

General Update on FGS

This note provides information on Woodland Creation, consultation on the draft Scottish Forestry Corporate Plan and updates the budget availability for FGS applications. It also highlights some forthcoming key dates associated with claims for grant funding.

1. Woodland Creation

There continues to be a high demand for woodland creation grants; with the current woodland creation situation shown in the table below.

Woodland Creation	2019/2020 (ha)	2020/2021 (ha)
Pre-application	0	8343
Submitted not yet approved	0	2327
Approved projects	10,954	6770
Max Potential Area	10,954	17,440

We are keen that applicants maximise planting in 2019. We would ask contract holders to deliver as much of their 2019 contracted planting as possible. Additionally where it is possible to identify any approved new-planting projects, or parts of projects, that can be realistically brought forward from 2020 to a 2019 claim year – applicants should speak with their [local Conservancy office](#).

Demand for woodland creation grants in claim year 2020 is high. Bringing forward projects will help maximise the use of grant funding in 2019.

2. Scottish Forestry Draft Corporate Plan Consultation

A four week public consultation began on 8 January 2020 and all views received will help to test and further refine the draft plan before publication in April 2020.

The public consultation on the Draft Corporate Plan closes on 5 February. To access the plan and share your views please log on to <https://consult.gov.scot/environment-forestry/scottish-forestry-corporate-plan>.

3. Budget Availability and Threshold Scores

Table 1 has been updated to show the current indicative budget availability and minimum score thresholds for all options in 2020. Changes include:

- **Woodland Creation Budget** – this has been updated to reflect the indicative funding level for the 12,000 hectare target for 2020. (Note this has still to be confirmed as part of the Scottish Government budget process).
- **Closure** of the **WIG-WIAT** option for 2020 applications- as the budget has now been fully allocated.

4. Stocking Density Assessments

To allow us to monitor the success of FGS funded woodland creation areas, Scottish Forestry will shortly be writing to recipients of woodland creation grant funding to request stocking density assessment returns for woodland creation projects with claim years 2015 and 2016. Please return information where requested, but should you require more information please contact your [local Conservancy office](#).

5. Key Dates

- **31st January 2020** - SUBMISSION OF EVIDENCE SUPPORTING 2019 SAF CLAIMS

Most of the FGS Sustainable Management of Forests (SMF) options claimed on the Single Application Form (SAF) have an eligibility requirement to submit evidence of works undertaken to enable payments.

The options requiring a monitoring form/record/assessment to be submitted are:

- SMF - Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS)
- SMF - Native Woodland
- SMF - Woodland Grazing
- SMF - Species Conservation – Grey Squirrel Control
- SMF - Species Conservation – Predator Control: Capercaillie & Black Grouse
- SMF - Species Conservation – Reducing Deer Impact

You must submit your annual monitoring form/record/assessment (for an annual recurrent management item with a claim year of 2019, submitted by 15 May 2019) to your [local Conservancy office](#) by the 31st January 2020.

The evidence supplied must comply with the option guidance and demonstrate that the works have been satisfactorily undertaken throughout 2019.

If we do not receive your evidence we will not be able to pay your claim that was submitted on the 2019 SAF.

- **31st March 2020** – SUBMISSION OF FGS CAPITAL CLAIMS (with claim year of 2019)

Claims for capital items with a claim year of 2019 in your contract must be submitted to your [local Conservancy office](#), when the works have been completed, by the 31st March 2020.

- **15th MAY 2020** – SUBMISSION OF 2020 SINGLE APPLICATION FORM (SAF)

SMF options all have annual management grants and Woodland Creation options have an annual maintenance grant. You must claim all of these grants on your SAF by the 15th May 2020.

To make a claim for the annual management item, with a 2020 claim year approved in your contract, then you must declare the land on which you carry out these options on the SAF using the Permanent Land Data Sheets (IACS 3). The window to submit your Single Application Form for 2020 will open on the 15th March 2020.

If you have any queries then please contact your local Conservancy or our National Office.

