

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.:

Incentivises landowners, both large and small, to appropriately manage and plant woodlands

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.:

Do not use the LPID funding structure for forestry, causes confusion and is costly to administer by both parties

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.:

Planting and appropriately managing woodlands can only be a good thing for the country, the climate and biodiversity. All types of woodlands have multiple benefits for flora, fauna and human populations, there should be enthusiasm to create woodlands and systems/process should not be restrictive or difficult to follow.

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,

Not sure

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

The grant support mechanism should definitely have more flexibility, but it should not be reduced or withdrawn and replaced by private investment. Natural capital and carbon schemes have the potential to provide income in the well into the future with no guarantee, but this does not pay for the capital items which landowners have to pay for upfront.

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.:

Funding packages have been heavily skewed towards native woodlands without taking into consideration the economic, social and environmental benefits of commercial woodlands. Scotland has an industry based on timber which supports the rural economy. The obsession with increasing diversity in response to perceived climate changes should be stopped and basic principles of understanding the growing potential of soils, right tree-right place-right reasons should be brought back into focus rather than just a percentages game. We have to replace the softwoods that we are currently harvesting and expand the commercial availability of timber for future generations as we are currently using the foresight of previous generations and should replace what we are using.

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?:

Resilience should be gauged on the constraints of the site not trying to achieve a generic target which may not be appropriate. Again basic principle of right tree-right place- right reason should be followed.

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

Are there others not listed above?:

Clear advice on integration of basic payments and forestry grants

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.:

Cashflows are major barriers to woodland establishment on all scales. Payments are often delayed or have rigid timescales which do not match silvicultural timings

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.:

Amenity woodlands should be the focus in urban and peri-urban areas to help with the promotion of health and well-being through nature.

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.:

Commercial timber should be the focus in rural economies to support jobs and opportunities for small to medium scaled companies. We already import over 80% of our timber which is a huge cost, growing our own would provide a better quality of life and wealth to rural economies and reduce carbon from the transport systems.

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.:

Sort out the public register. This should be the main point of contact for communities and stakeholders to engage with forestry proposals. A one-stop reliable consultation platform would provide both stakeholders, land owners, agents and regulators with a comprehensive guide to forestry proposals.

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.:

Sort out the public registers.

EIA determination screening letters used to detail the rationale behind the decisions made to support afforestation. Now the new pre-application system would seem to produce just a tick-box exercise, which is possibly a step backwards rather than forwards.

An increasing number of Scottish Forestry employees have limited experience in practicing forestry and therefore have difficulty in assessing applications and their nuances.

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?:

Uplifted rates for using local contractors to undertake work rather than looking for the cheapest contractor who may have to travel further and have an increased carbon footprint.

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

Uplifted rates for local contractors using apprentices and supporting their development to be able to keep trained people in local rural areas, which would have increased benefits to the wider economy.

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.:

Scottish Forestry have to teach FGS in conjunction with the colleges/universities through either running a module on putting together a project and an application - this would help raise the standards for all parties.

Many SF staff have no practical experience of operational delivery and do not appreciate or understand the challenges.

Schemes are too complex - use of LPIDs, which are ever changing are complex and costly to work with and administer.

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.:

Commercial woodlands are also diverse - they host a range of red-listed species as well as providing other multiple benefits.

Not all areas are suitable for a diverse range of species and perceived benefits may not be realized because of site constraints and at worst fail or produce very poor woodlands.

Grant schemes need to be tailored to getting the right trees planted on the right sites with as easy a process as possible

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?:

Promotion of venison as a sustainable food source to increase consumption and therefore drive up value, this would increase cull rates and ultimately reduce populations.

Small scale mixed land use?:

Promotion of venison as a sustainable food source to increase consumption and therefore drive up value, this would increase cull rates and ultimately reduce populations.

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

Please add your comments here.:

Application process and stakeholder engagement processes need to be much simpler to use to encourage forestry and woodland expansion and management

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:

Bidwells

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.

I consent