

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.:

Support for forestry and the scale of plans risks outweighing other rural development priorities and funding. Large scale forestry should therefore be managed separately from other land support. Smaller, more accessible forestry options which are intended as part of a mixed enterprise should be part of the tiered system under future agriculture support.

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.:

Future forestry support needs to reflect that not all forestry plans are equal. Large scale forestry should be separate from agriculture funding, whereas smaller scale forestry schemes which are designed to complement agriculture businesses should be developed. We need to separate funding for those which are looking to create mass planting and those who are looking to diversify their agricultural businesses. There should be a forestry scheme specifically for those who are active agricultural businesses to try and tackle the increasing issue of farms being bought by companies purely for afforestation funded through FGS.

## 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.:

increased emphasis on mixed native woodland, mixed age stands, more natural use of open ground in FGS plans, greater allowances for varied stocking densities, greater emphasis on genetic diversity.

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.:

Private companies are currently exploiting the FGS system - businesses are funding their projects through FGS and then capitalising on the carbon sequestration value - essentially being paid 3 times in some cases (BPS claim, FGS claim, carbon credits). Through FGS funding, the tax payer is funding private companies to offset their emissions. Government funding of forestry needs to focus more on forestry as complementary income to mixed businesses (esp. agriculture) and not look to fund funding for corporations such as Aviva.

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.:

Focus on developing schemes which are accessible to farmers who are looking to create small scale forestry, shelter belts etc on their holdings. There is a high administrative burden to this, but mass forestry can be funded through private companies while smaller scale "less attractive" forestry options should be created for farmers (including tenants). Greater connectivity through catchments can be encouraged through smaller scale native planting through and between farms.

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?:

For any large scale forestry plan - yes.

### 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.

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

Are there others not listed above?:

FGS process very long and complicated, need a streamlined version for small scale woodland. Better integration between FS staff and RPID. Forestry should not appear as a huge and daunting commitment for farmers but a simple addition which complements their agricultural business.

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.:

Focus funding more on smaller scale woodland as these are the woodlands which the private sector dont/wont fund as they dont "pay". Small scale woodland for agricultural businesses is in the only option which should be funded in future agricultural budgets and delivered as part of the tiered system of future support.

### 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.:

unknown.

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.:

surely this can only be done through community ownership? Large scale land owners benefit whatever is being done to the land.

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.:

A lot of focus is put on community engagement, but not enough on the unforeseen impact of forestry created - eg large estate being bought and people losing their jobs and having to leave their homes ([redacted]). If you clear the community in order to develop the forestry proposal, it is already too late. There needs to be greater emphasis on the social impact of a forestry scheme (who loses their jobs, their homes, their livelihoods). It doesnt matter if you have a town hall meeting to include the "community" if the real community have already been cleared from the land. This is brushed off by many as the "clearance" of people is usually done before the sale of the land, meaning the new owners take no responsibility, but a forestry plan which empties a glen is not in the public interest.

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.:

plans should have to clearly detail what was there before - a farm, a business doing x employing x. Its important what is being lost in the transition to forestry is clearly understood and presented in a unbiased way. Greater transparency about job creation is important - communities are often led to believe there will be local jobs but the reality is different. Also - who even owns the project, is it a company, someone local - there needs to be openness about who is doing what with the land and what their motivations are.

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?

Not Answered

a. How could this approach be used to support further forestry businesses?:

It should be required to offer contract work to local contractors in the first instance. where the skills are lacking, this needs to be highlighted to forestry scotland and work undertaken to look at how this can be addressed.

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

large scale forestry projects should have a local skills development criteria reflecting apprentice work, work experience programmes, links with local colleges or schools. If the public are funding the project there should be greater corporate responsibility and links to rural skills development for young people.

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.:

make it part of the scheme eligibility requirement for projects over a certain size threshold

## 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.:

increase the percentage of forestry plans which have to be native woodland.

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?:

support local deer management experts, contract local individuals, embrace mixed aged stands and be more flexible regarding stocking densities.

Small scale mixed land use?:

payments for deer management for farmers or local small scale contractors.

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:

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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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