

Update on FGS – 2020 Capital Claims Additional Flexibility and Arrangements for Handling End of Year Claims

This note provides information on arrangements for submitting capital claims for Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) works completed within the 2020 claim year.

1. Background

Much of upland Scotland was covered by snow in the first six weeks of 2021 and as a result there were significant restrictions on planting and ground preparation until mid-February. We are also aware that, for some projects, Covid-19 restrictions and EU exit related problems have delayed the receiving of machinery and parts from the EU.

In recognition of these difficulties Scottish Forestry (SF) are offering increased flexibility to Forestry Grant Scheme customers who are due to submit FGS capital claims by 31 March 2021.

2. What we are doing to help

This year we will be using a split FGS claims process which allows an extra period, until 31 May 2021, for claim supporting documents to be provided.

A list of claim supporting documents you must provide with your claim is provided in the [FGS option guidance](#) relevant to your contract, examples include:-

- maps
- components tables
- receipted invoices
- seed certificates

We normally require all claim supporting documents to be provided with the claim but this year we are allowing you an additional two month period to provide all the supporting documents.

Forestry Grant Scheme capital claim forms for 2020 claim year activities must still be submitted to Scottish Forestry by the deadline of 31 March 2021.

We are allowing a period of two months for you to complete site surveys, compile your supporting maps, and prepare your supporting documents and evidence. You must then submit all of the outstanding supporting documents to us before 31 May 2021, to support the capital claim you submitted prior to 31 March.

This will allow you to maximise your efforts on completing your planned 2020 claim year capital works. As an example, this will allow you to continue planting up until the end of

March on your Woodland Creation and Restructuring Regeneration projects and allow you a further two months to take delivery of any machinery or equipment that you are purchasing under our Harvesting & Processing grants.

These three FGS options are where you've told us the greatest risk of delays will occur. However, for clarity, these arrangements are in place for all FGS capital items that have a 2020 claim year.

Your claim will not be authorised until all supporting evidence is supplied. Where you have informed us that you intend to submit the claim supporting documents later, we will not finalise the processing of your claim until these documents are received, which must be no later than 31 May 2021.

3. What you will need to do

You still need to make a declaration, by 31 March 2021, that the quantities of work you are claiming for have been substantially carried out, as this is required in order for SF to finalise the FGS 2020/21 grant spend and, where applicable, associated woodland creation areas.

We believe this approach will reduce the time that both you and SF Conservancies have to spend on the administration of the FGS by reducing the requirement for variations associated to your FGS claim year. However, please note that this is not without risk:

- You **must inform us**, at the time you submit your FGS capital claim, if you have not included all of the claim's associated supporting documents. This is very important as SF staff will be processing many claims and payments at this time of year. If you do not tell us that you have outstanding documents to submit, we will not know to put your claim on hold, and by processing your claim the absence of the full record of supporting documents will lead to additional correspondence and may result in your claim being penalised.
- For woodland creation, your associated 2021 SAF deadline is the 17 May 2021 and you must ensure your SAF submission aligns with both your capital claim, submitted before 31 March, and the actual quantities you will provide evidence for by 31 May.
- You are making a declaration on your FGS capital claim form of grant claim quantities. Please be careful to ensure that you are able to fully evidence these quantities in the supporting documents that you will be supplying before 31 May 2021. We cannot allow you to retrospectively amend your claim form, so please be absolutely sure that you know the quantities delivered when submitting your claim form.

In Summary:

- You must submit your FGS capital claim for claim year 2020 by 31 March 2021.
- With this claim submission, you **must inform us** if you have not included all the required supporting documents.
- You must submit all supporting documents by 31 May 2021.

Please [contact your local Conservancy](#) if you have any queries about the content of this note.

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