

# Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme Scottish Borders Locational Premium



## Native Woodland & Riparian Woodland Creation

### Introduction

In support of the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy, Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) is offering additional funding through a Locational Premium to encourage the creation of new native woodlands and riparian woodlands in the Scottish Borders. This note explains how to apply for this funding.

### What is Locational Premium?

Locational Premium is an extra grant payable **in addition** to the standard grants available under the Scottish Forestry Grants Scheme (SFGS). It is called a “locational” premium because it is only available in parts of Scotland where the Scottish Executive considers woodland planting, regeneration, improvement or management are priorities. Scottish Borders is such an area, reflecting the commitment of Scottish Borders Council (SBC), other organisations and local people to woodland development and the production of the Woodland Strategy.

Applications must satisfy the requirements of SFGS and meet the criteria set out in this leaflet. You should apply for an SFGS in the normal way. The two parts of the SFGS grants which apply to this premium are drawn from woodland expansion grants for “expanding areas of native woodland (P2)” and “improving riparian habitat (P3)”, which are both based on 90% of standard costs.

Woodland creation which is eligible for SFGS and Locational Premium may also qualify for the annual Farmland Premium payments from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department. Farmers may also be able to consolidate their Single Farm Payments for any woodlands created by 16 May 2006.

### How much is the Locational Premium?

The Scottish Borders Locational Premium for 2006 is £2,000 per hectare. This is in addition to SFGS grants based on 90% of standard costs and, where appropriate, Farmland Premium payments (£60 to £300 per hectare per year for 15 years) and consolidated Single Farm Payments.

The Scottish Executive has announced that a total fund of £500,000 will be available for the Scottish Borders Locational Premium in 2006. The premium rate per hectare and eligibility criteria is set for 2006 only and will be reviewed thereafter to ensure the objectives are being achieved.

### The Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy – *New Ways for Scottish Borders Trees, Woodlands and Forests*

The strategy was produced by SBC, with input from the Woodland Strategy steering group and many local people. It was produced in response to growing interest amongst the local community in creating, protecting and managing woodlands, and was subject to extensive local consultation.

The strategy sets out a vision that trees, woodlands and forests will achieve their full potential as a natural resource, creating the environment that gives greatest benefit to the life and work of Borders people.

The strategy identifies a series of key issues, activities, policy objectives and key actions that have been grouped under the following five broad strategic themes:

- Contributing to the sustainable development of the Scottish Borders economy
- Expanding & diversifying the Scottish Borders woodland resource

*Delivering the  
Scottish Forestry Strategy*



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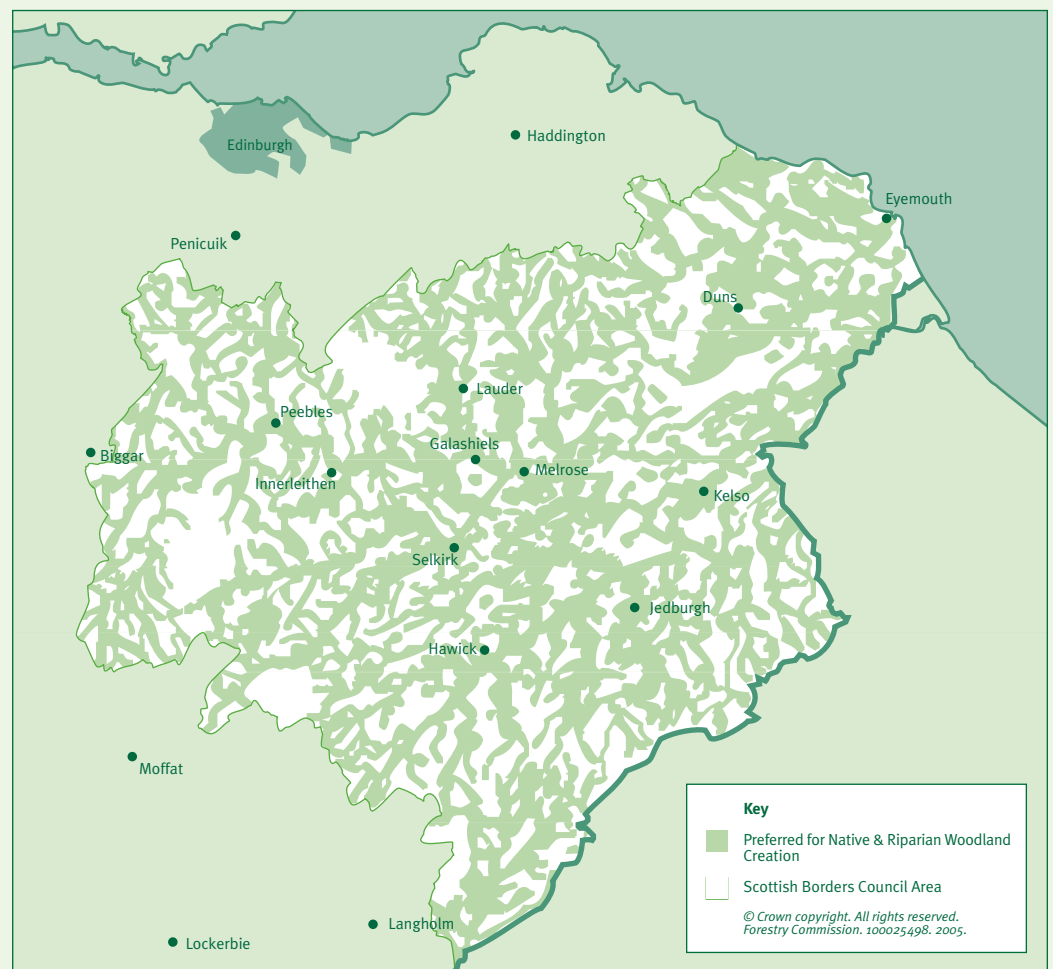
**Forestry Commission  
Scotland**

