



Section 1

Introduction

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The aim of the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS) is to help deliver the Scottish Forestry Strategy by encouraging the creation and management of woods and forests to provide economic, environmental and social benefits, now and in the future. The Forestry Commission's powers to give grants are set out in the 1967 Forestry Act (as amended). SFGS and Farmland Premium are covered by EC Council Regulations and the forestry chapter of the Scottish Rural Development Plan.

Grants are available for:

- **Expansion – creating new woodlands.**
- **Restocking – replanting following felling.**
- **Stewardship – activities in existing woodlands.**

Sections 2-5 of this booklet explain the criteria you must meet in order to obtain grants. Section 9 explains how to apply to the Forestry Commission (FC) for grants in Scotland. Section 10 explains how to claim grant.

Locational Premiums and Challenge Funds

Locational Premiums and Challenge Funds provide additional funding to the normal SFGS grants. They are available in specific geographic locations for specific purposes. See Section 6 for details.

Farmland Premium

For planting on agricultural land you may be able to claim annual payments under the SFGS: Farmland Premium Scheme which is administered by the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD). See Section 7 for details.

UK Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard sets out criteria and standards for the sustainable management of forests and woodland in the UK and aims to promote good forestry practice. To qualify for grants all work must adhere to the UK Forestry Standard and associated FC Guidance. You can view or order a copy of the UK Forestry Standard via the FC website at www.forestry.gov.uk.

Management plans

At present, Forest Plans cover felling and restocking. In the future, we intend (a) to extend the scope of Forest Plans to cover all elements of management planning, including new planting; and (b) that all woodlands within a property be covered by a Forest Plan. Although elements of your application may require specific management plans, we would thus encourage you to prepare a single overall management plan for your woodland, which includes these specific elements. The contents of your management plan will vary depending on the size and complexity of your application. Section 12 'SFGS Specifications' gives further guidance.

Standard Costs and Percentages

Most SFGS grants are based on a percentage of Standard Costs of agreed operations. The Standard Cost is an average of the estimated costs of labour, plants, machinery, materials and supervision to do work to the minimum specification as set out in Section 12 'SFGS Specifications'. Depending upon the level of public benefit, grant payments are either at 60% or 90% of the Standard Cost, except for restocking, which is generally at 75% of the new planting Standard Costs.

Applying for SFGS

Section 9 ‘How to Apply to SFGS’ explains the process in detail. You may find it useful to discuss your proposals with local FC Conservancy staff and/or seek professional help to prepare your application. Please note that:

- You should discuss woodland planting and felling proposals with those neighbours who might be directly affected.
- You must declare whether grant aid from other public bodies is either approved, or being sought, in relation to SFGS work grant aided by the Forestry Commission.
- **Once a contract agreement is in place and work is carried out there is a requirement to ensure proper maintenance. If work is not to the required standard, grant payments may be reclaimed with interest.**

Scheme funding

Acceptance of an application for SFGS is subject to grant funding being available. Should the funding be fully committed in any particular year, we reserve the right to delay accepting new applications or agree a future claim year for the work. In this case we will inform applicants at an early stage in the application process.

Environmental Impact Assessment of forestry projects

Where a forestry project (deforestation, afforestation, forestry roads and forestry quarries) might have a significant effect on the environment then you must obtain our consent for the work. If our consent is required we will ask you to prepare an Environmental Statement. To help with the initial decision making process there are thresholds above which we are required to make a determination about the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment. If the area of the work you propose falls below the thresholds then it is not likely to require our consent. Further information is given on page 9.3.

Web site

Our web site (www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland) provides a very useful source of information about the Forestry Commission and also has full details of all our grants including up to date news, application forms and additional guidance.

Important features include:

- Land Information Search (LIS) – this will help you identify any land designations, such as sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) or archaeological sites, that may affect your grant application.
- Grant Calculator – to help you apply for SFGS grants we have developed a special grant calculator. This is a customised excel spreadsheet that can be downloaded from our web site and will work out the grant amounts for SFGS operations. A guidance note is also available to assist you to complete the spreadsheet.

Disclosure of information

By signing an SFGS contract you agree that all information about your participation in the scheme may be made public.

Further information

If you have any queries about the SFGS then please contact your local Conservancy office (see Section 14 for addresses and contact numbers) or contact our Grants and Licence enquiry service by using the **“Contact Us”** button on the top banner of our web site.

Should a format of this booklet such as larger type be required then please contact our enquiry service by e-mail.