

## Response ID ANON-VEPG-2G1X-M

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry  
Submitted on 2023-05-16 16:02:46

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.:

Yes. Grant support for woodland creation is difficult to achieve, particularly on larger scales. Although greater emphasis should be placed on achieving native woodland creation particularly within our riparian zones. There seems to be little in the way of support, let alone, advice on riparian planting. If there is to be any future improvement or positive development of the forestry grant scheme, native woodland and a greater emphasis on native, broadleaf planting is key in order to support and sustain biodiversity, particularly within our riparian zones.

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.:

There should be greater integration between forest, agricultural and biodiversity schemes ie all Scottish Government funded land schemes. They should be seamless for example riparian woodland or more open woodland that does not destroy the existing sward on permanent pasture with already high levels of soil carbon may be grazed as tree growth permits, bringing greater value for biodiversity and the farm business.

### 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.:

- ☐ No planting on peatland - consider reducing the eligible peat depth for planting.
- ☐ More support and guidance on bio-tubes as alternatives to plastic. Otherwise, plastic tubes must be removed prior to final payment with an inspection required.
- ☐ Much more use natural regeneration as a tool to create new woodland areas which will be appropriate to site and lead to more natural woodland cover. We should be looking at long term plans as these woods can take 20 to 50 years to regenerate.
- ☐ Greater emphasis on creating diverse broadleaf woodlands and a move away from singular mono-cultures which are prone to disease as the climate changes.
- ☐ Create greater opportunities to plant with areas of greater climate risk such as the riparian zone.

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.:

Use Woodland Carbon Code as this is a certified process.

However, riparian woodland creation for example is a higher cost activity but not necessarily achieving large net planting areas or therefore tCO2e units so support must be more targeted for this type of planting. Carbon schemes focus on C sequestration as a means of removing CO2 from the atmosphere but riparian woodland in particular deliver multiple benefits and, in the context of the climate emergency, offer great potential to help regulate river water temperatures and protect rivers from increases in water temperatures that are threatening the survival of salmon and other species. This should not be forgotten in the overall aim of increasing woodland cover. Allow the regen of riparian woods to be over many years and allow open scattered trees.

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.:

- ☐ Increased support for capital costs for smaller scale woodlands
- ☐ Create a simpler application process overall but specifically for woodlands up to about 2ha in size
- ☐ Encourage native broadleaf planting in the riparian zone. There is no guidance or support within the current consultation for riparian zone. Considering the wealth of knowledge and science to back up the benefits to people and wildlife, there is nothing to suggest that FGS takes riparian woodland expansion seriously. There needs to be a system in place where riparian woodland creation is reward on the same scale as other categories of woodland creation being offered through FGS. Riparian woodland offers far more, environmentally and socially, than some other types of woodland being planted. Whether this is a skills gap in FGS personnel or avoidance.
- ☐ Similar is the approach to existing or old woodland which will have established root structures and mycelium to support additional planting and 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?:

- ☐ Offering more financial support/rewards for those schemes that incorporate nature-friendly practices and woodland expansion in areas that are otherwise avoided such as the riparian zone and existing or old/dying woodland which still holds some ecological value. Similar for areas that incorporate natural regeneration as part of their woodland creation plan
- ☐ Encouraging diverse species planting

### 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?:

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.:

- ☐ Easier application process - for small scale woodland creation, good advice availability and right tree right place.
- ☐ Riparian woodlands - often small in area but costly to fence. Don't assess these and score for cost effectiveness along with the rest of the woodland applications. As noted above, these woodlands have a high public benefit and biodiversity scoring. Lo
- ☐ Integrate the forestry, biodiversity and agric schemes.

### 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.:

Make sure the planning documents for new schemes are in public domain, including consultations

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?

Not sure

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

Would need to see how many local businesses are directly benefiting from a specific forestry grant.

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

see above

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.:

A lot of the guidance for FGS as well as the traineeships or placements are steered towards the productive forestry industry, yet there is little traineeships or training schemes designed towards native planting. There seems to be less flexibility within the FGS schemes to encourage more holistic style of forest management. University or College degrees do not provide enough practical experience with native woodland creation.

## 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.:

- ☐ A lot more emphasis and guidance on native woodland creation. First and foremost should be encouraging more diverse, native woodland rather than productive forestry/monocultures. This includes riparian zones as well as areas of old or dying woodland. These areas provide the highest degree of ecological value and regeneration and expansion within these areas should be a priority.
- ☐ There needs to be better grant support for capital costs associated with riparian planting.
- ☐ Natural regeneration is possible to achieve and allowing clearer guidance and flexibility on how this can be achieved 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?:

- ☐ Too much money and effort is put into fencing and capital costs do not cover the financial strain that fencing puts on a scheme. It is not financially viable to fence entire areas of land. Employing deer management contractors to sustainably manage deer numbers.
- ☐ Consider the notion of natural predators are needed.
- ☐ A shift towards monitoring and management of deer numbers is needed. Fencing is not a long term solution to the deer issue.
- ☐ Greater support and incentives for farmers and landowners who are unresponsive to deer management. Provide resources to achieve goals rather than shutting them out.
- ☐ Consider that the vast amount of sheep have an equal impact on landscapes and can curb the impact of natural regeneration and biodiversity.
- ☐

Small scale mixed land use?:

- ☐ Fencing again is not ideal but not as intrusive on the small scale. However, proper monitoring and management would still be needed.

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

Please add your comments here.:

- ☐ There is no mention of the word 'riparian' once in the consultation document. Previous guidance on riparian planting within FGS has been limited to a paragraph at most. Whether this is avoidance or a serious skills gap is unknown. Considering that riparian woodland and other woody vegetation within this zone is some of the most ecologically rich and environmentally beneficial. If there is a serious need to tackle a biodiversity crisis and curb climate change, enabling woodland expansion and creation within these critically important areas should be a high priority.
- ☐ More financial support and resources are desperately needed to encourage more riparian woodland creation. Due to the high capital costs of extended fencing, resources are needed.
- ☐ There needs to be a greater emphasis on holistic methods and practices when it comes to woodland design and creation. Support, training and guidance for woodland expansion for biodiversity, climate change and wildlife is key. This includes riparian, old/dying woodland, ancient woodland, fragmented woodland.

## 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:  
Forth Rivers 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