

Submitted to Future Grant Support for Forestry  
Submitted on 2023-04-14 11:33:58

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.:

It is essential to have grant support to encourage the planting of new woodlands and to more heavily support the replanting of previous clear felled sites - particularly where conifer sites are to be replaced with native woodlands- this has potential to improve the woodland resource of Scotland, help move towards continuous canopy forestry and improve biodiversity. There should be incentives to encourage good management of plantations.

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.:

An overall reference site that tied together woodland, agricultural and nature based support schemes would add clarity to support options. It is important that land managers can clearly identify both agricultural and woodland scheme options to provide a better landscape scale application.

## 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.:

Enhance support for replacing conifer sites with native woodland, including a significant ongoing management payment to compensate for management costs and the loss of future timber revenue. This would lead to an increase in carbon storage, biodiversity gain and reduce forestry traffic in remote areas.

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.:

The green finance from external sources eg the Hampden scheme seems good on the surface, but needs to have a high level of clarity for land managers to sign up to long term obligations. It would often be better for land managers to source their own finance - increasing the taxation flexibility of woodland funding from self / private funding would be a significant incentive without requiring more direct public funding.

Currently only 'commercial' woodlands attract IHT relief- it would be beneficial for woodlands - ancient or new- with carbon / biodiversity value to attract similar tax benefits as commercial woodlands.

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.:

There should be equality of tax treatment across all woodland types, increased tax relief for new woodlands and restocking costs. Management costs should be supported.

A significant increase in tax breaks should be considered for a time bounded period to incentivise rapid woodland expansion in the short term. A move towards future continuous canopy model should be supported - especially in remote areas where biodiversity is a major benefit.

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?:

Ideally yes, unfortunately the current model of monoculture woodlands, clear felling and replanting does leave woodlands (and neighbouring woodlands) at risk from imported disease where tree sticks are not locally sourced.

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

Are there others not listed above?:

All of the above have benefits. Grant aid and tax incentives should be significantly increased to promote rapid increase in woodland area over the next decade. There should be an increase in support for re-stocking especially where conifer sites are migrated to an increase in native woodland.

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.:

Small woodlands are by their nature more expensive to establish- whether owned by larger or smaller management units. Grant support should not discriminate against larger management units.

A high level of fencing grant support should be available for all new and restock woodlands.

It is important that woodland managers support all stages of woodland creation, felling, restocking & infrastructure.

### 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.:

Support for the creation of car parking and public access facilities

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.:

Support for car parking and access infrastructure.

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.:

Land managers could be given grant payment to support incentives to train and provide opportunities for local people.

Grant support for training is vital to provide an increase in local skill reservoir to support all aspects of woodland establishment, maintenance and timber usage. This should be available for anyone in Scotland be they employed or volunteer. Up skilling people is essential to deliver and maintain future woodland objectives.

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.:

Clear lines of communication with DMGs , neighbours and community councils

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?:

Forestry businesses are very capital intensive with long term uncertainty over yields. While recent harvesting may have yielded some profitability, this is significantly reduced - especially in remote areas due to higher costs- after replanting.

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

There should be support for training by forestry businesses to increase the skill set of workers- especially in remote areas. Land managers should be supported where they train employees or other community members.

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.:

Remote rural areas struggle with recruitment- grant support is essential to increase the ability of land based businesses to deliver woodland aspirations

## 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.:

Support with training costs and the provision of easily accessed grant support for woodland management costs and infrastructure. Enhanced support should be given to sea based timber transport

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?:

An enhanced fencing support grant is essential to actually deliver deer protection. While deer reduction and woodland without fencing seems like a good idea, it will in reality not deliver the rapid woodland targets that land managers want to deliver

Small scale mixed land use?:

Fencing is essential in a mixed land use scenario- fencing needs to be grant supported

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

Please add your comments here.:

There should be a major increase in funding to support restock of conifer sites with native broadleaves after harvesting. This will significantly increase biodiversity gain and will be established on sites with past woodland history.

## About you

What is your name?

Name:

[Redacted]

What is your email address?

Email:

[Redacted]

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

[Redacted]

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