

Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration

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Aim

This option aims to improve the biodiversity, resilience and species diversity of woodlands in the long term.

This will be achieved through restructuring their age and species composition at the point of re-planting following felling. Restructuring Scotland's woodlands will help deliver against the outcomes in the Scottish Forestry Strategy.

Grant support

Grant support for restructuring regeneration has been approved by the European Union on the basis that we are providing a contribution to the extra costs of species diversity over the most dominant species in Scotland, namely Sitka spruce. Grant payments will therefore be made on the basis of obtaining the required level of species diversity.

Two grant rates are available, and there are two steps to determine whether your proposal will be eligible.

Step 1 – your approved Forest Plan / felling licence should be used to determine the appropriate grant rate for your circumstances. (See table below)

Within a Forest Plan, this should be assessed on the species composition at year 20 across the whole Forest Plan area. Within a felling licence, this should be assessed on the restocking species across the approved felling area (supported by a Management Plan).

This rate would apply to all Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration applications covered by the Forest Plan or felling licence.

Step 2 – check that your application and each claim year includes at least the minimum levels of species diversity for your grant rate prescription as set out in the table below.

If your Forest Plan / felling licence meets the Delivering Diversity and Resilience prescription, but your proposed restocking does not include the species diversity required for the higher rate, you may still be eligible for the lower rate. (See table below)

Applicants can apply for up to three years of restructuring regeneration (i.e. the current year plus two years).

Prescription	Standard rate (£ per hectare)
Delivering UK Forestry Standard Woodland Step 1 The level of tree species diversity meets the UK Forestry Standard so that no more than 75 per cent is allocated to a single species.* For Forest Plans, the grant rate is assessed on the species composition at year 20 across the whole Forest Plan area. For felling licences, this will be assessed on the restocking species across the approved felling area (supported by a Management Plan). Step 2 Within each application / claim, there will need to be at least 10 per cent of other species (conifer and / or native broadleaves) in addition to the main species to be eligible for grant.	£300
Delivering Diversity and Resilience Woodland Step 1 The level of tree species diversity goes beyond that required by the UK Forestry Standard so that no more than 60 per cent is allocated to a single species. For Forest Plans, the grant is assessed on the species composition at year 20 across the whole area of the Forest Plan. For felling licences, this will be assessed on the restocking species across the approved felling area (supported by a management plan). Step 2 Within each application / claim there will need to be at least 20 per cent of other species (conifer and / or native broadleaves) in addition to the main species to be eligible for grant. [An application that is above 10 per cent species diversity but unable to achieve the 20 per cent species diversity threshold will be eligible for the lower rate]	£550

* In woodlands of less than 10 hectares and in native woods, the above proportions may be relaxed providing the adjacent land uses provide landscape and habitat diversity (see UK Forestry Standard).

A grant for the use of improved vegetative stock for Sitka spruce is also available.

If vegetatively propagated Sitka is not selected as an option then applicants should note that improved Sitka must be used as standard.

Vegetative propagation

An additional payment of £60 per hectare will be made for areas planted with vegetatively propagated Sitka spruce. The plants must have been produced by vegetative propagation from seeds derived from controlled pollinations in 'Parents of Families' in the tested category.

If you propose to use 'Sitka spruce plants produced by vegetative propagation from seeds derived from controlled pollinations in 'Parents of Families' in the tested category' then the site must have the capacity to achieve a minimum yield class 14.

When submitting a claim for vegetatively propagated Sitka spruce, or for native trees, you must provide a nursery supplier's document that states the region of provenance, the Master Certificate Number and the total number of trees used.

[Marketing and supplying Forest Reproductive Materials](#)

[Application eligibility criteria](#)

You should check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before progressing.

Woodland Improvement Grant

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 Forestry Commission Scotland Management Plan or Forest Plan.

You must have Forestry Commission Scotland approval for the area you intend to fell or have already felled through either a felling licence or Forest Plan.

Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance

Management Plan

The restructuring regeneration proposed in your application must align with the approval as stated in your Forestry Commission Scotland felling licence or Forest Plan.

Stocking densities, unless specified in your approved Forest Plan or Management Plan, must be a minimum of 2500 stems per hectare for conifers, a minimum of 1100 for native broadleaves / shrubs, and 1600 for other broadleaves and native Scots pine.

We will make the checks set out in the table below.

