

SFGS Applications: Approval Priorities

The popularity of the SFGS resulted in such a high demand that we received schemes with potential funding totals that exceeded the available budgets set for SFGS. An exercise was undertaken following the closure of the grants scheme to prioritise all unapproved schemes which allowed us to identify the following categories:

Category 1: the following scheme applications were accepted and processed under SFGS subject to them meeting the required standards.

- Contracts already approved were honoured.
- Contract offers sent out before 3 May will be approved
- Applications already received under the following categories: Locational Premiums (but only up to the agreed ministerial commitments), WIAT, SRC, Stewardship 9: Controlled Livestock Grazing Pilot & Stewardship 11: Developing Woodland Energy.
- Restocking under approved Forest Plans
- Partnership schemes (eg: HLF, LIFE,..etc)
- Community involvement based schemes (including Stewardship 8 grants).

Category 2: the following scheme applications received are considered high priority.

- Schemes for new planting not attracting Locational Premium payments
- Schemes that are for Stewardship Natura/SSI/Priority HAP & BAP (Stewardship operations for S3 and S4 grants)

Should funds become available we will prioritise these schemes and approve those we are able to. Although we are carrying out a review of our current financial situation in the autumn we should stress that it is likely that only a small amount of extra funding will become available for approving such schemes and the majority will be returned at this date. In such a scenario applicants may wish to consider an application under the new scheme to be launched in 2007.

Category 3: the following scheme applications received are over-subscribed. We will not, therefore, be processing these under SFGS.

- Restocking not carried out through the approved Forest Plans process.
- Recreation Stewardship (Stewardship 7 operations)
- Other Stewardship (Stewardship operations in grants S1, S2, S5 & S6).