Forest Infrastructure

This is an old version of the page

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For recent changes to this guidance, please see the bottom of the page .

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Aim

This option has two distince aims.

1. To provide support for new access infrastructure that will bring small scale, undermanaged or inaccessible existing woodlands back into active management so as to:

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

Under this aim, this option is limited to existing woodlands of up to 50 hectares in size except in cases where low-level water crossings are being replaced.

2. To provide support for new access infrastructure to new woodlands as part of the Sheep and Trees initiative. This initiative is aimed at raising awareness of the many opportunities woodland can bring to land managers.

This option, as part of the Sheep and Trees grant package, is only available for upland livestock farmers when creating between 10ha and 50ha of productive conifer woodland.

Grant support

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

1. Existing woodland

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 or Loading Bays	£6.60 per square metre
Construction of Bell-mouth Junction	£32.40 per square metre
Replacement of low level water crossings	tbc

2. Sheep and Trees

The capital grant operations available are:

Capital grant operation	Payment rate	Allowances
Construction of Forest Road	£25.80 per linear meter	Up to 30 metres/ha of woodland creation (cap of 1,500 metres/application)
Construction of Lay-bys, Turning Areas or Loading Bays	£6.60 per square metre	

Application eligibility criteria

For the Sheep and Trees grant package, you must be an upland livestock farmer with sheep being a key part of the farm. Land within the CSGN area is eligible for either the CSGN contribution or the forest infrastructure grant but not both grants.

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

You must conclude any relevant requirements such as EIA or prior notification before submitting your application - see Associated permissions and approvals section below.

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

For existing woodlands, 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).

For Sheep and Trees applications for new woodland areas, you must submit the Sheep and Trees forest infrastructure template and the woodland creation supporting information template in the same application.

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.

For existing woodland, 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.

For Sheep and Trees, the construction of access routes must be done in association with the creation of between 10ha and 50ha of productive conifer woodland and is limited to up to 30 metres per hectare planted with a cap of 1,500 metres per application.

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.

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 templates provided. Ensure that you are using the correct template for your aims.

For existing woodlands:

- 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

Forest Infrastructure – supporting information template (MS Word, Size: 412.2 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/forest-infrastructure-supp-info-template-v2.doc

For sheep and trees:

- details on the infrastructure proposed
- map that clearly shows the location and type of access routes
- you will also need to submit all relevant information for woodland creation, as identified in that option

Sheep and Trees Forest Infrastructure – supporting information template (MS Word, Size: 831.0 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/FI-sheep-and-trees-supp-info-template.doc

General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

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 criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to Scoring criteria and clearing process for details.

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:

- Sheep and Trees application that expands existing woodlands

Or

- Sheep and Trees applications for woodland creation between 10 and 30 hectares

Or

- 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:

- Sheep and Trees applications for woodland creation between 30 and 50 hectares

Or

- 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.

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.

Grant claims must be made by the end of February of the year following their award, for example, grant claims with a 2017 year must be submitted to FCS by the end of February 2018.

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

Capital items must meet, as a minimum, the specifications detailed in the individual capital item’s guidance. You must include a map of the location of the capital items with your 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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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: Loading Timber from Roadside Forests (PDF, Size: 4.4 MB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Loading-timber-from-roadside-forests.pdf

Recent changes

Section	Change
Aim	We've added two distinct aims to this section
Grant support	We've added guidance relating to sheep and trees
Supporting information	We've added a new template for sheep and trees

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

Download guidance

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