Grants and Regulations, National Office, Scottish Forestry, Tel: 0131 370 5250
Email: scottish.forestry@forestry.gov.scot

Table 1 Forestry Grant Scheme: Clearing and Budget Categories with Threshold Scores – January 2020

Grant Category	Clearing categories	Frequency of Clearing	Indicative 2020 Budget £m	Claim Years available for first year of contract	Number of Claim Years available	Indicative Headroom 2020	Indicative Headroom 2021	Threshold Score(Max)
Woodland Creation	WC with CSGNC	Monthly	£8.0m	2020 & 2021	N+2			10 (31)
	WC High Cost* (>£6k/ha)		£3.0m	2020 & 2021				10 (31)
	WC with Nat Regen		£0.25m	2020 & 2021				2 (6)
	WC Other		£35.75m	2020 & 2021				10 (31)
Woodland Improvement Grants	Restructuring Regeneration	Monthly	£2.0	2020 & 2021	N+2			3 (6)
	Planning options		£0.35	2020 & 2021	N+2			2 (6)
	Habitats & species/Liss		£0.80	2020 & 2021	N+2			4 (6)
	WIAT		£0.90	2021***	N+2			9 (16)
Sustainable Management of Forests	Native Woodlands/ LISS/ livestock/Grazing	Monthly	£0.60	2021	N+1	N/A		2 (6)
	Squirrels/Predators/Deer		£0.50		N+1	N/A		2 (6)
	WIAT		£0.05		N+1	N/A		6 (16)
	Rural Access		£0.15		N+1	N/A		2 (6)
Tree Health		Monthly	£0.45	2020 & 2021	N+1			2 (6)
Forest Infrastructure**		Monthly	£0.3	2020 & 2021	N+1			3 (6)
Agroforestry		Monthly	£0.1	2020 & 2021	N+2			2 (6)
Harvesting and Processing**		Annual	£0.3	2020	N		N/A	2 (6)
Co-operation		Monthly	£0.1	2020 & 2021	N+1			3 (16)
Total			£ 53.6					

Notes: *Projects with average cost is £6,000/ha or higher **Projects must be completed and paid in the approved claim year. *** Projects limited up to £100k/BRN. N = current calendar year

Indicative Headroom Colour Key:

There is currently good availability of funds within this FGS clearing category and we will be able to support most good quality application

It is likely the demand for funds within this FGS Clearing Category will exceed the available budget and there will be strong competition for funds

There are no longer any funds available within this FGS clearing category

Claim Years Available - Our approach to claim years is set out in Table 1 and depends on the grant type. This has been structured to ensure applications go through the competitive clearing process whilst at the same time manage the grant budget without a long forward booking of projects.

Please note that for an application proposal with multiple claim years, the application score must meet the higher of the threshold scores for each claim year to obtain full approval.

Woodland Creation - capital such as fencing and initial planting - up to 3 claim years (i.e. within N+2, where N = the current calendar year at time of application submission) with work having to start in the first 2 years e.g. one option is to apply in 2020, start work in year 2020 and complete in 2021. Another option is to apply in 2020, start work in 2021 and complete work in claim year 2022.

Woodland Improvement Grant - up to 3 year claim years (within N+2, where N = the current calendar year at time of application submission) with work having to start in the first 2 years except for WIG Restructuring Regeneration where a delay until year 3 is acceptable to meet species diversity rules.

Sustainable Management of Forests – next claim year is available as the first annual management claim year.

Agroforestry – as for woodland creation up to 3 claim years (within N+2, where N = the current calendar year at time of application submission) with work having to start in the first 2 years.

Tree health – current and next year claim year (within N+1 where N = the current calendar year at time of application submission)

Forest Infrastructure – current and next claim year available (within N+1, where N = the calendar year of the application round)

Harvesting & Processing – one claim year available (within N, where N = the calendar year of the application round)

Co-operation – current and next claim year available (within N +1, where N = the calendar year of the application round)