Forest Infrastructure

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To see recent changes to this guidance, check the bottom of this page.

Table of Contents

Aim

Grant support

Application rounds

Application eligibility criteria

Other eligibility criteria

Associated permissions and approvals

Supporting information

Scoring criteria

How to claim

Technical guidance

Recent changes

Previous versions

Download guidance

Aim

This option provides support for new access infrastructure that will bring small scale, undermanaged woodlands or inaccessible woodlands back into active management with the following aims:

- to improve the economic value of forest and woodland through timber production
- to increase the area of woodland in Scotland that is in sustainable management
- to improve the environmental and social benefits of woodland

This option is limited to woodlands of up to 50 hectares in size except in cases where low-level water crossings are being replaced.

Grant support

Grant support is available for a number of capital grant operations associated with new forest infrastructure. The capital grant operations available are:

Capital grant operation	Payment rate
Construction of forest road	£25.80 per linear metre
Construction of lay-bys, turning areas, and loading bays	£6.60 per square metre
Bell-mouth junction	£32.40 per square metre
Replacement of low level water crossings	tbc

Application rounds

Normally, one application round will be run each year.

Grant claims for the 2015 round must be made by end of February 2016.

For 2016 there will be a closing date of 31 March for applications. For 2017 onwards the closing date will be 31 January for applications.

You must conclude any relevant requirements such as EIA or prior notification before making your submission to the application round - see section ‘Associated Permissions and Approvals’ below.

Application eligibility criteria

Your application and proposed work must comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

Land ownership

You must own or lease the land.

If you are a tenant then a landlord’s declaration must be provided with your application. The control of the land must extend for the duration of the proposed contract.

Landlord's Declaration Form (MS Word, Size: 356.2 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Landlords-Declaration-Form---FINAL.docx

If you are a contractual licensee then the Contractual Licence must be provided with your application. The control of the land must extend for the duration of the proposed contract.

Eligible land

You must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more. For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan.

- Forest Plan
- Management Plan

You must have a felling licence linked to the Forest Plan or Management Plan, if required.

There must be planned timber production, such as thinning or small scale clear felling, over the next five years (this can include low impact silvicultural systems).

Access infrastructure works must conform to good forestry practice as laid out in the UK Forestry Standard and other associated best practice guidance (see references) and you must provide a clear methodology to demonstrate this.

In particular, we will look for a methodology to demonstrate the measures that you will take to minimise the potential risk to the water environment such as diffuse pollution.

The forest road must be built from suitable material that is well graded and of sufficient strength that will not readily breakdown under the wheel loading that could then cause diffuse pollution (see guidance on the information required for Prior Notification plus technical references at the end of this page).

You must carry out the work to the standard outlined in the specification for each item. To view the specification, click on each item in the list below. You must ensure that the completed work is maintained and is functional during the period of your contract.

The construction of access routes must be appropriate and in proportion to the size of woodland and the investment and therefore the level of grant funding must be less than £50 per cubic metres of the timber to be harvested within the next five years.

This may mean that in small woodlands where timber volumes are small a forwarder / trailer route together with a loading bay may be more appropriate. The local woodland officer will assess the appropriateness of the proposal.

Other eligibility criteria

Infrastructure planning and implementation normally involves significant ground disturbance and the use of heavy machinery, so careful planning is required to avoid excessive environmental impact or permanent damage. It is recommended that you seek professional advice from an experienced civil engineer with a proven track record in woodland access infrastructure.

Forest roads and quarries can have significant impacts upon the environment and your application we will assess the application under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) Regulations .

You must maintain the access infrastructure as part of the forest road network and ensure that after any harvesting activity that the access infrastructure is reinstated to the condition when it was first installed.

Prior notification of forestry tracks

If your application includes the construction of forestry tracks (private ways), prior notification will be required. As this is a new regulatory requirement further guidance and final arrangement are still to be confirmed. Please discuss with your local conservancy office.

Associated permissions and approvals

Forest roads and quarries can have significant impacts upon the environment. Depending on the location and extent of your proposals, Forestry Commission Scotland conservancy staff will require to assess the application under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (Scotland) 1999 Regulations .

In addition, you may need to get further permission from your local planning authority. Any groundwork adjoining a public road (A, B or C categories) and up to 25 metres from the public road will require planning permission.

If your application includes the construction of forestry tracks (private ways), prior notification to the local planning authority (LPA) will also be required.

