

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?

Not sure

Please explain your answer in the text box.:

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.:

Forest Research has shown that a key route to resilience to climate Change and Biodiversity loss is to develop polycultures with a high level of structural diversity. Forests developed along these lines are more carbon efficient and re- stocking by natural regeneration assists in selecting plants that cope with changing conditions. Timber from these forests can lock up carbon in buildings and these types of forest lock up more carbon in soils. Financial support to achieve above would help drive a transition to this type of forest management. I understand that the Irish Forest service is taking forward such a scheme.

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 you 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.:

The framing of this question reveals a fundamental flaw in current forestry thinking and strategy. Separation of forestry into native and productive woodlands is extremely reductive and distracts from the possibility of productive native woodlands. Highly biologically and structurally diverse native broadleaf woodlands containing high quality commercial timber within them has been achieved. An example in the Highlands is growing YC 8 Oak of excellent form at about 50 stems/ha. This type of woodland can be expected to be highly resilient, highly biodiverse, and is seen as highly attractive to the general public. Scotland is largely self sufficient in soft wood but imports most of its hardwood. The above approach would help solve this. Grants to support this type of silviculture are needed because of the relatively high cost of the multiple interventions required in the early stages of developing these woods.

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 section 3 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.

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.:

How are small woodlands defined- ? less than 100ha.

To achieve more small woodland ownership requires fundamental policy changes such as those being developed by the Scottish Land Commission. Until small woodlands or land suitable for them become available for sale nothing can happen.

I am not sure that establishing small woodlands is more costly particularly as establishment can often be done by owners.

There needs to be a more user friendly process for developing Forest plans in small woodlands particularly when they are designed to be managed by different (and potentially better) methods than mainstream forestry.

Where small woodland owners require forestry contractors to undertake work they find it hard if not impossible to find contractors with the appropriate skills and machinery. A well designed apprenticeship scheme for contractors and support for the acquisition for suitable machinery is vital.

Small woodlands should be funded at a higher level to compensate for the disadvantage from economies of scale.

It is probably only possible to make small woodlands pay by concentrating on low volume high value crops such as broadleaves. Broadleaves are relative costly to manage for timber in the first 30 years and owners find it difficult to carry these costs with the prospect of sawlog returns in 60 - 100 years.

Grants to address this are required.

There is a serious failure in forestry training in broadleaf silviculture and until forestry in Scotland recognises that broadleaf woodlands can be productive and is a useful economic activity change will not occur and Scotland will continue to import 90% of hardwood timber. Policy documents must stop talking about productive woodlands and native woodlands as separate. Native woodlands can be productive of sawlogs.

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.:

Community ownership of woodlands is fundamental. Financial support and advice to enable communities to buy and develop land for woodlands or purchase existing woodlands is needed.

Encouragement for communities to grow commercial woodlands would help to build community wealth. Unfortunately mainstream commercial forestry, based mainly on clearfell re- stock is unattractive to most of the public so communities are unlikely to embrace it. There is a need to demonstrate alternatives to clearfell and in particular show how polycultures managed by CCF can be attractive, resilient and biodiverse and produce an income.

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.:

I assume this question is asking how communities can learn of and comment on forestry proposals on woodlands not in their ownership.

Although Regional Councils and thus Community Councils are informed of proposed forest plans these are often not relayed to community members. Not all Community Councils are fully organised and active.

Although Forest plans appear on the register it is unreasonable that the public should be expected to check the register fortnightly to pick up on local Forest plans.

A partial solution would be for all draft plans to be sent to all neighbouring land owners and all Community Trusts in the area with a clear explanation of the mechanism involved and a clear explanation of how they can engage and if necessary object.

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.:

Where comments and objections arise from the process outlined in sec. 11 it is important that a clear reason is given for subsequent changes (or absence of changes) made. Where issues cannot readily be resolved there should be a mechanism whereby an independent inspector can hear the issues and make recommendations.

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 for establishment costs is highly effective in woodland expansion.

There is an urgent need for support in converting forest stands to CCF polycultures to enhance resilience and biodiversity. Forest businesses that do not undertake this silvicultural change are likely to fail due to the pressures of the climate and biodiversity emergency.

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

Support is needed to develop the skills amongst forestry professionals and forestry contractors to undertake the type of forestry management that Forest Research consider necessary to weather climate change and biodiversity loss (where édaphic conditions permit).

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.:

I suggest that Forestry Scotland and FLS should take the lead in training.

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.:

Biodiversity loss should be addressed by enabling and encouraging conversion of suitable stands of commercial conifers to biodiverse polycultures with structural diversity

Managed by CCF systems.

Native woodlands - particularly broadleaf woodlands can be managed to produce a hardwood crop on suitable ground. Including the productive element will encourage native woodland by making it economically attractive. Establishment of productive native broadleaf woodlands is currently unattractive because of the cost of the relatively large number of interventions needed in the first 30 years. Grant support covering this early stage of silviculture is required.

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?:

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:

Craggach Woods

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