

Woodland Improvement Grant – Low Impact Silvicultural Systems

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Updates to this page

- addition of scoring criteria

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Aim

This option aims to facilitate the transformation of stands to low impact silvicultural systems (LISS).

A low impact silvicultural system is a type of woodland management that helps to increase species and structural diversity. It normally causes less rapid change to the landscape and to the physical environment than clear felling systems and so can help the landowner meet multi-purpose objectives.

In the context of climate change, varied silvicultural systems will increase the resilience of forests and may limit the damage caused by extreme events such as gales or pests outbreaks.

Grant support

A set list of standard costs for capital works and items are eligible for funding under this Woodland Improvement Grant. See the Operations section below for more details.

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.

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

[Management Plan](#)

You must either have an existing Forestry Grant Scheme [Sustainable Management of Forests – Low Impact Silvicultural Systems](#) contract or the [Sustainable Management of Forests – Low Impact Silvicultural Systems](#) option as part of your application.

More details can be found below on what supporting information you need to supply us when applying for this option. You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

Site suitability must be ranked 'moderate' or 'good' according to Forestry Commission Information Note 40.

The woodland area must contain trees that are of seed bearing age for the species concerned. This is because the grant is to support the transformation phase from later thinnings into seeding and secondary fellings, and encouraging, promoting and managing natural regeneration.

You must have a Deer Management Plan.

Other eligibility criteria

If your application is within or affecting a Site of Special Scientific Interest or Natura site, it must support the objectives set out in the site management statement. You must provide the site management statement with your application.

Operations

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.

Capital grant operations	
Cultivation	£160/hectare
Chemical Weeding	£200/hectare
Cleaning (10–15 years)	£600/hectare
Underplanting (when natural regeneration fails or when species diversification is required)	£265/hectare
Low Impact Silvicultural System – Monitoring (stand visit to collect and analyse data on species, diameter distribution and natural regeneration – available once per 5 year period)	£50/hectare

Supporting information

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

[Low Impact Silvicultural Systems supporting information template](#)

The information we need is:

- a brief analysis of the current structure of the woodland showing its suitability for a low impact silvicultural system / continuous cover forestry and why conversion to a low impact silvicultural system would be appropriate
- a description of the silvicultural systems proposed and the desired stand structure and species. You must identify seed trees on the ground, where appropriate
- a breakdown of the management work expected to be carried out during the plan period – include harvesting methods and time scales
- a deer management plan
- a map that shows the area of the low impact silvicultural system(s), including indicative areas of thinning and felling expected during the plan period. The map must also clearly show the area where the work will be taking place, with individual capital items mapped as appropriate

For advice on how to mark up your map, use the general mapping guidance and the information available within each capital item's minimum specification.

[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 which identify that 50% or more of the proposed species area is ranked in the [Ecological Site Classification](#) as being very suitable ('optimal')

Or

- applications which clearly describes in the plan the management objectives and how they will be achieved. This will need to include information such as monitoring. For example, an annual assessment to determine a suitable 'mast year', or a plan of interventions. For example, if the regeneration does establish what future works are proposed, such as re-spacing

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

- applications that can clearly demonstrate that the proposed low impact silvicultural system management, in SSSI/Natura designated woodlands currently failing to achieve 'favourable' condition, will help towards bringing 100 per cent of the feature into 'favourable' condition

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 plan should demonstrate how the low impact silvicultural system 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.

Supplementary point – additional benefit

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

- applications can clearly demonstrate work that will enhance views of the forest landscape by reducing future visual impact of forest operations

[How to claim](#)

You should only submit your claim once you have completed all the agreed work. We may inspect the capital items you are claiming to ensure that the work has been carried out to the correct specification.

You should 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.

Technical guidance

- [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)
- [Management Plan](#)
- [General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)
- [Deer Management Plan guidance](#)
- [Felling licence guidance](#)
- [Forest Research Information Note 29 – What is Continuous Cover Forestry?](#)
- [Forest Research Information Note 40 – Transforming Even-aged Conifer Stands to Continuous Cover Management](#)
- [Forest Research Information Note 45 – Monitoring the Transformation of Even-aged Stands to Continuous Cover Management](#)
- [The Costs and Revenues of Transformation to Continuous Cover Forestry – Owen Davies and Gary Kerr](#)
- [UK Forestry Standard](#)

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