

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry
Submitted on 2023-04-13 08:53:00

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.:

Continued support is vital in helping with the cost of tree planting and associated fencing and tree protection to help reach ambitious Govt targets. It is important that this is targeted where it is best suited ie trees planting that helps achieve these targets namely biodiversity, carbon sequestration, climate change mitigation and flood 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.:

Less dense woodland and smaller areas should be eligible. This will help deliver more biodiverse farms with greater emphasis on riparian, hedgerow, native and low density woodland pasture which also has proven CO2 sequestering 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.:

Payment for smaller areas, less dense trees, hedgerow planting, native broadleaf, eligibility of these within carbon code.

Commercial forestry will also be required as we transition to a low carbon economy but an integrated approach and the introduction of both mixed woodland and continuous cover forestry (as they do in lots of Europe) would help our timber operations be more resilient and sustainable.

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 you answer in the text box.:

The capital expenditure involved with woodland creation is substantial so extra support from the private sector is welcome as grant schemes (with current inflation) do not cover all the costs of fencing, planting ground prep, tree protection etc.

NB There is also an ongoing cost to manage these trees so having some sort of annual income from a private funder for the delivery of outcomes (carbon, wildlife, flood management etc) would be really helpful to ensure woodlands are properly managed

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.:

Annual maintenance payments beyond the current 5 years or some sort of annual private sector polluter pays/ ESG/Biodiversity Net Gain payment to ensure good, nature friendly woodland management.

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?:

See above

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, Flexibility within options, Support with cashflow, Information on how current land use could continue with trees integrated throughout

Are there others not listed above?:

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 funding per Ha up front and /or longer term income streams as mentioned previously like outcome based payments based on annual delivery of biodiversity net gain, flood management, climate resilience

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.:

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.:

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?

Yes

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

Rates of grant need to increase in line with inflation or else there will be a large shortfall between actual cost and grant money which will prevent a lot of people from planting woodland (unless there is other derivable income like carbon, BNG etc)

More flexibility between commercial, native, nat regen, and more outcome as opposed to process driven.

For example - 2400 or 1600 stems per hectare may often be too many trees but that is often the requirement, but also often a lot of regen will grow amongst the stocked trees. So an outcome based approach over say 10 years would work better.

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.:

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.:

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?:

We have deer, rabbits and mountain hares so our woodland creation costs are far greater than in some other areas. We need deer fencing, rabbit/ hare fencing and tubes (in case rabbit/ hare get its) For example in 2021 the snow drifts were so high that 500 hares entered one plantations by walking over the fences! I think this should be taken into account when offering funding and it should be more nuanced between say upland and low land plantings

Small scale mixed land use?:

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

Please add your comments here.:

I would like to see the end of use of plastic tubes. These create a huge amount of waste and many years to recover all the plastic from the ground if at all. Guards are however important for protection against rabbits, hares, and deer. Could there be funding for biodegradable tubes (which cost more but will be cheaper in the long run) to help us reduce our carbon footprint and pollution whilst planting these trees so badly needed.

About you

What is your name?

Name:

[Redacted]

What is your email address?

Email:

[Redacted]

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Rottal Estate

Scottish Forestry would like your permission to publish your response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with 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.

I consent