting in peaty soils, flood management and carbon balance.

Increase the adaptability and resilience of forests and woodlands

- Maintain long-term health of Scotland's trees, woods and forests. Effective surveillance, contingency planning, and management of pests and diseases together with measures to build resilience through creation and adaption of woodland. Identify emerging pest and disease threats and high risk pathways. Provide advice and guidance to the sector on tree health, biosecurity, and, specific pests and diseases. Gather evidence on drought.

Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth

- Promote continued growth in the use of and value-added to Scottish timber through supporting research and the sector to increase the volume of Scottish timber used in construction and biofuels. Support the economy and rural communities to recover from COVID with a particular emphasis on increasing knowledge and awareness of forestry sector careers with key stakeholders through job creation initiatives and career advisors. Regular communications with the forestry sector and stakeholders through the Customer Reps Group and National Stakeholder Forum to tease out evidence as to where further added value can be achieved in order to help the sector recover. This can include Harvesting and Processing grants which for example, can help the nursery sector to make working conditions COVID-compliant more quickly thereby boosting transplant availability to support woodland creation targets. Work across the Scottish Government to ensure that the replacement for the Common Agricultural Policy ring-fences funds for tree planting, orchard creation, and woodland regeneration, as well as support for the development of rural businesses linked with forestry.
- Further deliver, develop and promote the Woodland Carbon Code.
- Build evidence of economic impact of forestry and provide forest economics advice. Ensure increase of wood fibre availability. Secure timber supplies to enable continued growth of timber use in construction and biomass, supporting research and the sector to increase the volume of Scottish timber used in construction. Deliver the Strategic Timber Transport Fund, moving towards total decarbonisation and future proofing of timber transport and timber harvesting.

Publish the second forestry strategy implementation plan (2022-2025)

- Engage stakeholders in the development of the next implementation plan setting out key actions to deliver the Strategy's objectives and priorities for action.

Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodlands resources to enable more people to improve their health, wellbeing and life chances

- Consult on ways to increase easily accessible, sustainably managed woodlands, including native woodlands, in urban or peri-urban areas, as part of a just transition. Engage more people and communities in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands. Encourage a more diverse range of people to value and use forests and woodlands, particularly those close to where they live and work. Support public sector bodies, as part of their statutory duty under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018, to identify and implement opportunities to increase tree cover on land they own and manage, with an emphasis on native woodland and natural regeneration. We will explore if further legislative changes are required to strengthen the duty on public bodies.

Raise awareness and profile of forestry through our communications

- Identify opportunities to raise awareness of Scottish Forestry's work to targeted audiences (e.g. through ministerial visits). Develop content for existing and new social media channels to connect with key stakeholders and new audiences. Liaise with external contacts and partners to better connect with communities, diverse groups and key influential stakeholders. Establish a National Forestry Stakeholder Group to enable strategic discussions between Scottish Ministers and the forestry and land use sector.

Strategic Objective 2 – Develop our people and culture to improve performance and resilience, building a dynamic, flexible and modern workforce which serves the forestry sector and wider Scotland well.

Conservancies to move to a new target operating model which will ensure better customer service, achieve compliance and enable SF to meet our woodland creation targets

- Invest in front line delivery capacity. Move towards geographical grouped technical forestry teams with a mix of pay bands. Specialist delivery roles will continue, either as part of specific Conservancies or working across Conservancies, co-ordinated at a National level. Where necessary, additional capacity, to interface with National Office Teams and the Improvement Programme. Invest in our administration teams, who are also vital to our success, building both capacity and new roles in Conservancies.

Flexible and safe working

- Ensure that Health and Safety remains a priority for the leadership of Scottish Forestry, effective coordination with FLS H&S team and all staff have access to appropriate training and development. Review of SF Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy. Establish a HS&W committee across all of SF.
- Undertake review of flexible working arrangements and identify opportunities for future working models. Enable staff to conduct meetings, site visits and return safely to the office as restrictions ease. Look at the way our offices function, to identify different models of operating. Manage staff and stakeholders expectations through regular communications and support.

- Review the flexible working options available to staff, working with staff to identify opportunities for new working practices to be adopted and building on the benefits of home/office working. Review and update associated staffing policies.

Attracting, recruiting and retaining staff from different backgrounds, particularly providing opportunities for young people

- Embed learning about forests and woodland for lifelong learning and play. Support industry to increase knowledge and awareness of forestry sector careers in key stakeholders such as career advisors.
- Agree and implement the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan on an ongoing basis, with a focus on addressing the gender pay gap and providing opportunities for young people. This is long term and will be the output from other actions linked to development opportunities. We are also planning to promote understanding of diversity including neurodiversity. Review recruitment process and how vacancies/opportunities are advertised in order to maximise access to skills and diversity of applicants.