As this is a new regulatory requirement (2014) further guidance and final arrangement are still to be confirmed. Please discuss with your local conservancy office or local planning authority for further advice.

Forestry Commission Scotland and LPAs are seeking to align the PN and forestry approval process where practicable to do so (including the supporting information required) and further advice will be available in the published guidance.

Supporting information

We need supporting information to help us assess your proposal. You must give the details as listed below using the template provided:

- brief description of the current structure of the woodland
- description of the silvicultural system(s) proposed
- breakdown of the management work expected to be carried out during the plan period
- map showing the areas of thinning and felling expected during the plan period together the proposed volume of wood to be harvested over the next 10 years
- map that clearly shows the location and type of access routes

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

Forest Infrastructure – supporting infrastructure template (MS Word, Size: 408.6 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/forest-infrastructure-supp-info-template.doc

Scoring criteria

To ensure that we make the best use of the resources available in delivering the Scottish Government objectives we will assess each application using the scoring criteria for forestry options.

The scoring criteria will be specific to each Forestry Grant Scheme option. Each application will receive a score based on the selection criteria and we will set a minimum score for each option.

Threshold score = 2 points

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion, except for additional benefit.

The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

Delivery of option benefits

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications that actively seek to address old low level watercourse crossing points, along access routes into and within woodlands, which have been identified as poorly designed and create a barrier impeding fish passage. Your application must be supported by SEPA

Or

- applications that deliver value for money based on the ratio of grant value versus the standing volume of timber contained within the woodland. That is:

Value of Grant ÷ Total Standing Volume

If the above calculation results in a value between 2 and 10.

Example for 3 points
Woodland area = 5 hectares
Estimated standing volume = 125m³/ha
Grant sought for 200m of new road = £5,160
£5,160 ÷ 625m³ = 8.2

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications that improve accessibility for timber removal from a woodland where there is a plan to convert a Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to an appropriate native woodland

Or

- applications that deliver greater value for money based on the ratio of grant value versus the standing volume of timber contained within the woodland. That is:

Value of Grant ÷ Total Standing Volume

If the above calculation results in a value between 2 and 5.

Or

- applications that recognise and actively seek to address the impact of timber transport on routes which are identified as having timber transport constraints. This may include new infrastructure that provides a link to a public highway classed as an ‘agreed route’ for timber transport (refer to the Timber Transport Forum ‘Agreed Routes Map’), or new sections of forest road that bypass a weak section of public highway

Supplementary point – additional benefit

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications create or improve a timber access point (for example bell mouths) into previously undermanaged woodlands. Your application must have the support of the Local Authority Highways Department.

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Or

- applications that enhance local public access opportunities

How to claim

This grant is based on a number of capital items. You must claim your capital items on the Forestry Grant Scheme manual Standard Costs Capital Item Claim Form once you have satisfactorily completed the work to the desired specification.

Claim forms and guidance are available on the Claims and payments page.

Refer to the capital item's minimum specification guidance to find out what supporting documentation and maps you need to supply with your capital claim.

You cannot make a claim for an area that exceeds that agreed in your contract. You must claim for the areas and / or quantities as detailed in your schedule of works.

We may inspect all the capital items you claim to ensure that you have carried out the work to the correct specification.

Technical guidance

- Forest Plans
- Management Plans
- UK Forestry Standard
- the Forestry Civil Engineering Business Unit of the Forestry Commission has a specification for forest roads
- Timber Transport Forum: The design and use of the structural pavement of unsealed roads 2014
- Timber Transport Forum: Guidance Note 2015:Forestry operations on or adjacent to public roads (in preparation)

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
How to claim	Clarification of the guidance.	This grant is based on a number of capital items. Submit your claim once you have completed the works to the desired specification. We will inspect these items to ensure that they have been implemented to our specifications. Refer to the capital item's minimum specification guidance to find out what supporting documentation and maps you need to supply with your capital claim.	This grant is based on a number of capital items. You must claim your capital items on the Forestry Grant Scheme manual Standard Costs Capital Item Claim Form once you have satisfactorily completed the work to the desired specification. Claim forms and guidance are available on the Claims and payments page. Refer to the capital item's minimum specification guidance to find out what supporting documentation and maps you need to supply with your capital claim. You cannot make a claim for an area that exceeds that agreed in your contract. You must claim for the areas and / or quantities as detailed in your schedule of works. We may inspect all the capital items you claim to ensure that you have carried out the work to the correct specification.

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