

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.:

Grant support for forestry needs to be improved because at present, the support is creating a rush of new predominantly single-species plantations and insufficiently few diverse woodlands (which would be better for biodiversity, flood management, drinking water, river life, and future climate, fire and disease-risk management)

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.:

1. Need to allow more flexibility so that wood-pasture can develop into woodland without losing support,
2. provide support for farmers with scrubby knolls to maintain that scrub and encourage it to develop into diverse woodland;
3. provide permission and encouragement for wind-blown and over-mature but in-accessible conifer shelter-belts to be felled and replaced with more appropriate low-woodland or scrub;
4. provide permission/encouragement to allow very low density of cattle (not sheep) to winter/graze in woodlands to help manage open spaces and woodland flora.

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.:

Remove support for the planting of single-species blocks of forestry (in particular, clones/vegetatively-propagated improved sitka spruce), to reduce risk of disease.

Ban the artificial drainage of plantations and restocking sites, so that wetlands remain wet and retain the soil carbon.

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,

Yes

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

Need blended finance, but it might be best to flip the system, and send private finance to SF (to enable better regulation and policing, as well as better carbon storage and biodiversity).

Need especially to ensure that forestry takes better care of soil carbon.

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.:

Increase the financial support, advice for, and time permitted for NATURAL REGENERATION of native trees.

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?:

By focussing support on mixed, diverse woodlands which respect the underlying soil carbon and soil life.

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?:

Encouragement and enhanced support for integrated farm/woodland systems;
Ongoing management payments (because increasing woodland cover on a farm usually means decreased stocking/cropping)

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.:

More support for reducing stocking densities and encouraging natural regeneration.

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.:

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.:

Require all large-area forest planting and restocking by non-resident owners/managers to provide and manage access (footpaths and gates);
Require open areas within rural forests to be open to the possibility of conservation grazing with cattle/ponies.

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.:

Require afforestation and restocking plans to be discussed and agreed with the community when forests are near communities or along footpaths, roads, view points etc.

Take better care of private water supplies: increase buffer zones for insecticide and fungicide use in the flushes and seep areas above private water supplies. (Public water supplies, too)

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.:

Keep improving the website

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?

Yes

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

Support training on peatland and soil carbon
Support footpath creation and management

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

Provide support for training on peatland and soil carbon
Ensure that forestry degrees include modules on soil carbon and biodiversity.

Send forestry excavator operators on Peatland Action training courses

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.:

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 support for the regeneration and colonisation of native woodlands.

Ban the excavation of man-made drainage ditches on wetlands and peaty soils prior to afforestation.

Focus grant support on the type of woodland most appropriate for the site's soil and biodiversity.

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?:

Deer management groups

Small scale mixed land use?:

Provide a list of certified rangers/deer-managers, and deer larders

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 organisation?

Organisation:

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