Create and maintain a skilled and competent workforce with the capacity to meet customers' needs and deliver organisational priorities

- Adoption and embedding of the BRAVE values, through activities such as training; using the values branding in our emails and documents; incorporating the values into our staffing infrastructure such as Personal Objective Plans; using them in our Customer Charter; and using Values checks in decision-making processes. At both an organisational and team level, address issues raised in the staff survey (such as tackling inappropriate behaviours, learning and development opportunities and workload issues).
- Put into place leadership development opportunities and a clear career progression structure across for different job roles across the organisation. Work with FLS to develop suitable systems to monitor and improve performance management.
- Recruit staff to facilitate skills development, to ensure this is better supported and more consistently achieved within the business and that our investments in skills development is better aligned to the business needs. Build on improving our approach to Learning and Development through developing our use of iLearn. Use the Skills Matrix and individual Personal Objective Plan to ensure that people have the skills and knowledge required in their role. People to identify and secure the learning/skills development they require to progress in their job role and in their career (both informal and formal training and qualifications). Training of existing and new staff in the effective use of internal services. Promote and help introduce increased levels of staff self-sufficiency and knowledge of financial and business support responsibilities.

- Extend the monitoring, analysis and use of our Staffing Management Reports to inform decision-making on our staffing activities at a strategic level.

Use meaningful engagement and effective internal communications

- Continue to improve our corporate and external communications. Implement our Corporate Communications Strategy. Review our existing media and communications channels and introduce new ones. Produce ongoing communications in relation to COVID and our areas of expertise and leadership. Strengthen our communication activities through specific projects, such as brand development, creating a content bank, developing our Gaelic Language Plan, and reviewing our publications.



Strategic Objective 3 – Become a more innovative, efficient and accessible organisation by delivering process improvements, and harnessing digital and technological solutions.

Improve our business processes to provide excellent customer service

- Improve the functionality of our GIS system to enable better administration of the Forestry Grant Scheme, Felling Permissions and Forest Plans through the digitising, management and publishing of spatial data. Support and development of existing spatial business systems to effectively deliver information to staff and stakeholders. Complete the development and implementation of new pre-application and small loans scheme case types in casebook and move on to new case type improvements which will include public register and regulatory elements. Improve variations management across the agency.
- Delivery of new digital delivery systems and process, alongside ongoing maintenance and support of existing systems and processes to facilitate Forestry Grant Scheme approvals (woodland creation and other), FGS Claims and Felling Permissions.
- Support the implementation of a new approach to prioritising organisational projects.
- Complete key projects such as the Regional Pilot Project, myForest WC Platform, Small Woodlands Loan Scheme and Croft Woodland Project.

Ensure SF operates as a high performing public agency, and complies with the relevant corporate and statutory obligations

- Focus on gaps in our statutory compliance as an executive agency. Ensure we have legal and effective records management and information governance, and that we are

compliant with data protection legislation. Put into place Sustainability Reporting systems in place for reporting data on corporate emissions; and taking action on Climate Change, Adaptation and our own journey to Net Zero. Prioritise meeting the gaps in our corporate responsibilities. Continue to meet Ministerial and Official correspondence/FOI/ briefing targets, maximising our organisational capacity to achieve this.

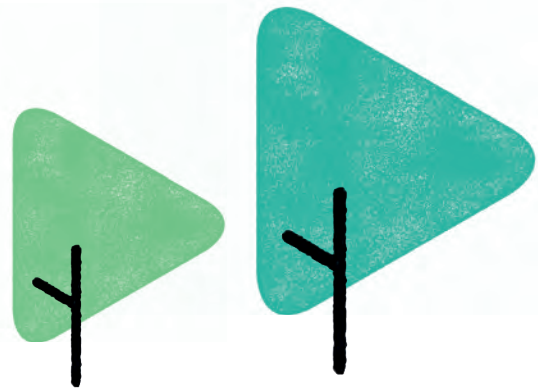
- Develop and implement our management information reporting strategy and production of our KPIs. Ongoing maintenance and support of existing and new reporting systems, covering areas such as: staffing; budget; Forestry Grant Scheme case workload/clearing/claims; woodland creation statistics; and felling permissions.

Using effective financial planning and management information to drive decision-making, improve productivity and performance

- Complete transition of shared finance service responsibilities from FLS. Identify and procure new finance system and Management Information Platform for implementation by 2023.
- Evolve and improve our Business Planning and Budget Monitoring process, promoting and increasing budget management responsibilities. Identify and establish Direct Purchasing Authority operating model to better enable procurement best practice and efficiency.
- Review and implement project level audits to deliver process improvements, as well as regular process reviews to improve efficiency.
- Further develop the use of ERDM across SF in order to improve access whilst also providing increased capability to share and store information securely and electronically.

10. Key Performance Indicators and Monitoring

Over the last year, we have been working on developing a suite of Key Performance Indicators, to monitor our progress towards our Strategic Objectives. Many are now in place, whereas others are subject to improvements and will be published for the first time in subsequent years. Our KPIs are published separately every year. In addition, the National Teams and Conservancies have identified lower level indicators to monitor their progress in specific areas of work.





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