- Protecting and enhancing the Scottish Borders landscape, biodiversity & cultural heritage
- The role of trees, woodlands and forest in contributing to the quality of life in Scottish Borders
- Connecting people and communities with the Scottish Borders trees, woodlands and forests

In the Scottish Borders only small scattered fragments of 'semi natural' woodland remain comprising only 0.26% of total land area. This compares unfavourably with other parts of Scotland. These fragments are characterised by their small size and are frequently associated with steep inaccessible slopes along watercourses. Many are degraded through long term overgrazing. Nonetheless they have an intrinsically high biodiversity value. Restoration of at least part of this lost resource is now an environmental priority.

## Where is the Locational Premium available?

You can apply for Locational Premium on suitable areas (see criteria below) totalling at least 1ha (minimum 0.25ha per wood) only in those areas identified as preferred on Map 7 of the Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy – see below. A larger scale map can be viewed at [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-645j4t](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-645j4t)



There is a desire to see the benefits of new native and riparian woodlands spread reasonably widely across the Scottish Borders. Consequently the area of Locational Premium within any one woodland will be limited to a maximum of 40ha. A maximum of 80ha of Locational Premium in any application may be allowed **where individual woodlands are widely separated**. Only one application per landholding per year will qualify for the locational Premium. Woodlands and applications can be greater than 40ha and 80ha respectively but the additional areas will receive only standard SFGS grants.

## What types of woodland creation will be eligible?

The premium aims to encourage planting of native woodlands and riparian woodlands, **particularly where it will reduce the isolation of existing native woodlands or significantly improve riparian habitat.**

The Locational Premium represents a significant extra level of public funding for woodland creation and it must, therefore, deliver more benefits than the standard SFGS alone. Whilst some criteria have been relaxed to suit Scottish Borders conditions (e.g. proximity to and size of source native woods), others have been added to ensure this extra delivery. Applications for Locational Premium will be assessed against the criteria set out below.

### **Both native and riparian proposals should address the following:**

- The site must be suitable for woodland creation. An ecological survey will be required where initial indications are that species or habitats of conservation concern are likely to be present. The results of an ecological survey may require proposals to be modified or rejected.
- The native species and provenance of tree must be suitable to the site. Local provenance and origin of seed used to grow trees is considered highly important (see FC Practice Note 8, 'Using Local Stock for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs'). Documentary evidence such as a Certificate of Local Provenance will be required.
- Planting in accordance with FC Bulletin 112, 'Creating New Native Woodlands'.
- The type of native woodland should match the site and be specified using the native Woodland Habitat Action Plan types (e.g. Upland Ashwood) and National Vegetation Classification (e.g. NVC W9).
- Planting at variable spacing to achieve minimum establishment of at least 1,100 native trees/shrubs per hectare across the site with up to 20% grant aidable open space.
- Detailed map showing the layout of trees and open ground to ensure that wetland, species-rich flushes and other important habitats are taken in to account.
- The design of the proposed wood should be sympathetic to and fit well into the surrounding landscape. (Evidence may be required e.g. photo montage)
- There should be appropriate neighbour and community consultation. (Evidence may be required e.g. record of meeting, letters of support.)
- There should be sufficient demonstration of commitment to future management by the owner/applicant. There should be a clear maintenance and protection strategy for the woodland.
- Large seeded broadleaves such as oak and hazel to be excluded from planting in and around red squirrel priority woodlands (including buffer zones).
- Seek advice from Scottish Natural Heritage for applications affecting SACs or SSSIs such as the Tweed SAC/SSSI.
- Consider public access and recreation and include appropriate provision. Access infrastructure may be eligible for SFGS grants.

