

Woodland Improvement Grant – Planning – Long-term Forest Plan

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Date published: 16 July, 2015

Date superseded: 7 March, 2016

Updates to last version

- addition of scoring criteria

Table of Contents

[Aim](#)

[Grant support](#)

[Application eligibility criteria](#)

[Other eligibility criteria](#)

[Supporting information](#)

[Scoring criteria](#)

[How to claim](#)

[Technical guidance](#)

[Previous versions](#)

[Download guidance](#)

Aim

This option aims to provide support for the creation of a long-term forest plan that sets out the management objectives for your woodland.

This is for the long-term management of woodlands over 10 to 20 years and is aimed at (but not limited to) woodlands of 100 hectares or more in size that have not previously had a long-term forest plan.

If your woodland is less than 100 hectares, we will accept applications for this Woodland Improvement Grant option if you intend to prepare a long-term forest plan to cover your felling activities.

Grant support

We will pay this standard cost capital grant after we have approved the completed plan.

Your plan must capture your entire woodland holding, including young woodlands and areas planned for woodland creation.

However the payment of grant will be based on the area of woodland within the plan that has woodland cover of 10 years old and older.

This means we will exclude from grant payment woodland less than 10 years old or areas covered by a woodland creation live contract from a legacy scheme (where the conditions have yet to be met and / or final payments have yet to be made).

We will not pay grant for more than 20 per cent internal designed open ground in the areas eligible for grant payment. For example, if the woodland areas of 10 years old and older have greater than 20 per cent designed open ground attributed to them, we will cap the payment of this grant at a maximum 20 per cent of designed open ground.

The grant rate for a new long-term forest plan is:

- £25 per hectare for first 200 hectares
- £5 per hectare thereafter
- minimum £500, maximum £15,000

This grant support is to help cover all aspects of the long-term forest plan process including any necessary surveys (such as archaeological, historic environment, habitat, species and soils), scoping and site visits.

Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before you begin your application.

Woodland Improvement Grant

Please see the supporting information section below for the information you need to supply us when applying for this option.

Include all woodland on your property. Where woodlands are geographically separate parcels we may permit more than one plan.

Historical land splits will be taken into consideration but will not necessarily be endorsed for this Woodland Improvement Grant. Please discuss this with your Forestry Commission Scotland woodland officer.

Payment is based on the total area of woodland within the plan, including felled areas due to be restocked and open ground up to 20 per cent of the total long-term forest plan area.

You must include any woodland younger than ten years old, or any area planned for woodland creation, in the long-term forest plan but we will exclude these areas from the payment area.

Do not include areas of open hillside or farmland unless you intend to expand your woodland by natural regeneration. These areas will not receive payment, but include them in the detail of the long-term forest plan.

Your plan must show the areas of felling, thinning and restructuring that you intend to carry out over ten years and for which you would like approval. The plan should also outline proposals for a 20-year period.

Long-term forest plans must comply with the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

Other eligibility criteria

You must carry out operations that are eligible for grant support within the first phase of the plan approval period.

You must carry out the plan process as outlined in the [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#).

Supporting information

To help us assess your application, you must provide us with supporting information.

Please provide maps that clearly show:

- the perimeter of the plan area
- key issues and actions that you will address in the long-term forest plan – this is the concept map

The concept map must also show the areas that need felling approval during the period of the plan.

[General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)

Scoring criteria

We have set agreed financial budgets for each of the options under the Forestry Grant Scheme. In order to ensure that we make the most cost effective use of the money available and to meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using selection criteria.

The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option. Each application will receive a score based upon 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 include designated SSSI/Natura woodlands which are not currently meeting 'favourable' condition. The concept map should clearly set out the actions proposed, within the approval period of the plan, to improve the condition of the designated woodland

Or

- applications that identify the presence of [European Protected Species](#), and indicate the operational practices which will be undertaken to ensure their protection

Or

- applications that identify a waterbody which is classified as being in 'bad', 'poor', or 'moderate' status. Refer to the 'map view' on [Scotland's Environment](#) web page to find the 'river classification' in the 'water' section. Your concept map should demonstrate how activities proposed, within the approval period of the plan, will help to reduce the 'forestry' pressure on this waterbody. Your local conservancy office will be able to confirm if your application meets this requirement

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

- applications that include designated SSSI/Natura woodlands which are not currently meeting 'favourable' condition. The concept map should clearly set out the actions proposed, within the approval period of the plan, to improve the condition of the designated woodland. The designated woodland should be identified by Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage as a priority. Contact your local conservancy office to confirm your application meets this requirement

Supplementary point – additional benefit

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

- applications can demonstrate improvements to an existing wooded landscape by resolving recognised design deficiencies (usually related to the design principles of relative scale and shape)

How to claim

You can submit a capital claim once we have approved your completed plan.

You cannot make a claim for an area that exceeds that agreed in your contract. You must claim for the areas as detailed in your schedule of works. For example, you cannot make an interim claim for part of the area shown on a single line of your schedule of works.

Technical guidance

- [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)
- [UK Forestry Standard](#)

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