

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.:

Currently the grant system does not allow innovation, novel approaches or even old approaches. The woodland offices, ops managers don't appear to have the forestry experience, objectivity, and empowerment to think freely. For example, a proposal of seeds sown rather than trees planted would no meet the criteria for NWC. The benefits of implementing seed planting are more trees and less carbon release. Allow each proposal to be assessed on its merits and with objectivity.

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.:

Grant funding, for the use of existing agricultural machinery in the instance of seed tree sowing. This could aid breaking down some attitudinal barriers. A productive shelter belt system where fruit, hedging or short rotation coppice trees are planted on the field margin rather than agriculture being paid to 'Do nothing' may have multiple benefits

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.:

Grants must be reflective of the increased costs for labor and materials, the current costs for plants and fencing are far below the brake even point for WIG or NWC. This sways the landowner into planting strictly commercially.

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.:

Reading between the lines, is this a proposal to stop greenwashing or is this a proposal to exacerbate the already inflated land value? Agents are driving the value of established woodland and land readily. Smaller landowners have become increasingly marginalized.

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.:

The funding should be reflected in all the costs associated with the operation. If receiving capital cost only which is less than cost of supply and labour the costs of the agent, surveyors, fencers, ect are carried by the woodland owner. Most NWC schemes don't break even once all the costs are calculated. Similarly with WIG the costs are not reflective of or close to the operational or material costs. The woodland owner will typically choose commercial return and therefore pick conifer over any schemes with a return over a longer period.

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?:

When considering a sites located in the West or Borders, watercourses can be frequent. The current grant system does not offer an incentive for planting the watercourses with broadleaf. If there were an incentive to reflect the additional management time, cost, and value to mitigate climate change. The grants should be available to clients who are implementing good climate practice altruistically and to incentives more commercially focused clients.

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, Intervention level, Support with cashflow, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

Support for woodland agents to conduct surveys and budgeting of projects for crofters and farmers. The grant covers our time offering advice.

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.:

as above. If smaller farmers were to be incentivised to collectively by planting or mounding machines, offering a diversification

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.:

The current offering of WAIT and SMF grant are poor and not reflective of the management time involved in managing trails and liaising with local path groups. The current offering does not identify where the wood is in relation to the population. For example, several woodlands that I manage would not fit the criteria of either scheme but would be the only access to woodland for local towns and villages.

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.:

It would be beneficial to offer a grant to cover the cost of maintenance of trail networks. Conduct tree safety inspections and recorded the data.

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.:

Have more public presence and a more accessible web presence

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.:

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?:

Unfortunately, the capital cost is lagging far behind any actual cost for all operations. The grant system should be reflective of the cost, additionally take account of inflation, and the CPI rate annually.

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.:

As an agent we have recently taken on a student forester. There could be a grant for this to support our input into their ongoing development.

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.:

Deer management is key to establishing woodland expansion, this would be inclusive of a grant for Deer fencing to a set minimum standard (this would mitigate the poor-quality fencing I've been seeing over the past few years) incentives for high seats, application of Trico.

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?:

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Extra point for collaboration and ongoing maintenance of shared fences

Small scale mixed land use?:

Deer management is key to establishing woodland expansion, this would be inclusive of a grant for Deer fencing to a set minimum standard (this would mitigate the poor-quality fencing I've been seeing over the past few years) incentives for high seats, application of Trico.

incentives to collaborate and maintain, monitor the fence.

If you wish to make any other relevant comments, please do so in the text box below.

Please add your comments here.:

Deer management is key to establishing new woodland. Collaboration between differing estates sporting and forestry could have an incentive. it would make shared marches more suitable for new plantings

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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