Level	What we will check	What we're looking for
Forest Plan / felling licence	Grant rate will be assessed based on the species [1] composition at year 20 of the approved Forest Plan or restocking species across the approved felling licence area.	<p>For the UK Forestry Standard (lower rate) The species diversity must meet UK Forestry Standard, i.e. includes no more than 75 per cent of a single species by year 20 of the Forest Plan or within the approved felling area of a felling licence</p> <p>For the Delivering Diversity and Resilience (higher rate) Species diversity is no more than 60 per cent of a single species by year 20 of the Forest Plan or within the approved felling area of a felling licence</p>
Application / contract / claim year	<p>Species mix across the total area from all the coupes included in the application / contract and each claim year meets the appropriate species diversity.</p> <p>That claim years do not exceed three years (i.e. the current year plus two years)</p>	<p>For the UK Forestry Standard (lower rate) The species diversity must include at least 10 per cent of other species and / or native broadleaves.</p> <p>For the Delivering Diversity and Resilience (higher rate) The species diversity must include at least 20 per cent of other species and / or native broadleaves.</p> <p>[An application that is above 10 per cent species diversity but unable to achieve the 20 per cent species diversity threshold will be eligible to claim the lower rate]</p>
Claim	Each claim must meet the relevant other species requirement.	<p>We would normally expect applications to include a claim year in the current or next year.</p> <p>However, in cases where all the application's coupes are needed to be claimed at the same time to achieve the required species diversity, then we will accept the first claim year to be in year three.</p>
Coupe	Each coupe corresponds (within tolerances etc) to the approved Forest Plan / Management Plan.	<p>Not every coupe needs to meet the relevant species diversity requirement.</p> <p>Some coupes could be 100 per cent single species but for the lower rate there must be 10 per cent other species and for the higher rate there must be at least 20 per</p>

		cent of other species in the application / contract and each claim.
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[1] Open ground that is integral to the restocking design and meets the requirements of the UK Forestry Standard will be eligible. However, extensive areas of open ground that are not proposed for restocking will not be eligible for support, nor should they be included within the calculation of percentage composition of the remaining eligible restocking area. Within the application / contract area, the maximum limit of open ground will be 20 per cent.

Supporting information

You must submit an operational plan – using the template provided – which includes information on how you propose to successfully re-establish the woodland.

[Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration operational plan template](#)

This must clearly demonstrate silvicultural appropriateness, as well as ensuring site conditions have been thoroughly assessed and the most appropriate management techniques are proposed to minimise the impacts to the environment.

The operational plan must also include information such as ground preparation methods and identification of existing watercourses (as per Forest and Water Guidelines).

Please provide a map of the species composition of the area you propose to carry out restructuring regeneration on and detail the inclusion of any planned tracks.

You must also supply a tabular breakdown – using the table provided – of the restructuring regeneration component areas to show the species and areas you plan to replant.

[Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration component areas table](#)

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 – 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:

- for applications that propose to maintain or increase the productivity of the woodland. Minimum stocking density must be 2500 stems per hectare for conifers and 1600 stems per hectare for broadleaves, except for the 5 to 10 per cent of native broadleaves within conifer areas to meet the UK Forestry Standard

Or

- for applications with the aim of converting Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) to an appropriate native woodland

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

- for applications that propose work to achieve more resilience and diversity. Your application must clearly demonstrate opportunities have been taken to further diversify species composition on sites where these opportunities exist

Supplementary point – additional benefit

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

- applications can clearly demonstrate active and adequate protection for vulnerable species from browsing damage

How to claim

Once you have completed your operations, you should submit a Forestry Grant capital claim and a map that shows the species composition of the areas you have planted.

If you claim for planting Improved Vegetative Stock for Sitka Spruce we will verify this against the nursery supplier's document you should supply as support to your claim.

You must also supply a tabular breakdown of the restructuring regeneration component areas to show the results of the completed planting operations. Each claim needs to meet the species requirements of the relevant restructuring regeneration prescription.

Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration component areas table

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.

We may inspect the areas as approved within the Scottish Rural Development Programme contract and associated felling licence or Forest Plan, to ensure that you have delivered the agreed design and restructured species composition.

Amendments and variations

We understand that from time to time approved plans or licences may require amendments due to unforeseen circumstances such as windblow. It is therefore essential that prior to carrying out any works you ensure that the plan or licence associated with your application is still valid and reflects what has been approved in your contract.

If there have been any amendments to a plan or licence, which may have an impact on your approved Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration contract, then you must liaise with your local office to agree any variations that may be necessary before you carry out any works.

Technical guidance

- [UK Forestry Standard](#)
- [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)
- [Management Plan](#)
- [General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)
- [Marketing and Supplying Forest Reproductive Materials](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Note that there have been significant changes to the Aim, Grant support and Application eligibility criteria sections	
Aim	Updated to include species diversity.
Grant support	Grant prescriptions are now covered in this section, along with a rationale for the grant. The assessment of the grant rate for Forest Plans has been changed from being based on the restocking species over the 10 year felling approval area to the species composition at year 20 across the whole Forest Plan area
Application eligibility criteria	The criteria have been expanded to cover a series of checks.

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