

## Response ID ANON-VEPG-2GTS-J

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry  
Submitted on 2023-05-17 11:51:21

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.:

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust is working to conserve and restore the riparian habitat on the rivers of the Kyle of Sutherland. Native riverbank woodland provides habitat, nutrients, locks up carbon and helps to keep rivers cool during heatwaves. Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust is influencing and delivering riparian natural regeneration and planting schemes, under a nationwide 'Riverwoods' initiative. We have been working closely together with local Scottish Forestry and Forestry & Land Scotland staff and their support and guidance is gratefully received and valued. However, we are finding it difficult to fund or part-fund certain riparian woodland creation schemes currently via FGS.

We have contributed to and support the consultation submission of our representative body, Fisheries Management Scotland. Therefore, we do not wish to replicate their response here.

However, we have made some specific observations on Q 15 and Q 16.

2. Are there any changes that would allow for better complementarity between the forestry and agriculture funding options?

Not sure

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

### 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.:

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.:

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.:

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?:

### 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, 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.:

#### 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?:

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.:

Invasion of non-native conifers via seed dispersal within sensitive riparian areas is a significant issue affecting many areas of Sutherland. Enhanced support and advice for removal and/or felling is required. Where seed dispersal takes place across multiple land holdings/ownerships, and where costs of removal are prohibitive, the 'polluter-pays' principal should be considered.

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?:

The existing Forestry Co-operation Grant support mechanism is underutilised and could be developed and publicised to help multiple landowners plan effective management of deer populations at landscape-scale. This existing mechanism could be better utilised to help fund innovative herbivore census efforts and the establishment of evidence-based deer management plans.

With regards to riparian woodland restoration, in many cases fencing near to or across rivers is a high risk option for FGS funding and in other cases fencing is extremely challenging and/or expensive from a practical point of view. In the absence of a wider deer management plan, fencing can funnel deer causing trampling and damage to sensitive habitats. Further potential problems associated with deer fencing are discussed in recent Scottish Government policy documents on deer management and also, for example, in the Scottish Environment Link publication: Managing Deer for Climate, Communities and Conservation.

We feel that future FGS support mechanisms should incentivise an evidence-based, sustainable approach to deer management at landscape-scale first, and increased public spending on deer fencing second. This approach would allow the public benefits of FGS schemes to be realised far beyond the

riverbank or beyond the woodlands in question. For example, this approach would have cross-cutting benefits for neighbouring peatland restoration schemes which require a maximum of 5-10 deer per sq km. At present, for example, in parts of Sutherland peatland restoration cannot be realised due to excessive damage from deer.

We welcome the news that FGS has supported natural regeneration via sustainable herbivore management in the Cairngorms to the tune of £1.3m and we would support further roll-out of this type of approach in our area of interest in future.

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.:

## 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:

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

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