### **Native woodland proposals only:**

- Contribute to development of Forest Habitat Networks (see FCS Guidance note 20 'Forest Habitat Networks') by planting within 500m of existing native source woodland.
- Source woodlands need to be predominantly native species (or non native species on ancient woodland sites that are to be restored) that occupy at least 0.1 ha.
- The area of new native woodland is limited to twenty times the size of the source woodland(s).

### **Riparian woodland proposals only:**

- Must adjoin watercourses greater than 1m wide, except where we agree that important habitat linkages can be made along a watercourse close to its source.
- Minimum average width of 25m from the edge of the watercourse or water body.
- Maximum average width of 100m on each side from the edge of the watercourse or water body. Possibly wider on some flood plains.
- Exceed the standards in the FC Forest & Water Guidelines.
- Maintain partially wooded conditions such that bankside vegetation thrives.
- More than 20% native woody shrubs may be justified.
- Maximise opportunities for linking with existing riparian and native woods where possible.

## How do I apply?

Applicants wishing to benefit from consolidation of single farm payments should apply in 2005 or early in 2006 to allow time for processing, consultation, approval and planting before 16 May 2006. Other applicants should apply in good time to ensure approval by 31 December 2006 at the latest.

Please apply for an SFGS in the normal way. The Forestry Commission Scotland web site ([www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)) has full details of all our grants, application forms and additional guidance. It also includes a grant calculator that can be downloaded and used to work out the grant amounts for SFGS operations, as well as forming part of your application. Paper copies of the application forms are available from the FCS office in Galashiels (tel 01896 750222).

Completed grant calculators can be e-mailed to [southscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:southscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) with signed paper applications sent to the FCS office in Galashiels.

In order to simplify processing of the application we will only accept whole compartments for the Locational Premium, so you should bear this in mind when completing the forms.

Please use the specific Locational Premium reference codes shown below to indicate the compartments for which you wish to apply for the premium.

Locational Premium	SFGS Objective	SFGS Operation Code reference	Cost
Scottish Borders Native Woods	P2	2309	£2,000/ha
Scottish Borders Riparian Woods	P3	3308	£2,000/ha

## How will applications be assessed?

Forestry Commission Scotland will assess applications in the usual way against the SFGS standards and the additional criteria above.

There is a limited amount of money available for Locational Premium. Therefore, it will be allocated on a first come first served basis. **We will make this allocation at the point when Forestry Commission Scotland approves each SFGS contract.** Once the entire Locational Premium for the year has been allocated we will not accept further applications for payment in that year.

## When should I start work?

You can start work as soon as you have received a signed SFGS contract from Forestry Commission Scotland which confirms that you have been allocated Locational Premium. All work should be completed and claims lodged by 28th February in the financial year approved for grant payment.

If you have also applied for SFGS Farmland Premium you must also have received SFGS Farmland Premium approval before starting work. Consolidation of Single Farm Payments should be applied for before 16th May 2006.

## How will the Locational Premium be paid?

You can claim the full SFGS payment for protection and ground preparation as soon as you complete the work. Payments for planting are made in two instalments; 70% when the operation has been satisfactorily carried out and 30% five years later.

We will pay the full amount of Locational Premium along with the first (70%) payment for planting. We will not process a claim for part of a compartment. However you need not claim for all compartments at the same time.

## Where can I get more information?

For further information on the Scottish Borders Locational Premium and advice on grant applications contact Jim Affleck (Berwickshire, Tweeddale & Lauderdale), Greg Macfarlane (Roxburghshire & Ettrick) or Iain Laidlaw at the following address:

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North Wheatlands Mill, Wheatlands Road, Galashiels TD1 2HQ

Tel: 01896 750222 • Fax: 01896 751286

Email: [southscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:southscotland.cons@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)