

Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration

Date published: 1 October, 2024

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

On 1 October, the Forestry Grant Scheme was updated to align with the new UK Forestry standard (2023). Any applications previously submitted do not require further changes. More information on how Scottish Forestry will be managing existing applications through the change can be found in the [Scottish Forestry UK Forestry Standard](#) webpages.

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

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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 [Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029](#).

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 Permission 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 management plan, this should be assessed on the restocking species across the approved felling area, covered by the Felling Permission.

This rate would apply to all Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration applications covered by the forest plan or the approved Felling Permission area within a management plan.

Step 2 – check that your application and each claim year includes at least the minimum levels of ‘other species’, for your grant rate prescription as set out below. ‘Other species,’ is defined as any of the supporting component species, broadleaved or conifer, as identified within the relevant approved forest plan or Felling Permission. There may be instances when application/claims are comprised wholly of ‘other species’; these will be eligible for grant payment under the rate determined in Step 1.

If your forest plan / management plan 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, as long as you apply for the lower rate in your application (see table below).

You cannot have different rates in your contract.

Therefore, if you have a contract for the higher rate but your claim does not meet the required diversity for the higher rate, your contract will require a variation and we will be required to recover any previous payments made on that contract.

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 65 per cent is allocated to a single species. In woodlands of less than 10 hectares and in native woods, the above proportions may be relaxed providing the adjacent landuses provide landscape and habitat diversity (see UK Forestry Standard) Step 2 To be eligible for grant, then a minimum of 10 per cent ‘other species’ must be present within each application/claim.	£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. Step 2 To be eligible for grant, then a minimum of 20 per cent ‘other species’ must be present within each application/claim.	£550

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

For applications being considered against UKFS 2017 no more than 75 per cent is permitted for a single species. If you are unsure which UKFS edition your application will be assessed against, please refer to the [reference table for managing the UKFS change](#).

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



Supplier's document – template (PDF, Size: 25.3 kB)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/suppliers-document-template-2.pdf>



Example of completed supplier's document (PDF, Size: 36.5 kB)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/FCS-example-supplier-document.pdf>

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, unless in exceptional circumstances a Management Plan is deemed suitable.

You must have Scottish Forestry approval for the area you intend to fell or have already felled through either a Felling Permission 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 Scottish Forestry Long-term Forest Plan or Felling Permission. Stocking densities must be set to meet the objectives of the site.

As per the UKFS general forestry practice requirement 4, forests should maintain their capability to produce a range of wood and non-wood forest products on a sustainable basis.

Therefore, it is expected that minimum stocking densities will be 2500 stems per hectare for conifers, and 1600 stems per hectare for broadleaves and native Scots pine. Where site objectives differ, for example, are for productive broadleaves the stocking density should be higher, and where site objectives are for transitional woodland, stocking densities should be lower.

Native Broadleaves Stocking Density Guidance (PDF 174KB) (PDF, Size: 177.6 kB)

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

Level	What we will check	What we're looking for
Forest plan/management plan	Grant rate will be assessed based on the species composition at year 20 of the whole area of the approved Forest Plan or species composition across the approved felling area covered by the Felling Permission within a management plan.	For the UK Forestry Standard (lower rate) The species diversity must meet UK Forestry Standard, i.e. includes no more than 65 per cent of a single species For the Delivering Diversity and Resilience (higher rate) Species diversity is no more than 60 per cent of a single species
Application / contract / claim year	Species mix across the total area from all the coupes included in the application / contract and each claim year meets the appropriate species diversity.	For the UK Forestry Standard (lower rate) The species diversity must include at least 10 per cent of 'other species'.

	That claim years approved in contract do not exceed three years (i.e. the current year plus two years)	For the Delivering Diversity and Resilience (higher rate) The species diversity must include at least 20 per cent of 'other species'.
Claim	Each claim must meet the relevant other species requirement.	We would normally expect applications to include a claim year in the current or next year. 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.
Coupe	Each coupe corresponds (within tolerances etc) to the approved Forest Plan / Management Plan.	Not every coupe needs to meet the relevant species diversity requirement. 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 cent of other species in the application / contract and each claim.

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 \(MS Word, Size: 777.7 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/0018---wig-restructuring-regen-op-plan-template_v3---SF.doc

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 of the [UK Forestry Standard](#)).

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 \(MS Excel, Size: 119.3 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Copy-of-0019---wig_restructuring_regeneration_component_areas_v601---SF.xls

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



[Example FGS WIG map - Restructuring Regeneration - Species \(PDF, Size: 2.0 MB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/FGS-WIG---Res--Regen---Species.pdf> Example FGS WIG map - Restructuring Regeneration - Species

Scoring criteria

We have set agreed financial budgets for each of the options under the Forestry Grant Scheme.

To ensure that we make the most cost effective use of funding available and to meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria.

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 – 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

You must claim your capital items on the Forestry Grant Scheme manual Standard Costs Capital Items Claim Form once you have satisfactorily completed the work.

Claim forms and guidance are available on the [Claims and payments](#) page.

We require you to submit the following supporting documents:

- a map showing the locations of all the tree species you have planted
- a components table that will show that you have met the minimum species requirements of the relevant restructuring regeneration prescription
- if you have planted native trees, or if you have planted using genetically improved Sitka spruce, then you must provide us with the required copy of the tree supplier's document when submitting

your initial planting claim. As well as entering the quantity of trees and the Master Certificate Number on the supplier's document, you should also include, for native trees, the region of provenance that demonstrates that the trees are suitable for the site



[Woodland Improvement Grant – Restructuring Regeneration component areas table \(MS Excel, Size: 119.3 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/Copy-of-0019---wig_restructuring_regeneration_component_areas_v601---SF-2.xls

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 your contract and associated Felling Permission 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 Felling Permissions may require amendments due to unforeseen circumstances. It is therefore essential that prior to carrying out any works you ensure that the plan or Felling Permission 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 Felling Permission, 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](#)
- [Guidance: Wildlife and Forest Operations](#)



[The provision of archaeological information and advice in Scotland to meet the UK Forestry Standard \(PDF, Size: 329.2 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/0017---guidance_note_provision_of_archaeological_info_advice_jan_2016---SF.pdf

Recent changes

Section	Change
Grant support	Clarifications and simplification of the guidance
Application eligibility criteria	Clarifications and simplification of the guidance
Grant Support and Application eligibility criteria	Delivering UK Forestry Standard Woodland maximum single species changed from 75 to 65 percent

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